



CAMERA OPERATOR

The Journal of the Society of Camera Operators

JULIE & JULIA | THE HANGOVER | NINE | UP IN THE AIR | STAR TREK | INVICTUS



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AWARDS ISSUE 2010



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CAMERA OPERATOR

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 1 SPECIAL AWARDS ISSUE 2010

Cover



Photo of George Clooney in *Up in the Air* by Dale Robinette, courtesy of Paramount Studios

Julie & Julia

by Bruce MacCallum
David J Frederick SOC interviews the A-camera operator from this heartwarming double bio-pic.



The Hangover

by Dan Gold SOC
Bonnie Blake SOC interviews the A-camera operator from this hilarious breakout comedy.



Features

Nine

by George Richmond
Steve Fracol SOC interviews the A-camera operator from this new musical sensation.



Up in the Air

by Matthew Moriarty
David J Frederick SOC interviews the A-camera operator from this critically acclaimed film.



Star Trek

by Colin Anderson SOC
Dan Gold SOC interviews the A-camera operator from the newest installment of the fan favorite series.



Invictus

by Stephen Campanelli SOC
Aiken Weiss SOC interviews the A-camera operator from Clint Eastwood's latest film.



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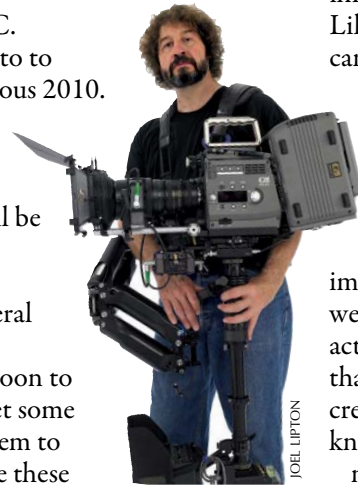
Letter from the President

Greetings, members of the SOC. On behalf of all of us, I'd like to wish you a very happy and prosperous 2010. It is an exciting time for camera operators. This is Awards Season and many of the films we worked on and friends we worked with will be recognized. It is a glorious time.

In this awards issue of *Camera Operator* magazine, we'll meet several of the great camera operators that helped contribute to many of the soon to be award winning films. We will get some insight as to what it was like for them to use their unique skills to help make these films the best they could be. How did they do this?

As we know, having a camera operator on set makes for a much more efficient shoot and saves production time. Our presence also allows our directors of photography the freedom of thought and action to devote themselves fully to their many other responsibilities on set. They know they have a trusted and competent camera operator by their side to look out for their best interests, providing extra eyes, ears, and hands to help get their job done in the most efficient and artistic way possible. We are their collaborators both on and off the set.

Our job doesn't stop there. Proper camera operators are



JOEL LIPTON

valuable assets to everyone on the set by constantly providing information to each department when called upon to do so. Like hawks, we watch everything happening around us so we can analyze the effect it has on our jobs and the movie as a whole. But it doesn't stop there.

People skills are most important of all. If we catch every ladder in the shot, if we execute every move flawlessly, if our framing is as good as it's ever been done, our job is only 2% complete. Working with people is the most important aspect of getting our job done for without them we have nothing. From craft service to the director to the actors themselves, we have to conduct ourselves in a manner that allows us to work in very close proximity and not inhibit creativity—while still inspiring confidence so they never know we are there. We have to be perfect, available, amenable, and invisible all at the same time.

This is why those mentioned in this issue are so important to us and to the business as a whole. They have perfected the skills necessary to become true camera operators.

Though the SOC postponed its awards for a while, there are many other awards presentations that would love your attendance in these hard economic times. The ASC Awards come immediately to mind as do the Publicists' Awards. They are two great shows that never fail to please. So do yourself a favor and enjoy some great entertainment and a nice meal with your friends. You'll even get to see them all dressed up. How cool is that?

Sincerely,

Dan Kneece, SOC President

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COURTESY OF JACK MESSITT SOC

Ready for Anything

This particular issue of *Camera Operator* certainly showcases how every project is uniquely different. Each story needs to be told in a different way. Each director and DP has their own style of working.

An operator must be a chameleon.

Some directors have every frame meticulously documented in their minds and have very specific framing for you on every shot. Others will give you the general idea of a shot and leave you to fill in the blanks.

Some DPs leave you alone with the director to work out the shot while they concentrate on the lighting. Others prefer to be the creative filter and give you the details after they emerge fully formed.

Some projects allow for plenty of rehearsal, letting you get a great feel for every shot. Others you see for the first time while the camera is rolling, requiring more on-the-fly decision-making.

Some stories are best told with smooth camera moves and impeccable framing. Others need the energy of handheld cameras being battered around, less structured framing and "imperfections" that give the perfect visual quality.

There are so many ways to make a film set run well and to tell the story the right way. What works wonderfully on one project might not be the best method for another. But a good camera operator will seamlessly navigate these ever-changing dynamics to give every project exactly what it needs.

That is what makes our job so interesting.

Jack Messitt SOC

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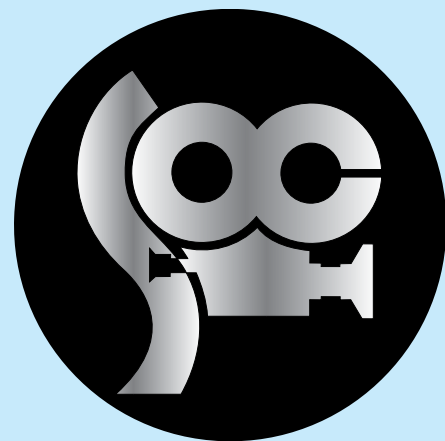
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New SOC Membership Directory in the works

Please confirm or update your contact information—we need your input to assure accuracy. Also, refer us to people you want to receive a copy of the new SOC Directory.

Available in 2010, the book will be a valuable resource for industry professionals looking to hire SOC members: Operators, Assistants, and Directors of Photography.

If you did not receive an SOC Membership Directory email by January 31st, 2010, please contact us at:

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Holiday Screening and Toys to VCCHLA



The balloon lady was extremely popular.

AIKEN WEISS SOC



SOC President Dan Kneece, Amanda Hedlund from the Vision Center, and Dave Tolsky SOC at Childrens Hospital with the gift collection.

DAVID TOLSKY SOC AND DAN KNEECE SOC

The SOC's annual Holiday Screening on Sunday December 13th featured *Fantastic Mr Fox* followed by pizza, balloon lady Kathy Ann Wittes, and a toy raffle for the children attending.

Toys donated at the screening were delivered to the Vision Center at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles on Thursday, December 18th by SOC President Dan Kneece and Dave Tolsky SOC.



Decisions, decisions...

Children at the Vision Center could get reindeer antlers (if they wanted) and select a gift from the pile awaiting them.



Dan Kneece SOC points out the new SOC/VCCHLA plaque at the hospital.

DAVID TOLSKY SOC



A photograph of Meryl Streep as Julia Child in a kitchen. She is wearing a white button-down shirt and a white apron, holding a whisk. She has a slight smile and is looking towards the camera. The background shows a kitchen with wooden cabinets, a window, and a stove with a copper pot.

Bruce MacCallum
on operating *Julie & Julia*

interviewed by
David J Frederick soc

Meryl Streep as Julia Child.



Camera Operator Bruce MacCallum setting up a shot for Meryl Streep as Julia Child.

What is the nature of your previous working relationship with DP Stephen Goldblatt ASC and the director, Nora Ephron, if any?

I had never really worked with Stephan Goldblatt before, so we started out fresh from hair & makeup tests, going right into the shooting of the film. I first met Nora Ephron when she was a writer on the movie *Heartburn*. I was the first assistant for DP Néstor Almendros ASC and she was with us daily at the monitor with Director Mike Nichols.

What is a typical shot set up process on this film with director Nora Ephron?

To be honest, the typical shot set up involved Stephen and Nora having a discussion, usually including Dianne Dreyer, our script supervisor. Next came a bit of a line up of a few angles with the director's viewfinder. This was taken a step further by showing Nora on the monitor with the camera as the real viewfinder. We would tweak it from there and make our adjustments. After a bit more lighting, a few rehearsals to make sure Nora was happy, the photography then followed.

How involved were you in the blocking, shot conception, actor rehearsals?

I find all jobs are different and in this case, I was not involved that much in the blocking of shots. Stephen and I would talk with each other about certain shots as we were shooting them. We had a good back and forth discussion to make improvements and small tweaks as we went along.

Did you get to rehearse as much as you desired?

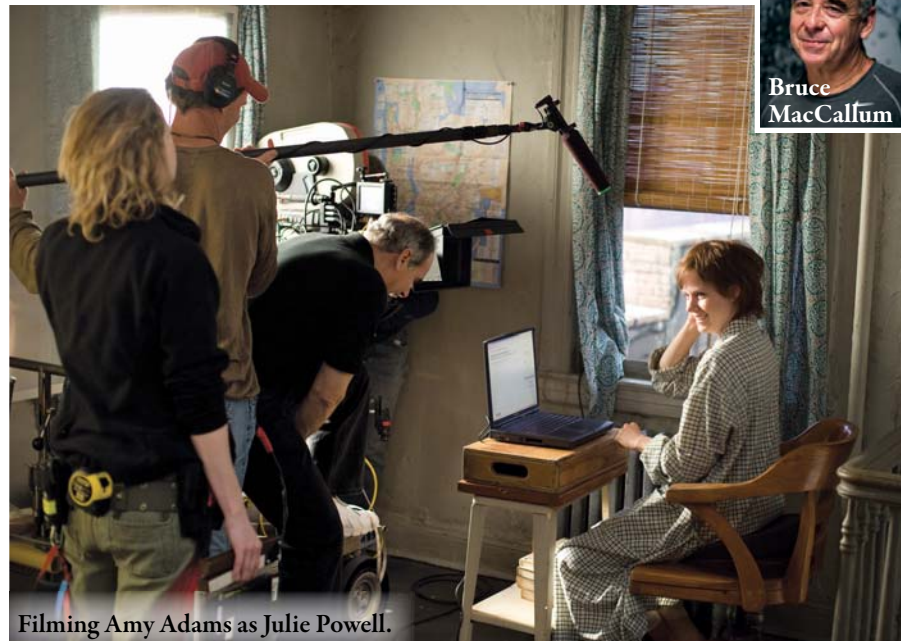
Yes, we would always get a rehearsal even though it is not really a common practice these days. It speaks well of the higher professional level of this job.

Our rehearsals would start out closed—another interesting process that changes from

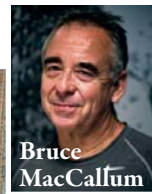
Julie & Julia was based on the book by Julie Powell and we shot each of the two stories separately, starting with the Amy Adams section. It was really like shooting two separate movies with the two main stars never appearing in a scene together.

I thought it was special that half of the movie would be a period piece and the other half contemporary. I was always intrigued and wondered how the two stories would be edited together into a single story. Director Nora Ephron and editor Richard Marks did a wonderful job putting them together. The other special thing was the great actors involved in this project as well as the fabulous crew that I have known and worked with before. I was very happy to be part of this group.

I feel that filmmaking is truly a total group effort. Everyone on the crew has an imprint on the film. If the group works well together I think that quality of experience translates clearly into the end product, the film itself. I am very lucky to have the job I have. I believe it is the best job on set. Some jobs are better than others but still, I feel being the camera operator is the best place to be.



Filming Amy Adams as Julie Powell.



Bruce MacCallum

CRAIG BLANKENHORN

job to job. The question is always who is allowed into a closed rehearsal? On *Julie & Julia*, I was part of the process. This special group included myself, Nora Ephron, Stephen Goldblatt, Dianne Dreyer (script) and 1st AD Jeff Bernstein.

In terms of acting during this time, there was very little time spent on what was going to happen during a given scene. They knew for the most part where it was all heading.

Once the actors and Nora were happy, we would have a department head rehearsal and line up our shots and mark the actors. In almost all cases, once the lighting was done and the camera set, we would rehearse, record video, make any adjustments that were needed and then shoot.

What type of camera equipment was used for the show? What were the advantages/disadvantages of that system?

We used the Panavision Platinum cameras on *Julie & Julia*—the complete system—all the way. I think that this system is still the best, but also in my opinion, the video taps need to be improved a bit. In past projects I admired that



Julie (Amy Adams) contemplates the first lobster she's about to cook.

Arriflex still has a better video set up and the eyepiece that flips to the right side. I find that feature does come in handy at times.

Do you have a preference of holding the matte box doing hand held shots or using handles?

You always have to go with the flow. Fortunately, Tim, a wonderful guy who runs the shop at Panavision NY, built a bit of a custom handheld camera rig for me. However, I do grab the matte box as needed and rip it apart a bit now and again.



Meryl Streep as Julia Child.

What do you say when a neophyte asks what it takes to be an operator, and do they need to do Steadicam?

I would say that a good operator does not have to operate Steadicam. If you have a good sense of composition, an idea on how a shot or sequence cuts together, a willingness to learn from others, along with a good personality, in broad strokes, you will be fine.

In terms of work, it is an advantage to be able to operate a fixed camera as well as operate Steadicam. The very hard part is to be able to do both very well. =>

Steadicam is a specialized tool that is sometimes overused. It is seen as a quick and easy solution. In my experience, that is not always the case, but it is very good tool when needed. Whatever works to help tell the story, that is usually the best way to go.

Here is a note: trying to find a very good Steadicam operator is always an interesting process—getting the right personality to fit the project comes into play more often than not.

Did DP Stephen Goldblatt like to operate the camera?

Stephen never operated a shot that I remember. He would look through the eyepiece on the camera during lighting and set up time which I feel is all part of the normal film-making process. I will say that Stephen is a total professional who is well aware of what everybody's job is. He knows when to tell the first AD we are ready to shoot. I was able to do my own thing as an operator. Again I will say this was a special crew.

Our dolly grip on the film was Pat McGrath, who for me, is just the best. He and I had it dialed in and we were in total sync. It really does make a great difference having this relationship between camera operator and dolly grip in a very good way.



Meryl Streep as Julia Child and Stanley Tucci as her husband Paul Child.

What was Meryl Streep like to work with?

Meryl, Meryl, Meryl... This was my third film with her (*Heartburn*, *Music of the Heart*). Meryl is simply the best on and off camera. During hair & makeup tests she would enter the stage as Julia Child, totally locked in and ready to go. There are very few actors in her league. I am, and have been, very spoiled by working with this kind of cast: Amy Adams, Stanley Tucci and Chris Messina. They were all terrific and always fun to be around. I remember that we worked hard but had some good laughs, mostly thanks to them.

And this movie is all about food, mostly very good food. Any time there was a scene where the actors needed to eat, Chris Messina (Amy Adams' character's husband Eric Powell) was the man. Chris was really into it non-stop. He was our food guru, always rating what was best. There were always a lot of leftovers for the crew to sample. His guidance on what to try was excellent!



*Photos by Jonathan Wenk © 2009
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Amy Adams as Julie Powell and Chris Messina as her husband Eric Powell.



A photograph of Ed Helms as Stu in the movie The Hangover. He is lying on a tiled floor, looking up with a shocked expression at a white chicken that is standing on the floor next to him. The background is a dimly lit bar with shelves of bottles.

Dan Gold SOC on
operating *The Hangover*

interviewed by
Bonnie Blake SOC



The fun thing about *The Hangover* was that the four guys are all very talented comedic actors and sort of an ensemble. And the director gave them quite a bit of freedom to make things up as they went along and ad-lib. Things would develop as we were shooting and you always had to be ready for whatever was going to happen. It was fun to sort of change the shot on the fly or whisper to the dolly grip “let’s slide over here when they do this” because of the dynamic nature of the actors working with a story that was improvised quite a bit. It gave us an opportunity—it gave me an opportunity as a camera operator to kind of make things up as we went along. And that was fun. It kept things spontaneous.

Were they, “Okay, that was good. Let’s move on?”

There were times when we would do one or two takes and want to move on. The director Todd Phillips is a real believer in shooting the rehearsals and if he feels like he got it, he will want to move on. I am a little more old school and if I feel we didn’t get it all or I feel we can do a better job or somebody else, maybe the dolly grip or the focus puller or the boom guy needs another one, I am one of those guys who jumps right off the dolly, runs over to video village and explains that it is worth trying again, that we can do better.

A lot of times Todd would sit right next to the camera and watch the actors. I think that it’s so smart and so valuable for the actors to have the director right there—for all of us to

have the director right there as opposed to being 100 yards away at a little tiny 9” monitor screaming “okay, do it again



Dan Gold SOC shooting Bradley Cooper and Zach Galifianakis at the blackjack table.

but try this...” I mean, that is so impersonal and Todd more often than not was right there on set. It was great.

Overall, giving the actors freedom and keeping the scene going was Todd’s priority. We on the camera crew try to keep things moving forward and try not to interrupt and stop the momentum.

Larry and I have done five movies together. He is a real believer in shooting from the hip and adapting on the fly. He is very happy to see me make something work while we’re in the middle of it. He is very into keeping things organic and not imposing restrictions on the director or the actors because of some aspect of the photography.

Larry has a really strong visual sense and has some great ideas. We did one scene up on the top of Caesar’s Palace, where the guys toast at night and the camera crane shot drifts up into the skyline and locks off and time lapses through to the next day when the sun comes up. I think that kind of stuff really adds an interesting texture to the movie. We did that a few times. The time lapse really helped set the tone and the mood of the new scene or new twist that the plot was going to take.

What was your favorite scene to shoot?

When they have just drugged the tiger and are waiting for the drugs to take effect so they can drag him out of the hotel. While they are waiting, Ed Helms sits down at the piano and plays this little ballad about what do tigers dream of when they are sleeping. It was so simple. It ended up as two cuts, I think.

But what makes it so special was something I heard the director say to Ed. “After lunch,” he said, “we are going to shoot you sitting at the piano and playing a song.” And during lunch, Ed made up this song, out of thin air. We came back and set up the dolly shot and just did this wonderful slow move across the piano to see a chicken in the background, and then it reveals Ed playing piano and the other two guys get revealed in the background. It was wonderful. It lasted less than a minute. It was real simple. That is a good example of the spontaneous-ness of the shoot. He just pulled that right out of thin air and it was perfect. ⇒



Dan Gold SOC poolside at Caesar’s Palace in Las Vegas.



What was in your camera package?

We used Panaflex Millennium XLs on both cameras because it is easy to make into a Steadicam camera for Geoffrey Haley (B-camera/Steadicam) and also it is a nice lightweight handheld camera for us both. For this movie, and all the time when I work with Larry, we do a lot of handheld.

We shot in almost every mode there is. Because it is sort of a road picture, they are in the car a lot. We had traditional insert car stuff—where you are shooting off the back of an insert car onto a vehicle being towed. We towed the car with the cameras hard mounted on the hood or on hostess trays on the side. We had crane shots from a moving insert car—using the crane from the insert car to the free driving car. And then a lot of it was tow dolly stuff, where we would tow a big process trailer behind the insert car, shooting off dollies into side windows or the windshield. Larry likes the flexibility of handheld and the look of it, especially on the insert car, so we did a lot of handheld on the tow dolly, just sitting on an apple box shooting through the side window or shooting from the backseat doing reverse overs handheld.

I think all the different styles worked together. There are some of those big high crane shots of the insert car that sort of set the scene as the car drives away from you, or pulls underneath you. And then there is the rougher stuff on the tow dolly handheld when they are having an argument in the car. They all had their place.

How much of the movie was shot on location?

The big foyer, the big lobby of the hotel, that was Caesar's Palace. The casino stuff was not in Caesar's; we shot that in another casino. That was a real casino, maybe the Flamingo. The suite of their hotel room, that was on stage. That first shot, when they walk in and you see the whole strip out the big windows and it is a live image down there, you see cars going by—that was all green screen that we had shot plates for. It really sells that you are in Vegas. That is quite clever, I thought.

We actually shot on the roof of Caesar's Palace. That gave us that great view of the night neon behind. When the guys come out of the door to the top of the stairwell and then climb up a ladder onto the highest level of the roof, we did a crane shot up there on the very highest point of the roof. Of course, like most wonderful crane shots, they end up chopped up in the movie and you only see a little sliver of it. It was a pretty difficult shot that started on one end of the dolly track, then peeked out over the edge of the upper roof looking straight down the ladder at the guys climbing up. As they started to climb up, I would tilt up and the crane would dolly along the track and follow them up the ladder around to the top. The shot levels off to reveal the whole Las Vegas skyline behind them and continues to dolly as the guys one by one come off the ladder. Then the arm would swing a circle around the guys as they were exiting the ladder.

We practiced it a bunch of times with second team, but of course second team always does it differently than first team. Then we did it with the guys and we got it in a couple of

takes. It was difficult but it was a really nice looking shot. Unfortunately no one will ever see it. The end of the shot still exists.

Did you have a lot of 2 camera set ups?

Yes. I mean a fair amount. Larry likes to use two cameras whenever he can to get coverage, especially in comedies. When so much is improvised, it is really important to get a couple of angles at the same time because it never happens the same way twice. It is hard to recreate that for single camera coverage so Geoff would get in there whenever he could. And there are a lot of wonderful Steadicam shots in *The Hangover*. Geoff did a great job.

Tell me about working with the actors.

It was fun to work on. It was a great bunch of actors and they like to have a good time. They were all very down to earth and happy to be there. It was a fun experience.

Zach [Galifianakis] ad-libs like crazy, improvises like crazy but he is aware of where the camera is and knows that he is making a movie all the time and whatever he is going to improvise would be good to get on film. He is very aware of what is going on, and is a real team player as far as making the



Bradley Cooper, Zach Galifianakis and Ed Helms.

movie goes. We did this shot where I tilt down from his face to get right down to his pants as he drops his pants to reveal this silly wardrobe and he is one of those actors that helps you with that timing—you don't really have to say anything; he knows. All I'd have to do is say, "Zach, I am going to start on your face and tip down. If you feel the camera go down, that is when I get to see your butt." He made it work on the first or second take.

They all were like that; they were great. There was always such a fun positive energy on set because of the actors.



Photos by Frank Masi. © Warner Bros Pictures and Legendary Pictures. All rights reserved. Thanks to Karen Beck for her help with this interview.

A man in a white shirt and dark tie stands on a stage, gesturing with his hands. The background is a dark, textured wall with a bright light source behind him, creating a silhouette effect. The floor is dark and appears to be a stage with some equipment visible in the shadows.

George Richmond on operating *Nine*

interviewed by
Steve Fracol SOC

I had never worked with Rob Marshall or Dion Beebe before. My understanding was that Dion interviewed a bunch of operators and I got lucky.

What camera support equipment (Techno/Steadicam/stabilized heads) was used for the show and what were its advantages for this particular project, being a huge musical and all?

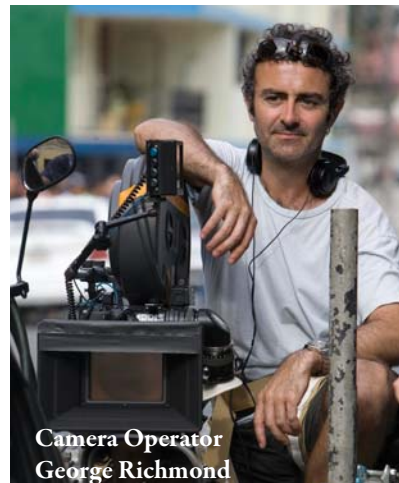
We used some Steadicam, but in general Rob preferred the urgency and feel of the handheld camera. We used a mixture of 30 and 50 ft Technocranes, mainly 30s. We used the Scorpio stabilized head on the cranes (which Dion allowed me to choose.)

Describe a typical shot/scene set up.

For all the dance numbers, the music tracks were played back and lighting cues were set up with Time Code so the operating was “old school.” We always had to figure out how to be at the right place at the right time. I always referred to it as “analogue” operating. We would then finish the number by shooting detail or picking up any of the bits that we could not get during the full run throughs.

Did you get to rehearse much? How does that affect your work?

For the musicals, there were full rehearsal and lighting days which we watched but did not rehearse with the cameras. On the shooting days, we generally started to shoot as soon as the



Camera Operator
George Richmond

dancers were up and running so as not to waste their energy.

It was pretty much the same with the drama, always ready to shoot when the actors were. It seems to be the way these days—not much rehearsing takes place and I’m pretty used to it and comfortable with it, because when things go wrong it’s nobody’s fault. Once you can feel comfortable with that, it allows you to be more adventurous.

The concentration level around the camera was high—all the actors and Rob demanded it. And with so many Oscar winners around us, who were we to argue.

When we were shooting the numbers, I would typically start wide—with the other cameras on longer lenses but at roughly the same distance as my camera. Then we would move the cameras closer and shoot medium. Then closer again to shoot the tight shots.

All this time, the number would run from beginning to end. In the process, we would learn the beats and the timing. My grip and I were always connected with open headsets and had a continuous dialogue, and also learned to count eights as the dancers do to help stay in time with the number.

What made this project stand out from previous projects?

Obviously what made this project stand out was that it was a musical. I remember telling Rob that ‘these films rarely cycle past London,’ so we considered ourselves really lucky to be doing it.

Ultimately what really made this project stand out in the end was working with Rob, Dion and Daniel. They were amazingly talented and that encouraged me and the crew I work with to step up a notch and try to be that much better.

What are the challenges to operating Steadicam?

My greatest personal challenge while operating Steadicam is the weight. I’m only 150 lbs and 5’10”, so managing the time wearing the rig is important. I try not to wear it anywhere on set outside a rehearsal and between the words “action” and “cut.”

Technique is everything if you are not big and strong. A good technique is the most important thing with Steadicam.

What do you say when a neophyte asks what it takes to be an operator, and do they need to do Steadicam?

As far as advising new operators goes, I would say you need to try a Steadicam on before making any decisions on whether to do it. You really need that to decide if you want to do something that physical. You certainly don’t need to operate Steadicam to be an operator!



Photos from *Nine* by David James © 2009 The Weinstein Co.

Previous page: Guido (Daniel Day-Lewis) agonizes over starting his new film in the musical number “Guido’s Song.”



Saraghina (Stacy “Fergie” Ferguson) and dancers perform the musical number “Be Italian.”

Dion Beebe on Shooting *Nine*

As with any project, my visual approach is led by the script. With *Nine*, the setting was 1964 Rome, a visually dynamic time in art, fashion and cinema. I wanted to capture some of the energy and style of the period.

There is the obvious use of black & white, which defines the period in many ways. We did discuss shooting all the scene work in B&W and only utilizing color for the musical numbers, but we decided against this approach as we felt that it would create too dramatic a visual separation between the two worlds.

Instead, we opted to weave the B&W into both the story-telling elements and the musical numbers. We gave ourselves a lot of dramatic license with the musical numbers which play as pure fantasy. With Rob, the emphasis is always on the lighting as this is a tool he understands from working in theater.

The use of darkness and shadow are important and for the operators, using the volume of the stage and composing with negative space is important to me. I love those moments in a movie when the characters are both emotionally and physically dwarfed by the task they face, as when Guido first enters the sound stage in the beginning of the movie.

What do you look for in an A-camera operator?

When I put a crew together for a film, the choice of A-camera operator is key. Yes, I need to see a certain shared sensibility in their work, but what is also crucial is the overall social dynamic that needs to exist on the set. If there is too much of a clash of personalities, it can distract from the work. At the same time, I don’t want a docile crew.

I like to be challenged. That crew dynamic is important to me in all positions on the set. I like to interview all my potential crew, not to access their skill level, but just to talk and get a sense of their personalities. I was very happy with how things worked out with George.

What was it like working with your brother Damien for a second time as your B-camera operator?

Damien is a great team player and has been operating longer than I have been working as a DP. He obviously brings a familiarity to the set. And though he is my brother, he clearly understands his role on set. He also has great instincts and I know that I can rely on him to watch the set and anticipate what may be required of the B-camera. Of course, as I said earlier, I am always up for a challenge.

What camera package/lens package was chosen and why?

George wanted to work with ARRI cameras; I will always consult with my operators as to their preference. They are the ones that need to make the equipment work and pull off the shot.

We used an ST and an LT, as well as the 235. However,



Director of Photography Dion Beebe on *Nine*.

DAVID JAMES © 2009 THE WEINSTEIN CO.

I wanted to shoot the movie on the Panavision primos, so we combined Panavised ARRIs with Primo zooms and primes.

I consulted closely with George as to his choice of camera support. Technocrane was an obvious choice as it allows us to work close to the dancers without laying track under their feet.

A lot of decisions when making a dance musical revolve around how best to accommodate the dance. We also made use of a lot of handheld, which was some-

thing I wanted to incorporate stylistically from the outset.

Tell us a little about your experience with the crew of *Nine*.

Aside from Damien and Chas Bain, who did some C-camera operating for me, this was an entirely new crew. But once I have confidence in the crew’s abilities, my choice is fundamentally based upon how I feel they will work as a team.

Those choices are also affected by who my director is, as different directors require a different on-set dynamic. We had a great on-set dynamic on this film and I really feel that translates onto the screen.



Matthew Moriarty on operating *Up in the Air*

interviewed by
David J Frederick soc

The arrival of Natalie Keener (Anna Kendrick) complicates Ryan Bingham's (George Clooney) work life.



I think everybody involved with *Up in the Air* knew the film would be special. The script was fresh and wonderful, the performances were pitch-perfect and Jason is a textbook auteur. But it absolutely hit the jackpot on timeliness. We were shooting in St Louis during the big market crash (March '09). First AC Zoran Veselic and I are very close friends and we'd agonize together each morning over the stock quotes appearing on our iPhones. But then we'd spend the rest of the day chronicling the effects of that very crash and I can tell you the irony wasn't lost on us. I mean, it isn't often that simply doing your job reminds you of how lucky you are to have that job and I'm sure everyone on the crew was thinking the same thing: "This is probably a pretty good movie to be making right now."

What does a typical shot set-up process with director Jason Reitman entail?

For someone who's making these deeply human movies and developing a reputation as an "actor's director," Jason has an extraordinary visual sense. I'd say 90% of the time, my job was simply to execute shots he'd either lined up with the video finder, or shot on his Canon still camera two months earlier.

He'd operated much of his own work in the past and is very specific about framing. So being able to see what he was doing on the video finder was essential, especially since he and I have very different tastes compositionally.

He also likes to move really fast. The "George-whizzing-



Camera Operator Matthew Moriarty, star George Clooney and other crew members on an airport escalator in Omaha.

through-security" sequence was something like 30 cuts. To beat the arrival of morning passengers in the terminal, we ended up averaging one bookable setup every six minutes for three solid hours. That's an extreme case, of course. But I'll say that speed was, in general, a high priority for us and the



Filming in Detroit.

video finder helped put several departments on the same page in a hurry.

Did you get to rehearse as much or as little as you desired?

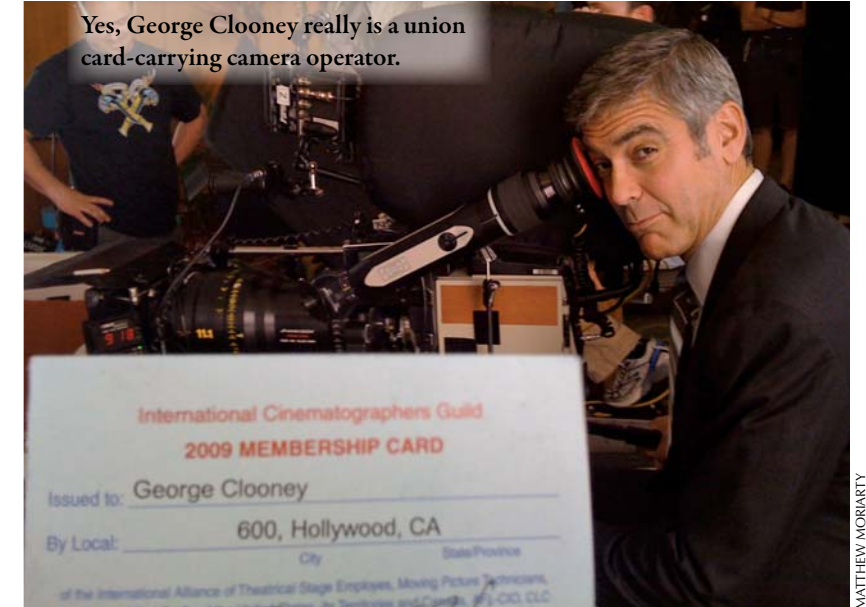
Jason's big on spontaneity so we mostly shot the rehearsals. Many of them made the finished film.

Jason Reitman is known for his love of operating sometimes on past films. How much did he do on *Up in the Air*?

Well, he operated quite a bit of the 2nd unit stuff of planes touching down, most of which was done before I was on payroll. But I can't recall him actually operating a shot on the main unit and certainly nothing on the A camera or anything with a performance involved. We joked about how much he'd operated his prior films so I was emotionally prepared in the event it did happen. But he clearly said that he'd come to realize that his attention and energy were better used elsewhere. I don't take any particular credit for that since the guys who did his other two movies are top-notch. I think it had to do with his evolution as a director (or the fact that he doesn't use wheels and he loathed my Sachtler head).

How involved were you in the blocking, the shot conception and picking the locations?

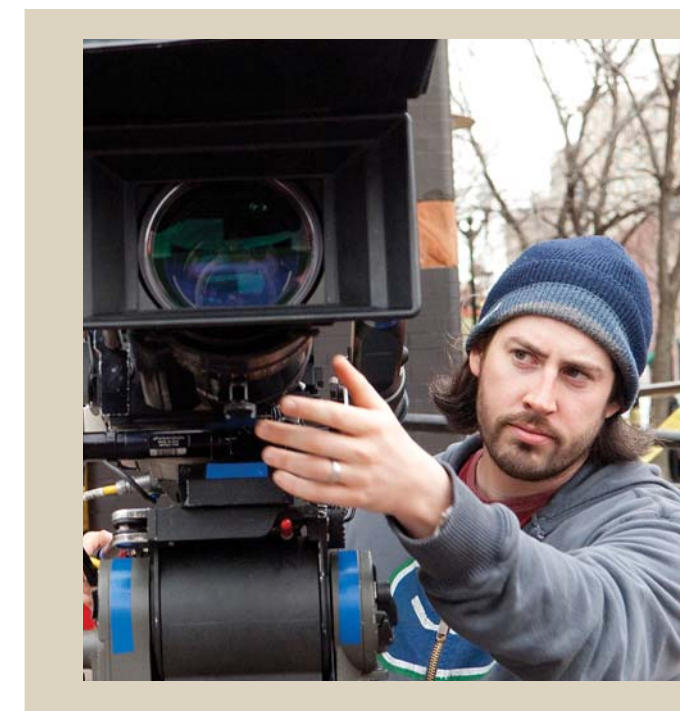
The main unit stuff is all Jason on every level and, as the operator, you follow his lead. My biggest creative contribution by far was the result of my aviation background: I supervised and operated the first round of aerial photography. We began with a super-high-altitude, "Google Earth perspective" concept and very early on I knew it just wasn't



working. You lose almost everything shooting through six or seven miles of thick, early-summer air.

So I decided to roll some passenger perspective stuff of farm fields from about 13,000' and I emailed the clip to Reitman on a refueling stop. He wrote back: "LOVE THIS! Please grab more of this. The patchwork of America." Little did I know, that phrase "patchwork of America" would take on a life of its own and eventually come to form the visual "mortar" of the film.

We had a persistent camera problem on the original outing, so while our stuff was being digitally sweetened, Jason sent up a subsequent mission to supplement our work and those guys did a wonderful job. However, a good portion of the aerials in the film do indeed come from my original flights and it was extremely gratifying to see that work from the second



Working with a camera operator is a very specific relationship for me. I am very specific about lensing and composition. I need someone who can read my language and intuitively knows where I want to look as the storyteller. Matthew's instincts were excellent and so quickly in line with mine. As a technician, he was also beyond impressive. I remember one series of whip pans he performed in a TSA checkpoint that would take a great operator five or six tries. He nailed it right out of the gate... and every take that followed. A camera operator needs to be perfect, so the rest of us can make mistakes. Nobody is in fact perfect, but Moriarty comes about as close as one could hope for.

Jason Reitman
Director, *Up in the Air*



mission largely followed the playbook I'd written. I had a great team on that effort: DP Bob Mehnert, two ace NASA pilots Tom McMurtry and (literally) "Ace" Beall, and an aerial company, Wolfe Air, that bent over backwards to facilitate the whole thing.

What type of camera equipment was used for the show?

I'm a Panavision guy. They're like family to me over there. None of the DPs I work with use anything but Panavision. As a result, I'm a bit of a boob when it comes to ARRI. We used a Platinum and an XL on *Up in the Air*, with the occasional Genesis day and even a bit of RED camera. The 40mm was our workhorse, using the new 19-90 zoom as a prime most of the time for expediency's sake. That's a wonderful lens. Razor sharp and vastly improved breathing over the old 4:1. We shot probably 80% of the movie on that lens.

What was George Clooney like to work with?

Whatever great things you've heard about Clooney, they're all true. He's an absolute gem and a total pro with a wonderful energy and bright and funny and warm and generous.

He's also a director, which means he's a great problem solver on the set. Of course, he did a lot of television and my experience is that actors who cut their teeth in television come out with a skill-set and a camera-savvy that can't be learned anywhere else. I could never say enough good things about George. I mean, the guy is even a card-carrying Local 600 camera operator! I think if he stole my wife away, I'd feel rather silly putting up a fuss.

Of course, I don't want to leave out the other actors, Vera, Anna, Jason, Sam, Amy, Danny, Zack, JK, many of whom are members of "Reitman's Traveling Players" and all of whom were an absolute joy to work with.

What is your previous working relationship with DP Eric Steelberg and director Jason Reitman?

My first picture with Eric Steelberg was *(500) Days of*

Summer and we hit it off like two peas in a pod, especially with both of us being pilots. We sort of worked British-system and, in terms of the shots and the coverage, *(500) Days* contains more of my ideas than anything else I've done. It was heavenly for me and I know Eric enjoyed working the way we did, particularly because it freed up energy he could then devote to his lighting, which was exquisite and very gutsy. We had a great partnership and I was thrilled for both Eric and *(500) Days* director, Marc Webb, to see it received so warmly.

Eric also has wonderful taste in material. He's at a very exciting point in his career now where he's getting a lot of scripts and I really admire the savvy with which he's handling it. Beyond his lighting and his skill on the set, he's got an incredible wisdom and maturity and he's putting it all to good use charting his path forward. You'll be hearing a lot about Eric in the coming years.

Up in the Air was my first picture with Jason Reitman. I would love to do another one.

Considering your organizing, communicating and composing responsibilities, do you still feel indispensable on the job—both to the DP and to the production?

The most expensive thing on the set is time. The bigger the budget, the truer that statement becomes. So the benefit of having an operator is quite simple: Operators save time. We're at the camera, guarding the setup, while every other person, including the DP, is doing his or her business. It's a level of attentiveness that simply can't be had without a single individual consistently anticipating the needs of the shot and warding off potential disasters before they materialize.

Since you're a Steadicam operator, what do you say when a neophyte asks what it takes to be an operator, and do they need to do Steadicam?

The question of whether or not to do Steadicam is a personal one: Do you like it? Could you be good at it? Are you willing to drop the cash?

I will say, however, that with budgets shrinking, producers often try to



Company downsizer and frequent flyer Ryan Bingham (George Clooney) finally meets a woman with a similar case of corporate wanderlust, Alex (Vera Farmiga).

day-play their B-camera crews, or have the DP operate the B camera, as was the case on *Up in the Air*. At the same time, their directors (and many DPs) do want the option of using Steadicam on a whim. As a result, you're seeing a lot of A operators doing both. I'm not saying it's a necessity, but it does broaden your possibilities in terms of which shows are available to you.

Most importantly, though, newcomers should understand that every job, Steadicam or otherwise, will be a product of his or her relationships. Developing those is as crucial a skill as doing a good, fast stand-up.



Up in the Air photos by Dale Robinette © 2009 DW Studios LLC and Cold Spring Pictures. Crew shots by Dale Robinette © 2009 Paramount Studios. All Rights Reserved.



A high-angle, top-down photograph of Chris Pine as James T. Kirk. He is lying on his back in a snowy, icy environment, looking up with a slight smile. He is wearing a dark, textured jacket and a large, brown, tactical-style backpack. The scene is lit with a cool, blueish-green light, creating a cinematic and atmospheric feel. The snow is piled up around him, and the texture of his clothing and the backpack is clearly visible.

Colin Anderson, SOC
on operating
Star Trek

interviewed by
Dan Gold SOC

Background: Chris Pine as James T Kirk in *Star Trek*

I had worked with both Dan Mindel and JJ Abrams on *Mission Impossible 3* and with Dan on a couple of pictures before that. Dan runs his department more along the lines of British DPs. He takes a step back and lets the operator and the director talk about setting up shots, planning the scene. As a camera operator, it is so fantastic, it's so rewarding. It takes the operator's job up so many levels.

As you know, often you can be left in the background as an operator. Everything gets decided without much input from you and you're left trying to pick up the pieces.

Whereas with Dan, it's just the opposite. The collaboration is just incredible. He'll step in as well and make suggestions and say, "This would be wonderful," and it becomes a whole group discussion. It's incredibly rewarding; you feel that you've really contributed something.

Was there an overall visual approach to the movie as it related to your job, any plan as far as composition or camera movement?

I can't remember a specific plan, but JJ is an incredibly

right into the lens, doing as much as possible to flare the shot.

It gives the film such a nice texture that's consistent all the way through.

I heard JJ explain it once. You have this very artificial world that you're filming in, on sets, in space—a lot of it is visual effects, green screen. It just adds this layer of unpredictability, almost a sort of analog effect into this digital world.

So you did shoot anamorphic as opposed to Super 35?

It was anamorphic. We used the Panavision AWZ and the ATZ zooms almost exclusively; those were our go to lenses.

Can you think of a specific set up to illustrate how you and Dan and JJ worked together to help make a sequence successful?

There was one situation where they're sky-diving—we were on the floor of the tank at Paramount. We were going to hang the actors upside down off rigs, sort of swinging, and shoot up at them as they are sky-diving down toward us. But it proved



Chekov (Anton Yelchin), James T Kirk (Chris Pine), Scotty (Simon Pegg), Bones (Karl Urban), Sulu (John Cho), and Uhura (Zoë Saldana).

INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC

tenacious filmmaker. He loves setting up shots that develop and will often spend a lot of time setting up a fairly elaborate shot whether it's Steadicam or Technocrane or a dolly shot. It doesn't matter what platform we're on, he'll take a lot of time setting up a shot that goes somewhere without doing the traditional master, over, over. From a style point of view JJ loves things to flow and let the story unfold.

You've probably heard a lot of talk about the flaring we used.

Yes, I wanted to ask you if that was an intentional choice.

It was, yes. It became a huge part of the movie—almost every shot. It was extraordinary. I think it was a very brave move to do that, right from day one. We spend most of our lives trying to eliminate flares, especially anamorphic flares. And sometimes with the older anamorphics like the C series lenses that we use on the Steadicam, people would say "Oh there's light hitting the glass. Let's get rid of it." But instead we would have people literally blasting these xenon flashlights

completely impractical because you have to have them hanging by the ankles, very unrealistic. You know you can't really move like that. JJ came up with the idea of putting them on mirrors. We built a 10 foot scaffold and put these mylar mirrors on the floor of the tank. We'd have the actors standing on the mirrors and we would be shooting down at them from the platform. So the mirrors were reflecting the sky and we'd blow a lot of wind down on them. I'd be handheld above them hanging off the platform and they'd be looking up into the lens. It was as if they were falling because the sky was reflected behind them.

It was very awkward holding the camera. You know what it's like when you're shooting vertically with a handheld camera. It's difficult to hold it especially with JJ standing over you, grabbing the magazine and shaking it with all his might.

JJ?

JJ. Yes. He did it more times than I can remember through the course of the movie. He would grab the magazine and just



Camera Operators Colin Anderson and Philippe Carr-Forster with Camera Assistant John Connor capture a tense scene.

ZADE ROSENTHAL / PARAMOUNT PICTURES

shake it like crazy, simulating high speed, or maybe hits to the Enterprise when it was under attack. I can't describe to you how hard it is to frame, especially with the Steadicam because it goes against everything that the Steadicam was designed to do.

He did that with the Steadicam?

With the Steadicam (*laughing*). I'd be walking along with the Steadicam and JJ would be slapping the magazine. With the Steadicam, your hand on the post is supposed to be an incredibly light hand, transmitting no influence to the frame, and the opposite was happening. I'd have to grab the post with all my strength just to keep the actors in the frame while JJ was manhandling the camera.

When you did traditional handheld, what sort of approach did you have? Did you inject movement into the shot or try to keep it as solid as possible?

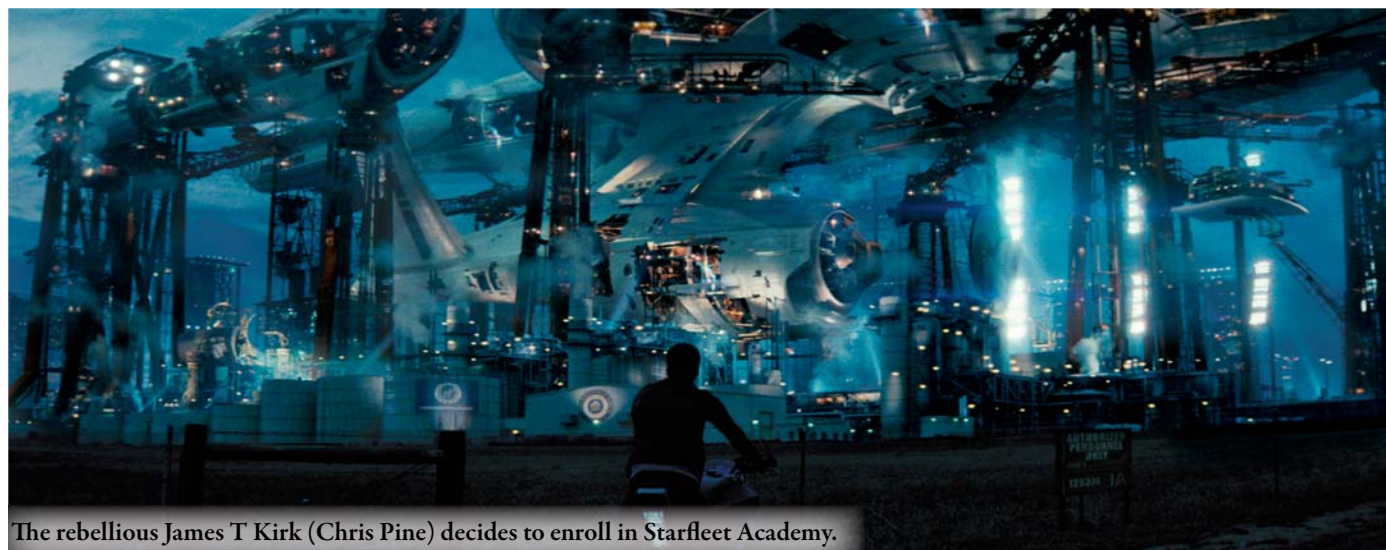
Most of it was pretty rough handheld because we'd go to it for fights or the battle sequences. I prefer to use the handles on the handheld rig, though I know a lot of guys prefer to use the matte box.

There are quite a few shots using dutch angles as well as Steadicam shots that start with the horizon way off level and straighten out as the shot develops. Were these all carefully designed and discussed ahead of time?

Absolutely. Often rushing down corridors of the various spaceships, JJ would specifically ask me to start at a huge dutch angle and swing it left and right as we were traveling down. And often on a very wide lens—we would use the 28 which for anamorphic is a pretty wide lens. We'd be rushing through these corridors purposely dutched at these massive angles. Dan, you noticed them because you obviously have an educated eye, but I often wonder if the public actually notices or if it's just a subliminal thing.

Handheld, dolly tracks, Steadicam, Technocrane. You obviously had all the toys on *Star Trek*. Do you have a favorite technique that you enjoy most?

Selfishly, I have to go with Steadicam. Because, especially with JJ, you're always doing such interesting shots. It's not just a traditional "walk and talk." With JJ there's always some curve ball he'll throw at you just to make it more complicated



The rebellious James T Kirk (Chris Pine) decides to enroll in Starfleet Academy.

INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC

When you watch the movie now, does it seem like a lot of the shaking and vibration was added later by visual effects or does most of it come from what you and JJ were doing on the set?

I think it was mostly what JJ and I were doing. JJ still teases me to this day about something that happened on *Mission Impossible 3*. Dan Mindel loves watching dailies. We'd watch film dailies every day. So one morning, having watched a helicopter scene in dailies that involved a lot of shaking, I arrived on the set and JJ asked how the dailies were. I said "JJ, I have to be honest with you—I think 90% of it is unusable. The shaking is just horrendous. It's too much." He went to dailies at lunch time and came back and never stopped ribbing me because he absolutely loved it and thought it was absolutely perfect.

And a lot of that carried through to *Star Trek* where I'd say, "JJ, it's too much." And then of course he'd shake even harder.

and always a better shot. By the same token, I enjoy Technocrane as well because it's always an elaborate shot; you're not just doing a high and wide shot.

Phil Carr-Forster was the operator on this one particular 50 foot Technocrane shot. The Narada set filled the entire stage at Paramount and the shot just went on forever. We had this huge crane flying around at full speed. There were 6 or 7 grips running, pushing the chassis, chasing Eric Bana through the set. It was just quite extraordinary watching this massive bit of equipment being thrown around the way they were doing it.

Phil was the B camera operator. What was the A camera/B camera dynamic like?

Phil Carr-Forster is one of the most perfect guys to have on your team. I used the word tenacious to describe JJ; I'd say the same for Phil. He will find a shot anywhere. Sometimes it seems like he's completely shut out on a shot because the



Camera Operator Colin Anderson frames the Enterprise set.

ZADE ROSENTHAL / PARAMOUNT PICTURES



Anderson and Director JJ Abrams film Kirk.

ZADE ROSENTHAL / PARAMOUNT PICTURES



A camera or Steadicam is all over the show, but Phil will find something and get the most amazing shot. His long lens work is phenomenal; he's truly gifted.

Is there anyone else you particularly enjoyed collaborating with on *Star Trek*?

John Connor is an extraordinary first assistant cameraman. He's one of those guys who, with the least amount of input, just gets it. We do some incredibly hard shots these days, and being a first assistant is one of the most difficult and least understood jobs on the set. Connor is just phenomenal, you know rushing at the actor's face with the Steadicam on a 75mm, and whipping around and he gets it. It's extraordinary. I don't know how he does it. That's why I gave up pulling focus to do something easy like operate.

Do you have any advice for up & coming camera operators?

I think one thing that's important, and I'm always reminding myself about this, is to pay attention. As an operator there are so many things going on that affect us. So much that can help or hinder us. Paying attention on the set and really being on top of everything that goes on really helps.

Do you miss any of the old traditions that we grew up with on the set which are now falling by the wayside? Like dailies, for example?

To the detriment of the business, film dailies are becoming a thing of the past. It's so sad because you learn so much. And you can never really replicate what the film sees by watching digital dailies on DVD. I also think it's so important to get the whole team together in the morning or after work to study stuff and see what you've done. On *Iron Man 2* Matt Libatique insisted on having a projection trailer for dailies on set. It was so fantastic just to go and watch quickly before work and talk about what we'd done the day before.

Another tradition we see slipping away is rehearsals. Did you rehearse much on *Star Trek*?

We did. We'd have closed rehearsals with JJ, the actors, Dan Mindel, and myself. With Dan and JJ, the operator is always included. It's so fabulous and so valuable to be able to see all that unfold. Then we'd have open rehearsals for the crew.

How does it affect you as the camera operator to be able to see the rehearsal right from the beginning, from the germ of the idea?

I think it just becomes so evident where the camera should be, the longer you see the rehearsal. If it's a closed rehearsal and you're called in at the last moment to see the final rehearsal, it's almost as if the camera position has been pre-determined. You feel like, you wish we had a little more time to look at this and maybe see if there's a better way to do it. It's almost like you've been

handed something if you see it at the very end and then you have to make do with it. Where being in the rehearsal from the very beginning, you can often whisper in their ears, "What happens if we started here instead of over there?"

I've been so fortunate in the last five years or so, to work with people who are prepared to collaborate. DPs like Dan Mindel, Matty Libatique, and Robert Elswit allow so much collaboration, so much input. They respect someone else's opinion so much. I wish everyone could work like this all the time.



Zachary Quinto as Spock

COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES

What's coming up next for you?

Another film with Dan Mindel called *John Carter of Mars* based on an Edgar Rice Burroughs novel. The director is Andrew Stanton who directed *WALL-E* and *Finding Nemo*. Most of the stage work is in London and then the location work will be in Utah. It's a very ambitious project. It should be fabulous because, once again with Dan Mindel as DP, I'll be right in the thick of things.



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Stephen Campanelli soc
on operating *Invictus*

interviewed by
Aiken Weiss soc

Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela and Matt Damon as Francois Pienaar.

It's been 15 years with Clint. He likes to keep people around. I am very fortunate to be with him for that long. Clint worked with Jack Green for 7 years, now he has been with Tom Stern for the same amount of time. Same producer Rob Lorenz. Rob started out as a second AD the same time I started with Clint on *The Bridges of Madison County*. Clint is a great guy; we have a lot of fun.

Was there a specific visual approach to the project?

To be honest with you, I don't think so. On previous projects more so, but on this film we didn't really play around with it that much. There was no real visual style besides capturing the real South Africa: getting a feel for it and its people.

What camera equipment was used for the show and what were its advantages for this particular project?

Panavision Anamorphic, C series lenses for the most part. Very little use of zooms. We like to use primes whenever we can. We had an XL, a Platinum for A-camera with the XL on the Steadicam.

Because we knew we were going to have a lot of aggressive moves, we rented additional gear and ended up using an ARRI 235 on my Alien Revolution. I kept that completely built for 5 or 6 weeks for Rugby Mode, so I could switch back and forth between the XL on one rig and the 235 on the AR. That time saver paid for the extra rental.

That's about it. Clint likes to shoot with one camera most of the time and I was very surprised when we had this massive rugby scene to do and I expected 5 or 6 cameras but it was just me and Michael Snyman for a couple of days. Pretty simple package.



South African Springboks rugby team. Matt Damon as Captain Pienaar.



Director Clint Eastwood, star Morgan Freeman and camera operator Stephen Campanelli SOC discuss a shot in front of the World Cup scores.

COURTESY OF STEPHEN CAMPANELLI SOC

Describe a typical shot/scene set-up.

We have always gone pretty much by the gut. You show up on set, read the sides, walk around the set and say "That looks like a good spot for the camera over there." You shoot the master, let the scene play out and from that you just figure out the coverage.

Clint likes the organic feel of a scene. He lets the actors do what they do best and lets the camera do what it does. We use 80% Steadicam because Clint likes me to feel the scene. If there is a moment where I feel I want to push in, I can just do it.

Basically, just tell the story. That's the mode we have been in for the whole movie. Shooting the rehearsal and sometimes getting incredibly lucky. The actors didn't know where they were going to go, we didn't know what we were going to do.

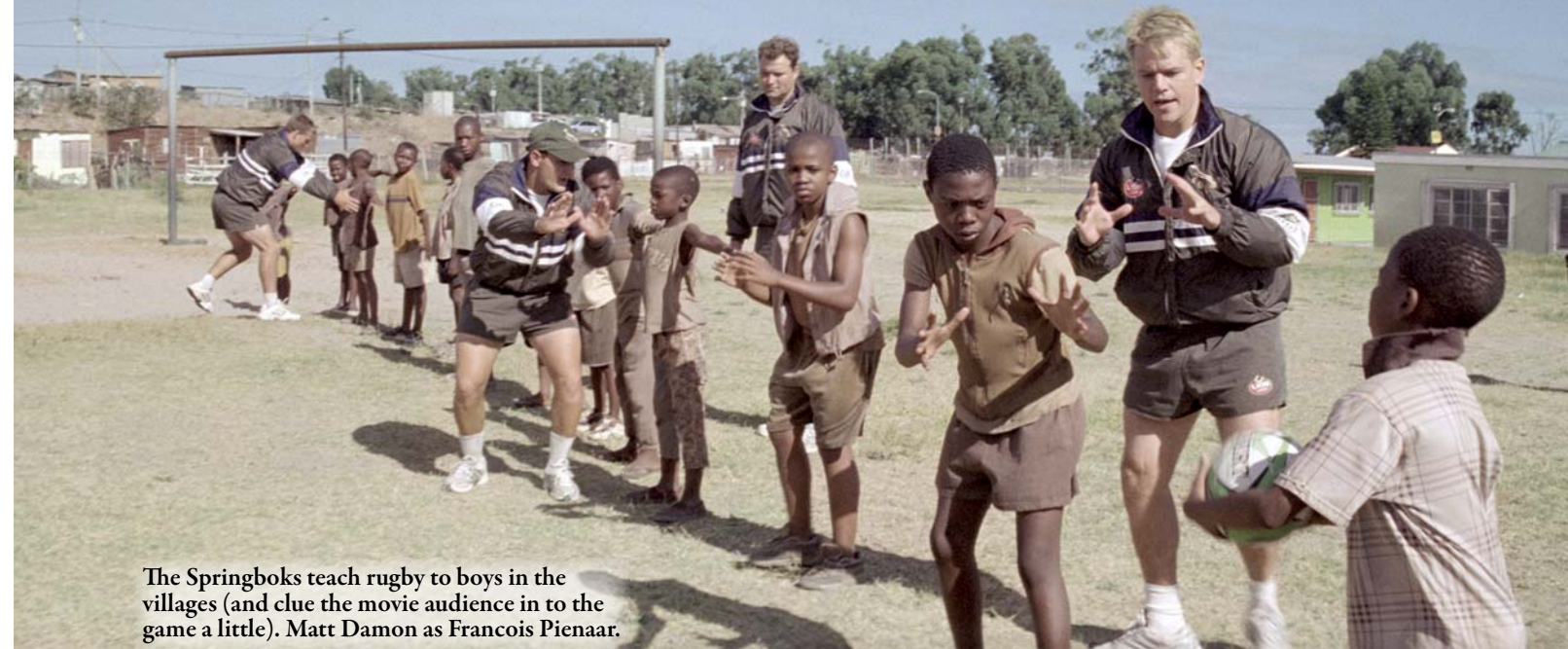
I have an amazing focus puller in Bill Coe and he just sticks with me all the time—which you need if you have a surprise like a push-in on a 100 mm lens (*laughs*).

How involved were you in the blocking, the shot conception and actor rehearsals?

My involvement on set is pretty much hands-on. Clint and I have this great relationship after 15 years where we rarely need to speak. That's communication we don't need anymore.

We just know what the first shot is going to be, what the set up is. Basically, the crew knows how he likes stuff and he rarely changes or corrects things we do. He empowers me and the crew to be creative and come up with stuff.

Tom Stern is great that way too. He will light the set so it is really forgiving. Besides minor tweaks, he accepts certain changes that would make other DPs freak out.



The Springboks teach rugby to boys in the villages (and clue the movie audience in to the game a little). Matt Damon as Francois Pienaar.

It is a great relationship and we all bring our A game.

What would make Clint repeat a shot even though he likes the performance?

A few times I needed another one and he would ask why? I'd say I clipped them a little or gave them too much headroom. He will judge instantly—he is really quick that way. He may say "It's fine; we move on. I loved the performance."

So I go to see the movie and see the clipped headroom and it bugs me, but somebody else may not see it at all. Clint knows that. He just says, "That was an amazing performance."

Then there are times where I really convince him. I tell him it didn't work or it is really not usable and he trusts me. Then he agrees, "Let's do another one." It is this great relationship of trust between us.

Let's talk about monitors. The SOC slogan is "we see it first." How does that apply in your case? Who is at the monitors?

We don't have a video village per se. We have no recording system. We just have these small 5 inch wireless monitors.

In the old days, Clint used to look through the eyepiece. We never had a video assist, even when video assist was



Stephen Campanelli SOC films the Maori war dance used to start a game and intimidate opponents by New Zealand's All Blacks rugby team, which was named for the color of its uniforms.

COURTESY OF STEPHEN CAMPANELLI SOC



Campanelli checks framing of a car camera mount shot.

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getting popular. Actually, we had Panavision take it off our cameras as we never used it.

But there were more than a few times where Clint would be waiting behind me to look through the eyepiece, and when I leaned back, we cracked our heads. He finally got fed up with that, so eventually we got a video system.

There is no video village with a tent and monitors, cable and producers watching. Clint works so fast he doesn't want to move all that. If he wants to turn around, he just wants to turn around and shoot and not move all that stuff. So Clint's usage of the monitor is just for framing. He is old school and while we shoot, he only watches the performances.

The same is true for Tom. The monitor is only a reference and it's all about trust for us and there is a real feeling of ease on the set.

It was the first time in South Africa for you. How was it to work there?

It was great. It is an amazing country and Cape Town is unbelievable, just really beautiful.

The local crews are world class. You can bring everybody we used there to Hollywood or anywhere else in the world. They are really, really good. Great attitude, lots of laughs and fun. Hard workers. They don't get paid very well, which bugs me. They should make much more because they are world class.

The grips are the most amazing bunch of guys I have ever seen. They would lift Fisher dollies all over the set. Pretty amazing. We had a bunch of local camera guys. Really, really good too.

It was a great experience. I'd love to go back and I do stay in touch with a few. Such warm and friendly people.

What made this project stand out from your previous projects?

South Africa stands out. But we were in Iceland before and... Clint takes us to the most amazing locations. South Africa was simply magical though. Such a wonderful country and amazing people.

Describe a particular operating challenge you had on the show.

I have done a few sports movies but I had never done a rugby movie or watched a rugby game. I didn't really know anything about rugby. That was my biggest fear, not knowing how to cover rugby.

Clint puts a lot of responsibilities on your shoulders, so I knew I had to come up with how to shoot rugby and figure it all out. I did a bit of research before I went to South Africa, but when I got there a week early, production gave me a bunch of DVDs of the actual game from the 1995 World Cup to study the actual game we were going



Campanelli shooting on the narrow gangplank of a boat.

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Left: Campanelli is underneath the special platform he had built, filming the silhouette of a rugby scrum against the sky. The white oval with green & blue markings is the rugby ball. Above: A rugby scrum from Technocrane POV.

is doing what and why in the game. Seeing the movie now, I am really proud of the rugby stuff because when you are in it so much, then when you are taken out of it you sometimes wonder, "How did I get that shot? I have no idea..."



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to shoot, the match we were going to recreate.

I met with the Sports Coordinator to see what games we were going to do, trying to figure out where the camera needed to be each time. I had a few rigs built because when the guys get down into the scrum, we were going to do a low angle shot underneath them. With the camera and the lens the camera is already 3 feet high, and the guys are as low as 2 feet. I had a platform built so the guys could be on it and I would crawl underneath it and shoot straight up at the guys.

Then we had a Technocrane shot for the reverse shot over the top of the scrum. We cut from the underneath shot to the overhead shot with that beautiful symmetry of arms and legs.

Besides all that it was important to understand who



Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela; Matt Damon as Francois Pienaar.

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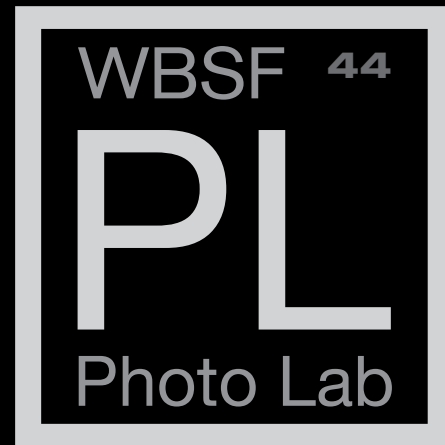


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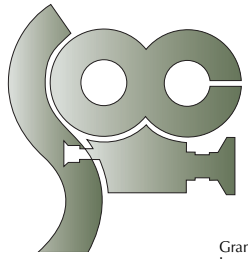
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