

### **Advice on Scripts**

Film makers need to really explore their idea BEFORE they start to write –

- 1) why is this a film rather than a short story etc.
- 2) why is this idea a short film rather than a feature film or tv series etc.
- 3) who is this film going to appeal to.

In terms of writing the script and the director working on the shooting script

- 1) can this scene be told without dialogue
- 2) identify the turning point of the film – what does the audience need to know before this to feel an emotional impact at the turning point? Anything else is superfluous and might be able to be cut.
- 3) Identify the crucial scenes
- 4) If there is a line, scene or element of the story/script that bothers you or doesn't seem quite right take the time to fix it now as it will save you time, energy and frustration later. If you can't fix it look for help from other people, give your script to as many people as are willing to read it for their feedback.

### **Shortlist Package:**

In terms of planning the shoot

- 1) identify the crucial scenes that the film will not work without – story board these scenes and keep reviewing them until they are at the essential elements
- 2) prioritise these crucial scenes in terms of the budget and the time on the schedule – make sure they are not slated to be shot end of day etc. If you have the key scenes in the can and the whole production falls apart something can still be made of the piece with pick-ups and ADR etc.
- 3) go for the most experienced crew you can get – generally on shorts the director is an emerging talent so they should be supported by as much tried and tested experience as possible. (Everybody wants to work with the best new hot director so take advantage of this.)
- 4) Go for the best and most experienced cast you can – take a risk and ask your dream cast first – often well established actors are happy to work on a short for nothing as it is only a day or two of their time.
- 5) Talk through the film with your editor (or any editors) in advance – often they will notice potential problems for the edit in terms of continuity or problematic cuts and may identify where additional cuts can be made (and save you time and money) or where cut-aways are required that are not in the script etc.
- 6) Talk through the film with your sound designer – are there story points that can be told exclusively through sound and don't need to be shot. Conversely do you have enough footage planned to cover any key sound sequences?

- 7) Make sure you have adequate provision made for the cost of sound design and music.

### **Shooting:**

#### On the shoot

- 1) generally people are working for very little or nothing so they should be well looked after in terms of travel and food.
- 2) Treat the shoot as a professional gig where any overtime would have to be paid for and therefore would probably not be allowed – respect your cast and crew and stick to the pre-agreed working hours – you’re more likely to get the crew/cast again.
- 3) If you run into major difficulties tell your financiers, they will try and help you if they can. If you wait until you can’t deliver or are delivering a sub-standard project there is nothing that can be done to right the problem. In this instance the financiers will be pissed off and the trust that they put in you will be damaged.

Overall film making is a collaborative process and all departments have a unique set of skills. The more the film maker can harness and include all of this the better ie don’t be too precious if someone is giving you feedback, listen to it, you can dismiss it later if it is of no use to you.

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