

# A Guide for Indie Filmmakers

Who Know Nothing About Indie Filmmaking

Written By: Adam Rensch

## **Foreword –**

### **Why I became a filmmaker**

I will bore you, but only for a little while, with my own story. When I was in my late teens I had dreams of becoming a filmmaker. There was this film school down in Florida that was offering a \$99 deal that included round trip airfare, transportation to and from the Florida airport, breakfast, lunch, and dinner and a complete tour of the entire school. I jumped on the chance to check out an actual film school! I loved every minute of it except for when they spoke to us about job placement. They said that after receiving your degree, the job you would get would most likely be an entry level position (like a gopher). I didn't want that! I wanted to be a director (I was young)! That was the last time I thought about going to film school. Years and years past and my dreams slowly deteriorated. In the latter months of 2004 I was in a restaurant that I used to work at. I knew many people there including a friend of mine named Mo Wallace. Mo had mentioned to me a few weeks earlier that a film director was going to use her in a small part in his next movie! I was very excited for her and couldn't stop asking her questions about it. So, this one night many weeks later at the restaurant I was talking to Mo and she whispered to me that the director was sitting in the booth next to me. Wow! How cool was this?! I eventually walked up to him and offered my services, and he said that he might use me. He never did end up contacting me about it, but what this did do was spark my interest again. I was back!

I was going to make a movie, but I knew nothing of cameras, editing, and practically anything related to making movies. I have seen my share of special features and the “making of's”, but had never received any formal training in filmmaking. I knew that I could make a movie though; I was very confident of that. I've watched and studied so many movies that I could not possibly list even a third of the movies that I've seen in my lifetime, and I can pick techniques out of them with ease.

It was a boring night at school one night and a thought came across my mind. It was one of those creative “oh, that would be a neat movie” thoughts. I was so bored because I didn't like this class, and so I started writing my ideas down. I suddenly found that more and more ideas were flying out of my mind and onto the paper. My thoughts were flying around so quickly that I could not even write fast enough to get everything down on paper! I had to jot ideas down very quickly so that I could go back and rewrite it later referencing my chicken scratch. It was truly amazing.

I pulled out a book that I had purchased a few months before but had never read named Digital Filmmaking 101 (required item in my opinion), written by Dale Newton and John Gaspard. I started taking my lunches by myself just so I could read that book more. I read it in less than a week and was truly inspired. After reading that book, I now had the basic idea of how to make a movie from start to finish. What Dale and John's book had in it was immensely helpful, priceless actually. What it didn't have in it was the artistic how-to's or the technical how-to's. I was on a mission. I would research and find the best of what I could afford.

I'm done boring you. Let's move onto what I found on my research quest!

## Pre Production

There are a few items that you will find very useful when in the pre-production stage of your film.

- Money... money... money!
- Screenwriting
- Storyboarding
- Blocking
- Scheduling & Budgeting

### *How to raise money!*

How are you going to film your movie without any funding? Yes there are a few ways to film a short film for peanuts, but the idea must be extremely creative and groundbreaking to have any kind of impact. Instead, most films, either short or feature, need funding to work good.

If you are really serious about making your film and you have made a few movies already using a borrowed camera or even a small MiniDV camera you owned, then you should start to think about getting together a proper proposal to pitch. I ran across this gem of a software package that really helps to organize things for you when you are about to do your pitch. It's called "Movie Plan" and you can find it on their website - <http://www.movieplan.net/>. This will be your first step in creating your funding for your project.

At this point there are a few things you can do. You first have to create a budget for your film. Breakdown your script and log every minute item that you think will be in the film. You have to make sure you are over the top with this list of items. If a scene needs a pencil on the desk do not just say to yourself "Oh, I'll just find a pencil when I get on the set (or on location)." My advice is "**be prepared always**". Take this list – do your research and find out how much all of this will cost. Figure out your equipment budget – make a list of all the cameras you would like to get pricing on (how many cameras do you want?), sound equipment (will you go to a mixer or directly to a camera?), lighting equipment (you really need lighting to make your film look good), etc... A good book on this is "Film and Video Budgets". This book has a good overview of the different sections of a budget and it also goes into depth into four different budget types. This book also gives you access to their website where you can download example budgets. After getting your budget then take that figure and use it in the Movie Plan software.

HAVE NO MONEY? – If you need money to make your film, you sort of end up in a catch 22. You want to make the movie but have no money, but people won't give you money unless you have proven yourself by making a movie; hmm. What do you need the money for? You will probably need the money to either buy or rent a camera, lights, editing software, film stock (if you aren't going to shoot digital) and so forth. However if you had money, then you could probably hire someone to perform all of the needed functions (cinematography, lighting, editing...) and could also provide you with the equipment necessary to do these things. Here is my suggestion to those of you who have a zero dollar budget. Try <http://www.mandy.com> and post the positions that you need on that website. You can post 1 post per 30 days for free, but in that one post, you can post multiple positions needed. For instance, if you have a GREAT script, but that's it, then post for a cameraman who owns their own camera. You probably will not be able to find an actual DP (director of photography) as those would need to be paid. You can probably find someone that was like me – a person who had some cash and bought their own camera and is eager to use it! If you have a camera and a good script you will also need actors. Also post on Mandy for your actors. I had a huge success in finding actors for my last short film from Mandy. I had so many applications that I had to hold auditions. If you can find a sound person, that will also be a great help, but it is not imperative that you have one. For your first zero dollar film you can simply use the microphone on your camera. You will hear people say "Don't use your microphone on the camera.", but in my opinion *it is more important to film your movie than to sit and wait until you have enough cash to buy or rent a microphone.* What you can do is to make or find a script that is held indoors. This will give you less wind noise, and you can also shoot mostly close ups so that your sound is of a higher quality. These are all things that are possible to do with just a simple camera.

As far as getting real money to fund your film, there is always the basic "walk up to someone with money and ask for it" approach. How to approach someone is such a wide subject that I cannot possibly do it justice here. All I can say is that you may know someone that may have some money to invest. This person may know a group of others that want to invest and so on and so on. Be brave. Take the proposal that you got from the Movie Plan software and call your friend up. That's what I did, and I wasn't told "no" by the person I approached. I'm working on putting together more information, finishing the script, etc... before our next meeting.

Finally there are a few fundraising organizations that can help you out. <http://www.fundable.org/> is a very interesting idea. I have not used this site, but it was recommended to me by a filmmaker friend of mine in LA. Another similar site is <http://www.fundablefilms.com/> and I also have not used this one, but

again, it looks very interesting. One more book on how to find money for your projects is “Shaking the Money Tree”. This is where I got my idea to have a fundraiser. I did it differently from how the author said to do it and went against his recommendations and basically it didn’t do so well, just like he said, so I would trust what he says.

If you are not the “Type A” go getter type person, then you can always find an Executive Producer. This essentially would be any person that you know who has a lot of guts and isn’t afraid to ask for things. Ask this person if they would like to be an Executive Producer for the film. Offer them opening title credits with his name on the screen by itself (called “single title card”) and also offer him a percentage of the profits. Make sure that this person would be serious when doing this and that this person is ethical. This person will represent who you are and what your film is about. The last thing you want to do is to have someone rude or pushy represent you all over town!

Finally – good luck!

NOTE: I mention this in the must have section but I want to express its importance in this area as well. You may want to check out Dov S-S Simens’ “DVD Film School”. It’s slightly expensive at almost \$400 but the information in it is incredible. If you cannot afford that, he also has a book called “From Reel to Deal” that has great information in it. He will talk about how to get financing in this book and in his DVD film school DVDs.

## ***Screenwriting***

I first researched how to write a script by reading a book on it. It told me the act structure, plot development and everything there is to know about writing a script. I even found a template for writing a script too! I sat down and tried to write it. What a pain! The formatting is so different from anything else I’ve ever written that it’s very time consuming to format a script in a traditional word processing program. I start looking into programs that were specifically created for scriptwriting and came to find Final Draft. While looking at the features that Final Draft had compared to the other scriptwriting software programs, I decided that it would be the one to buy. I found a package deal that came with Final Draft 6 and Syd Field’s Scriptwriting Workshop on DVD. Visit <http://finaldraft.com/> to read more about the program.

I highly recommend getting the DVD workshop. I was brand new to writing scripts and his DVD really helped me get a really good understanding of how to write one. After watching his DVD and doing all the steps he tells you to do, I then sat down and started using Final Draft. I was amazed at how easy it was to write. It's easy to format, you don't have to use your mouse in the middle of writing, and there are quite a few tools built right into Final Draft that can assist in the writing procedure. Final Draft also allows you to save your script as a PDF file. This is one feature that is not found in any other script writing programs that I know of, let alone other programs not geared for this purpose!

Do you need it? If you are going to be writing your own scripts, even if they are only say 10 pages long, then I say YES. You will save countless hours by using this software.

NOTE: What if you aren't a good writer? Then don't write a script. Find someone else's script to film! I got a group of my most creative friends together one night, bought pizza, and sat down and brainstormed. Within 3 days of that meeting I had the outline of a massively original idea that we ended up filming! Also, posting on Mandy.com again is a great way to find scripts. Triggerstreet.com is another valuable resource to find scripts.

## ***Storyboarding Software***

I have not personally used any of these kinds of software. I have not even done a storyboard for my films either. However, after filming my first short film, "So, A Guy Walks Into A Bar" which ran 9 minutes long, I found out why storyboarding is so essential to filmmaking.

Can you do without doing storyboards? The quick answer is "yes". What you must take into consideration though is that without doing a storyboard, you will most likely need to get the entire cast back to film the parts that you just didn't think of while planning the shoot. This exact thing happened to me. I captured my footage and started editing. "WHAT THE HECK!?" I had parts that were completely non-continuous that looked completely awful. As I was editing I had to start writing down notes on which scenes that I had forgotten to film! They were little small incidentals that I had not even thought of and most were transition shots that make the film flow easier to the viewer. For example I had shot a scene where my main character, played by R. Michael Paquette, was driving home from work and

stopped at the bar on his way home. I got the shot of him driving to the bar and then he asked me “Where should I park? The spot that we were going to park is taken.” I told him where to park and I resumed filming. He pulled into the parking spot and put his truck into Park. Then he called his wife to tell him that he had to work late. Now in my mind, this was the footage I needed. As I started editing I noticed that after I cut out the piece where he asked me where to park, there was a HUGE gap in the scene and it didn’t flow easy. I needed a “pick up shot” of him pulling into the parking spot from outside of the truck to fill into the gap. If I would have storyboarded, then I would have never needed to recall the cast and film another shot.

Do you need a software program? Another quick answer is “no”. You do not need it. You can write on a piece of paper and make really bad drawings even, and it will work just fine. What you get when you start to use the software programs is ease of use. Just like the screenwriting software. There are two types of programs; static image programs and 3D “pre-vis” programs. If you are a watcher of special features on DVDs you might have seen some of the “making of” features and might have seen them do something called “pre-vis”. This stands for Pre-Visualization.

A good static image program is Storyboard Quick or Storyboard Artist. There are a great many tools built into these programs that can ease the pain of storyboarding. Check out this programs website at <http://www.powerproduction.com/>.

A good 3D storyboarding program is called FrameForge 3D Studio. This is a little more expensive than the Storyboard Quick program but less expensive than the Storyboard Artist program. This program also allows you to do basic “pre-vis” storyboards. This will allow you to visually see zooms, pans, tracks, and the cast moving right on the screen. This program doesn’t allow you to save actual moving pictures but just snapshots. I’ve recently purchased this program. I really like the interface. It’s fairly intuitive and it’s relatively easy to create your sets and arrange the objects within the sets. I did notice that it is a little slow on the processing. Simply moving an object (person or place) from one spot to another takes quite a while. I’m sure that the reason why it is so slow is that because it is 3D and the computer must arrange all of these objects and it stresses on the computer’s resources. Two things I really liked about FrameForge3D are that it is very fast to render your images, and the other is that the manual is probably the best manual I’ve ever read for any piece of software. You can tell that the company really put forth the effort to support its users and write such a great manual. Overall, I really enjoy the program and don’t regret purchasing it for a single second. I do hope that they may be able to come up with some more

speedy algorithms for future releases though. Visit <http://frameforge3d.com/> for more information on the program.

## ***Blocking***

I can now say that I have officially done blocking on my last film titled Causality Scheme. The blocking was very basic, but nonetheless it was a VAST improvement over my 1<sup>st</sup> film. Blocking is the structure of how your actors move, stop, turn, speak, and how the cameras pick up the action onto film. It's your next step after storyboarding. Per Holmes has created the Hollywood Camerawork 6 DVD set which teaches you how to block and also how to make your shots more efficient as well as more artistic. I highly recommend getting this DVD set. You will thank yourself for purchasing it. I mention this DVD set in the "Other Essentials" portion of this guide. If you purchase anything listed in this guide, get that DVD set.

Blocking makes sure that your camera is setup on the right side of the line (you will know what the line is after seeing the DVD set if you don't know already). It tells the actor(s) to sit down or to walk through a door at a certain time. This is where the director decides that he wants an over the shoulder shot and then a reverse and then it moves out to a long shot.

Blocking is one of the most crucial aspects of filmmaking and I didn't even know it existed until watching the Hollywood Camerawork DVD set. Per Holmes did a great thing when creating that DVD set. One more note to mention – when you purchase the DVD set, you not only get the DVD set, but you gain access to their forum. Per gives you exercises on blocking, (don't cheat by looking at the others' blockings!) and then gives you suggestions. It's a great resource to have.

<http://hollywoodcamerawork.us/>

## ***Scheduling & Budgeting***

"Why would I need to schedule and budget my film?!" you ask... It could mean the difference between creating a film that you simply hand out to your friends, and creating a work of art that gets recognized by your peers.

There are a few industry standard applications for planning and budgeting. Entertainment Partners makes “Movie Magic Budgeting” and “Movie Magic Planning” but EP has created two new products which are even better than the Movie Magic ones. They call them simply “[EP Budgeting](#)” and “[EP Planning](#)”. If you have read the book I recommended “Digital Filmmaking 101” they tell you how to plan and budget your films manually. There is nothing wrong with that at all. However, I like my files to be electronic and I avoid using paper and doing any sort of manual calculations at all costs! I checked out the two EP products and wanted to purchase both products right there and then! That is until I found out how much they cost. Each standalone program costs \$699. You can buy both at a bundle price of \$999.

Can't afford these products? I don't blame you, neither can I. I could see myself putting a thousand dollars to better use – couldn't you? However, budgeting and scheduling are extremely important. Here is what you can do: **DO IT BY HAND!** You will learn your scrip like the back of your hand and then you will probably get sick of your script too! However, when you go to film, you will know every little nuance in your film because of the time spent on breaking down the script, budgeting, and eventually scheduling your film. When you go to school and they teach you how to multiply, many people say “well, I can just use a calculator”; while this is true, if the calculator breaks or isn't available, or if some more complex issues arise that need special attention, then you will be happy to know you have the fundamental skills of multiplication available to you. Apply this metaphor to learning how to budget and schedule your film by hand. Once you learn how to do it and have a little more of a budget the next time, then go and get your software; for now, just do it by hand.

# Production

## Cameras

### Considerations when choosing a camera:

When I first wrote this guide I was writing it for people like me who had no money. I've now made 2 short films and I'm ready for my 1<sup>st</sup> feature film. I have been researching HD cameras like a child takes to eating ice cream (everyone likes ice cream!). While researching cameras I found that when you decide to move to HD, a massive amount of costs start to appear. A production facility needs HD compatible equipment to properly capture, monitor, edit, and deliver your final product. I priced it out and to properly do this, my costs had gone into the low five figures. At this price, which I was willing to accept because I'm going to find funding for my feature, I started thinking "how about shooting on film?" I started researching 16mm cameras – more specifically Super 16mm film cameras. You can purchase a Super 16mm camera for roughly 5 to 12 thousand dollars. Most of these don't have sound so you would need a sound person to acquire the sound during filming or in post. The resolution you get from Super 16mm film is great than that of HD! It also gives you the feel of film because IT IS FILM! When you shoot on film your credibility has just shot through the roof. You step away from the masses of digital cinematographers and into different class of filmmaker. When looking for cameras, Kodak has a nice webpage on their website that talks a little about 16mm cameras. Click here to read about some of the 16mm cameras. <http://kodak.com/US/en/motion/16mm/cameraInfo/index.jhtml?id=0.1.4.9&lc=en>

NOTE: Keep in mind that 1R means 1 side of perforation on the film instead of holes on both sides of the film. By removing the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of holes on 16mm film, you can extend the film to achieve Super 16mm. It is more complex than this obviously but that is the basic idea of 1R film.

If you choose to shoot digital, the biggest thing currently to consider when choosing a camera is whether or not it is HD. SD is still the popular standard but is quickly being taken over by HD cameras. For the low budget Indie filmmaker HD was pretty much out of the question but there have been some excellent advancements which I will discuss in the "HD vs. SD" section below.

#### HD vs. SD:

HD stands for High Definition and SD stands for Standard Definition. You probably have (or hope you have) heard of HDTV's. SD has a resolution of 720x486 pixels. This is what we all knew as TV before

HD came around. HD booms out with either two resolutions: 1920x1080 and 1280x720. As you can see by the numbers, HD is a much higher resolution and provides a much better picture. The advantage is obvious. The disadvantage is a little more hidden. HD is still pretty new and standards are still being discussed. DV on the other hand is 720x480. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DV> for more info on DV and its resolutions.

HD has a new friend in the digital video arena now; HDV. HDV is a compressed version of HD. HDV allows the camera's HD footage to be captured on normal MiniDV tapes. It's captured using the MPEG2 codec which means that it's already compressed HD footage. It's a great format and is starting to be natively supported by many editors. A word of caution is that you may want to wait for the newer cameras to be "out" for a while so that the editors have a chance to natively support them. There is nothing more frustrating than to purchase a brand new camera and not be able to use it!

### Aspect Ratio

With DVDs offering both full screen and widescreen editions, filming in widescreen has becoming more accepted by the common moviegoer. I still know people who say that widescreen is bad because it "cuts off the actors' heads". Nothing can be further from the truth (I did find a few movies that were filmed in 4:3 ratio and they actually did crop the top and bottom of the film to make it widescreen – "Out of Africa" is one of these). Widescreen is the actual footage that was shown at the theatre. Full screen removes the sides of the film so that it can fit the screen of a normal (as in non-widescreen) television without having those black bars along the top and bottom of the screen (letterboxing). In the "old days" video cameras typically were only able to film in 4:3 aspect ratio. 4:3 is the ratio that we all knew as normal TV before the widescreen/HD/DVD revolution. What is becoming more popular is the 16:9 aspect ratio. This is widescreen. Pretty much all professional cameras in the low budget filmmaker's budget are able to film in 16:9. Even most of the low end camcorders have the ability to film in 16:9 as well nowadays. What you want to pay attention to is whether the camera films in 16:9 by default (native 16:9) or in 4:3 by default (native 4:3). Most cameras can do both but it's how they get to the non-native ratio that's important. For example, the Panasonic DVX100 series of cameras film in 4:3 natively. You can produce a 16:9 image however, but what it does is stretch the footage from 4:3 to 16:9. I've seen a movie made with this camera (Broken, a short film by Alex Ferrari – (<http://whatisbroken.com/>), and it looked excellent. On the other hand, the Canon XL2 films in 16:9 natively and cuts off the sides of the footage to create 4:3. Keep in mind that not all expensive cameras can do 16:9. You can purchase a \$40,000 camera

that is just an awesome camera that's made for broadcasting the news, but most of those are made to film in 4:3 ratio. You have to choose the right camera for the job you are doing.

### Interlaced vs. Progressive

Cameras film in one or two different formats: interlaced and progressive. Interlaced footage is where the camera doesn't take full screen pictures of the subject its recording. It takes only half the image, the next image it records is the other half. It doesn't record the top half of the screen and then the bottom, but every other line of resolution. Visit <http://www.100fps.com> for a great explanation on this.

When a camera films in interlaced format, which is commonly referred after the "frames per second" (fps) as an "i" (e.g. 60i). You will most likely see where the lines are being matched up when viewing the footage on a non-interlaced TV or monitor. This is not the format an Indie filmmaker wants to film their movie in. To help mimic the look of film filming in progressive mode helps greatly. Progressive format, which is commonly referred after the fps as "p" (e.g. 24p), captures the entire frame of the image so there is no interlacing involved at all.

Advantage to filming in the interlaced format: the cameras are typically cheaper. Advantage to filming in the progressive format: looks more like film.

### Microphone Inputs

Most good professional or "prosumer" type cameras will offer what's called XLR microphone inputs. This type of input connection allows you to hook up an XLR cable to an XLR microphone. This is important because without it you are at the mercy of the microphone that is mounted directly to the camera.

One option to not having XLR inputs is at least having a microphone input. If the camera has one of these you can purchase an after market converter that will plug-into the small microphone input and enable it to take XLR cables. Beachtek makes these types of converters (<http://www.beachtek.com/>). One thing to note about XLR cables is that they are balanced. This means that no matter how long the cable is, there will be no interference from anything external to it. Non-balanced cables get more interference the longer they are.

Now if your camera does have XLR inputs it is also important to make sure it offers Phantom Power. Phantom Power takes the power from your camera to power the microphone. If the camera doesn't offer phantom power, then you must have a microphone that has a battery power source.

### Is The Size Of The Camera Important?

Does size matter? It sort of depends on what you are going to be doing with the camera. If you are going to make Indie films with it, then the answer is no. If you are going to be producing commercials and might be hired to record conferences and things like that, then the answer is maybe. When you show up to a shoot that you were hired for and open your camera case and pull out a 5 pound camera, the person that hired you might get a little worried or even upset because they expect a professional to have a large camera. I had plans on filming weddings and corporate training videos. The XL2 was great looking and impressive so I had no worries about that. There is obviously nothing wrong with having a compact camera, but it is the impression that makes the larger ones slightly better.

### Alternative Cameras

If you don't have the money to buy one of the cameras that are typically used by the beginner Indie filmmakers, you can still make movies! Just go and get yourself a Canon MiniDV camcorder. They typically all have widescreen mode, but are all interlaced format. If this is the case, and you don't have the money to buy one of the above cameras, get a cheaper Canon and use Avisynth to deinterlace. Try to find one that has a microphone input because if you get that, then you can at least pick up a Beachtek adapter so you can use an XLR microphone. You can still make movies. Remember that if your story is good enough, the format in which you have filmed it in becomes less and less important.

## **Sound Equipment**

I've not done as much research as I probably should have on sound. I will tell you what my experience is and why I've chosen what I have. My first camera was the Sony HDR-FX1 and it had no XLR inputs. At the time I had a little money left over to purchase some decent sound equipment. I had two choices. Since my camera didn't have any XLR inputs, I could have purchased an adapter to plug-into my mini microphone plug-in the FX1 which would give me XLR inputs or I could have chosen to purchase an external recording device. I chose the external device. It was the Marantz PMD670 and it had two XLR inputs which had phantom power and it recorded on Compact Flash cards. At the time, this sounded ideal because this way, the sound man was not tied to the camera man. They could work independently. The bad thing about this is that you have to synch up the footage to the sound. It wasn't too bad to do this, but the thing I didn't like the most was that the quality of the sound, in my opinion, was not as good as I got when I used the microphone on the camera! I have sold the Marantz recorder so I could use that money elsewhere. What did I get with it instead you ask? I bought the Hollywood Camerawork DVD set, which you can read about later in this guide.

If you choose to purchase an external microphone, there are numerous brands you can choose from. I purchased an Audio-Technica shotgun microphone. It came with a shock mount which helps keep the sound of the boom and operator from reaching the microphone. A couple of other brands you might consider are Sennheiser and Azden.

## **Getting the "Film Look"**

This has to be probably the most talked about subject on the net regarding digital video; how to get your video to look like actual film. The answer is "you can't – but you can get pretty dang close!" I was on the search for the Holy Grail... oops – I mean the search for the film look using digital video at one point and I have found my answer. I'll get the film look when I decide to shoot using film. However, if what I want to achieve simply looks more "like" film then here's what I suggest you find.

*Let me first say that what I will be saying pertains to the 3k to 12k dollar range of HD cameras. Get a camera that shoots 24p and is high def. I know that the DVX100 and the Canon XL2 cameras are great (I own the XL2) but to really help achieve that film look the resolution has to be there. That's probably the 1<sup>st</sup> step to getting the film look. The next step you may be thinking is to maybe get something more technically, but actually it is not. The next step is to learn how to light for motion pictures. One of the*

ways the average moviegoer can tell if a movie is digital is that it has, for lack of a better word, crappy lighting. Don't worry, everyone does it at some point – I still do it! I'm always learning how to light my scenes better. The more you do it the better you will get at it. So be it. After you get a camera that can shoot 24p and you now have learned how to light a scene like you would when using film then you might want to consider getting a 35mm lens adapter. The most expensive on the market is called the MINI35 by P+S Technik. This one is the most expensive that I know of. The next most popular, at least here in the U.S. is the M2 by Redrock Micro. You can get a full kit for your camera that uses normal 35mm SLR lenses (any mount such as Nikon, Canon, Pentax, etc... you want) for less than \$1500.

Why get a 35mm lens adapter you ask? The answer is DOF – Depth of Field. Depth of field explained simply is how much can be in focus at a given time. If you have what's called a "shallow DOF" then you only can have a small amount of stuff in focus. If you have a great DOF then you have pretty much everything in focus. One giveaway to a viewer is that small chip video cameras typically do not have the best range of DOF. The lens simply isn't that great on these cheaper cameras. You can take a \$200 still SLR camera's lens and get MASSIVLY shallow DOF from the stock lens. I have a Pentax SLR 35mm camera and just to test the DOF on it, I was playing around with the focus and it was incredible compared to my stock lens on my XL2. What the 35mm adapter does is allow you to put 35mm lenses on the cheaper digital video cameras.

When you attach a 35mm adapter to your digital video camera you now lose some light that was going into your camera's lens and eventually onto the chip(s). What this means is that you need to purchase "faster" lenses to use on the adapter. Faster means wider aperture. A wider aperture means that you will allow more light into the lens and eventually onto the film or chip. For example, if you checked on an online camera store you might see something like this: *Nikon AF 50mm f/1.4D Autofocus Lens*. What this means is that the lens is manufactured by Nikon, it's an "AF" mount type which is your typical Nikon mount, it is not a zoom because it is only showing one number (in this case it is 50mm – if it were a zoom it would say something like 25mm to 85mm – non zooms are typically called Prime lenses), the f-stop is 1.4, and it is an auto focus lens. You will want to turn off the auto focus on these lenses. However, this lens goes for something like two to three hundred dollars. This is a massive savings over normal film lenses considering that an actual film lens (mount type PL, C or B4) usually starts in the thousands of dollars for one prime lens. The great thing about lenses is that they retain their value pretty good and once you are done with one lens, you can typically sell it on eBay for about the same price you bought it for.

So let's say you purchased your affordable HD camera and it is the Panasonic HVX200. You purchased the M2 35mm lens adapter and you purchased three prime Nikon lenses, a Nikon 35mm f1.4, a Nikon 50mm f1.4, and a Nikon 85mm f1.4. Now, what you would normally do is use your 85mm lens for your master shots, you would use your 50mm lens for your medium shots, and the 35mm lens for your close up shots. For the master shot you will use a small aperture. This will give you a great DOF so that most everything is in focus. On the medium shot you will use a smaller (but not too small) aperture so that some of the stuff behind your subject is not in focus. Then on your close ups, and this is how to really help to achieve that film look, you use a really wide aperture such as 1.4 or 2.0 to gain a really shallow DOF and only your subject will be in focus. If you want to get really fancy, then you can purchase what's called a follow focus, Redrock Micro also sells one at a VERY affordable price and it's made for still camera lenses like the Nikon ones I have been mentioning. When you use a follow focus, you have a whip or a dial that takes control of your focus on the camera. If you have done your blocking properly (like mentioned above) then you can plan to rack focus on a shot. This means that you will be focused on one person's face and then when the other person talks (or you want to make the audience pay attention to him now) you rack the focus (turn the follow focus) to change the focus to the new person's face. This is GREAT camerawork that most Indie filmmakers that are making their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, maybe even their 3<sup>rd</sup> film forget to do. It will greatly enhance the film look when doing this.

Many of you reading this guide may be reading it to get tips on how to save money so I have to add this really good news in here. Redrock Micro is a company for Indie Filmmakers. They not only offer the M2 35mm adapter for a great price, but they also know that a lot of Indie Filmmakers do not have even that much to spend on one piece of equipment. If you are a hard worker, they offer a DIY guide on how to build your own 35mm adapter! They also make follow focuses, as mentioned above, for an affordable price and they are also making a matte box which I'm sure will also be at an affordable price. Visit their website at <http://redrockmicro.com/>

There are a few things you can do in post, mentioned below, that will also help you gain the film look so don't forget to read that stuff. Besides what you do in post – it is imperative that you capture the best looking image possible while filming. Do not rely on post. Post production products are great but sometimes they will act as a crutch and really try to avoid that. Pre-plan everything you do and use post where you need to and you will have that film look – or at least very close to film look.

## ***Lighting***

This section on lighting can be as easy or as complex as you want it to be. Do you want to know how to light a film properly? Do this:

- 1) Close your eyes
- 2) Picture your shot with composition in mind
- 3) Can you see the light hitting your subject?
  - a) Yes.
    - i) Then think about where that light needs to come from and put a light there.
  - b) No.
    - i) If you can't picture your subject then start walking around, look at people and places; try to understand how the light hits a person's face while walking under direct sunlight. How does the light differ from that of the same person walking under moonlight or a cloudy day?
    - ii) Try to think about these things. There are a few books, CDs, and DVDs that may also help you learn about lighting which I will mention below.

Hopefully that wasn't too basic, but like I said, it can be as basic or as complex as you want to make it.

There are two types of lighting – hard and soft.

- Hard lighting would be described as light that is not diffused. An example would be a flashlight under a person's face or a fully sunny day shining down. This will cause very precise shadows.
- Soft lighting is the total opposite of hard lighting (hence the name) where the light is diffused. Clouds are the perfect natural diffuser. An example soft lighting on a set would be to take a very powerful light and put a white bed sheet (don't use a bed sheet as it might burn) in front of it. This causes the shadows to be much less defined.

There are a few great resources available to use to learn more about lighting. All of these items can be found at the American Society of Cinematographers' wonderful website <http://www.theasc.com/>. I love this website and I've also subscribed to their incredible magazine. Check their store on the website and look at the "Instructional" books, CDs and DVDs. I picked up "Art of Lighting for Film" by Kodak, "Kodak Master Class Series: Shooting For Drama with Robby Muller and Peter James", and the book "Painting With Light". I really enjoyed all three but I highly recommend the "Art of Lighting for Film".

TIP: Check out <http://www.pyramid-films.com/>. They sell used lighting, grip, camera, and all other used film equipment. Instead of viewing the items on their website, just call them and tell them what you are looking for. They will set you up with whatever you need!!

# Post Production Equipment

## ***Editors***

### Considerations When Choosing An Editor

I would say that one of the most important things to consider when choosing an editor is cost and value for your dollar. You can purchase a basic editor for around \$100, but this will not have the features that you will need, I guarantee that. The bare minimum you will spend on a decent editor is around \$400. What you want to look for in an editor is format acceptance. Most of the editors I'll mention below can all handle HDV now, but it was a frustrating experience to have an HDV camera without support for it. This will happen quite a bit when new technology comes out. I had the HDV camera but there were no editors that could natively edit it. One thing I have to say is that Avid by far is the one that you have to wait the longest for to support the new technologies. It's not a really bad thing though because they like to make it the best that you can get. Apple on the other hand is very good about supporting new technologies. The quality with Apple is also very good, so it's more of a preference between Avid and Apple. I'll break this section into the different makers of the editors starting with Avid.

### Avid Family

Avid makes quite a few different options for the Indie filmmaker to choose from. The biggest thing I can tell you about Avid is that it is the most popular editor there is. Not just Indie filmmakers, but even the pros in Hollywood use it. It took me a little while to finally learn how to use it efficiently, but after learning it, I love it. Avid has software in the prices ranging from free to over \$100,000.

### Adobe Family

Adobe is a great alternative to Avid and is used widely by the Indie filmmaker group. Adobe offers either just the editor, Premiere Pro, or a suite which comes with some other very nice programs.

### Apple Family

Apple has become one of the premiere video solutions around. They created Final Cut Pro, and it has gained huge recognition in the filmmaking industry. I've had people ask me why if I had the money to buy an Avid system, I didn't go the Final Cut Pro route. I would reply, "Well, I would have, but I don't have a Mac." The only issue with using Final Cut Pro is that you need a Mac. Macintosh computers are typically more expensive than its PC counterparts. If you are a student, Apple offers a decent discount off of their computers so surely check into that! Final Cut Pro comes in one package – Final Cut Studio.

This is by far the best value around on any platform (Mac or PC) in my opinion. The studio comes with FCP plus it comes with a DVD creating software, a music program called Soundtrack, and an effects program named “Motion”. The newest addition to Final Cut Studio is a color correction software called “Color” (tricky name!). I have a neat story that goes along with this new software package. I went to a demo for Apple compatible products in 2006. While there, I saw a demo of a color correction software that floored me. It was an amazing piece of software called Final Touch. There was a Da Vinci professional colorist at the demo as well and he said that when he used this digital program, that he was also floored by what it could do. After the demo I asked how much this program costs. They said that the SD version ran at \$1000, the HD version was \$5000 and the 2K version was \$25000! Well, I didn’t have the money for that! I was sad that I was not going to be able to use this amazing piece of software. Here’s the good news. Apple bought the company that made Final Touch; they have renamed it “Color” and have added it to the products in Final Cut Studio! How much did they raise the price for FCP Studio you ask... not a penny. I love Apple! The only thing that FCP studio doesn’t come with that the Adobe Video Collection comes with is Photoshop and a professional compositor. Apple’s professional compositor is “Shake”, which you must buy separately but does amazing work when used properly. See the short film “Broken” for an example of FCP in action along with “Shake”.

### Sony Family

Sony is a great option for a filmmaker on a limited budget. You can purchase just the editor or the bundle package that comes with a DVD creating software. Sony Vegas is a relatively young editor, but has gained a very large audience. I’ve seen some products done by Vegas and they look great. I’ve not personally used the software so I don’t know how user friendly or intuitive it is, but I do know that there are quite a few people that enjoy using it.

### Other Editors to Note

There are a few other editors out there for the Indie filmmaker. Avid just bought out Pinnacle but that is more of a consumer type program that I have no experience with. The new Avid/Pinnacle products can be investigated on Avid’s website [www.avid.com](http://www.avid.com). The other main editor to note is Canopus. I don’t know much about this editor, but they offer software only solutions as well as software/hardware solutions. I’ve heard great things about the Canopus software but have never seen a product from it or used it. You should however know about it.

## ***Deinterlacing***

If you cannot afford a camera that shoots in progressive mode, there is an option available; deinterlacing. The process called deinterlacing allows you to take interlaced footage and turn it into progressive. To help make your footage look more like film deinterlacing is very important. There are a few options for deinterlacing.

- Magic Bullet is a plug-in for either After Effects or some of the more popular NLEs (non-linear editors) that really helps to make your digital footage look like film. You can visit Red Giant's website at <http://www.redgiantsoftware.com>. There are two types of Magic Bullet plug-ins. Magic Bullet Suite and Magic Bullet Editors. Magic Bullet Editors does not deinterlace, the Magic Bullet Suite does deinterlace as well as adds special looks and feels to your film and also adds the feature of converting any footage into 24p! Magic Bullet Suite only works with Adobe After Effects. The suite is roughly \$800 at the time of this writing. (more on MB Editors and MB Suite in the "Color Correction and Looks" portion of this guide)
- DV Film Maker is a deinterlacing tool that is much more affordable than Magic Bullet except it doesn't have the color tools like Magic Bullet does. DV Film Maker costs \$145 at the time of this writing. You can visit their website at <http://dvfilm.com>.
- Avisynth is a free open source program that deinterlaces. This is a great tool and I've seen the results of it. I've personally never used it, but it looks great and it's free! It does not have a GUI (graphical user interface) however and is text driven. The learning curve for Avisynth is much higher than that of DV Film Maker or Magic Bullet but is free. Avisynth's website is <http://www.avisynth.org/>.

## ***Color Correction & Looks***

Recently, since I've decided to stick with MiniDV for a couple of more years, I'm able to really take my budget and do some great things with it. I was going to move to HD this year, but found that in order to make the switch I needed to upgrade so much of my system components that I didn't have the funding available to do the switch properly. I then had the funding however to put towards making my DV footage even more incredible that it already is. I started researching color correction and getting specific looks for my footage.

Magic Bullet Editors – One of the easiest programs to use is Magic Bullet Editors. This is a plug-in which I had mentioned in the deinterlacing section that can take your basic footage and apply certain looks to it. It does more than just color correction however. It can do much more than just your NLE's native color correction tools, one of which is diffusion. Take a look at this website to view their samples of the looks that this plug-in provides - <http://www.redgiantsoftware.com/lookguide.html>. It's amazing how quickly you can change the look of your footage. These looks are not static though. When you apply an effect to your footage, you can then access a massive control panel with many options to completely customize the look to your needs. They offer a demo and this demo is what sold me originally on the product. I highly recommend trying this out. It's a very inexpensive plug-in and Red Giant Software is constantly upgrading their programs and developing new versions, as well as expanding compatibility with the major editors and effects programs.

Magic Bullet Suite – This is also a plug-in, but only for After Effects. This has the same features as the Editors version except that it adds much more functionality as far as correcting your DV footage. It can remove DV compression artifacts, add true 24p motion effects, and more. I haven't personally used the Suite but judging from my satisfaction with the Editors version, I'd be confident to recommend this plug-in. You can read more about Magic Bullet and the many tools that Red Giant Software offers on their website here - <http://www.redgiantsoftware.com/>

Red Giant Software – the maker of the Magic Bullet software packages has created new rival to Color Finesse called “Colorist”. It is cheaper than CF and works very well. Check out Red Giant's website (listed above) for more info and samples of what it can do.

Color Finesse – This is probably the most used actual color correction plug-in to date. It differs from the Magic Bullet programs because it does more of the color correction instead of applying a look and then customizing. I’ve looked into this program as well as one other color correction program called FinalTouch. Color Finesse is close to releasing its next version, Color Finesse 2 and is a stand alone program or a plug-in. It will work with many editors and provides 32bit floating point correction tools. This greatly improves the quality of the color correction done from what you can do in your NLE. If you would use a program such as Color Finesse, you would not do any color correction in your NLE and simply use Color Finesse to do the grunt work for your corrections. You can read more about Color Finesse and download a demo on their website here - <http://synthetic-ap.com/>

(This was my original review of Final Touch which now is called “Color” and is included in the FCP Studio package) FinalTouch – This is a relatively new product and available only for Final Cut Pro. It has gained a quick and steady following as it has been designed by professional colorists. The structure of FT is a little different than what most would expect. Professional colorists work in what they call “rooms” which are actual physical rooms where the work on the footage is done. FinalTouch is structured the same way. You move from room to room with your footage and apply the different types of work to it that that specific room does; e.g. Primary Color Correction and then Secondary Color Correction. I have seen a demo of this program and have to admit that I was very impressed. It is a little more expensive than many of the other color programs. The SD version is \$995, the HD version is \$4,995, and the 2k version is \$24,995. However, if you compare that to what it costs to get your footage put through a DaVinci system (a \$300,000 system roughly), then these prices seem quite reasonable. FT is a great tool but I have heard it has a very high learning curve. I had experience with color correction for still photos and portraits but never motion footage so it would be a little new to me, but I would at least have some color correction experience to help me along.

I’ve recently had the chance to demo FinalTouch HD. I was impressed with the real-time presentation of the footage. However, I was not impressed with the interface at all. The warnings I received about FT having a high learning curve was not as true as I would have thought as I was able to start fixing the colors with ease only minutes after importing an XML export from Final Cut Pro. What is very different in FT is that the interface is not your typical Mac OS X interface so you must first learn how the new interface, and then also on top of that learn how to use the color correction tools. I found some of the controls to be extremely cumbersome. An external control interface is recommended when doing high end color correction and I can see why. Using a mouse to manipulate the controls was not fun at all. I think that FinalTouch has great roots and will eventually become an extremely popular program to use, but at this point it is still a little too young. It needs an interface overhaul in my opinion. I know that SiliconColor markets this program to only a specific group of

people and this interface may be the way to go for them. However, for an Indie filmmaker such as myself, looking for a more high-end program to correct my films on, I may steer away from this program simply because of the interface.

You can read more about FT on their website here - <http://siliconcolor.com/>

UPDATE: Final Touch has just been purchased by Apple so expect some GREAT things with this software! The interface will probably have a huge overhaul and the integration I think will probably get enhanced as well.

## **Compositors**

A compositor takes multiple sources of footage and brings them together. After Effects by Adobe is probably the most used one. AE (After Effects) was used to composite the movie “Hell Boy”.

Compositors are also used to create very cool graphical titles for your films. The neat titles that can float away or animate in and out are done by these types of programs.

Do you need a compositor? It’s a luxury and it’s very nice to have one, but it’s not a necessity. These kinds of programs are used for special effects and cool titles. A low budget Indie flick doesn’t really need these things to make it a good movie. You only need to make a good story and do good camera work and the rest will take care of itself. If you don’t need a compositor and just an effects program there are a few stripped down programs like Boris FX that do just effects.

- After Effects – This is the most popular compositor there is for the Indie filmmaker. It’s available for both MAC and PC platforms and comes with a lot of nice pre-made animations. It also has a huge amount of plug-ins available for it as well. After Effects comes in two flavors, Pro and Standard.
- Avid FX – This program is a variation of Boris Red. I’ve personally used this program with very nice and high quality results. You can get Avid FX if you get the Avid Power Pack or you can purchase it separately.
- Boris Red – This is very similar to Avid FX.
- Combustion – This is a good program I’ve heard. I’ve not personally used this program but you can watch a few videos about it on their website <http://usa.autodesk.com/>.
- Shake – This is Apple’s compositing software. I’ve heard and seen great things from this program. It was expensive however at around \$3,000, but has recently dropped to a nice \$499! Again, a big cheer for Apple!

## ***Music Creation***

Creating music for a movie, otherwise known as scoring a movie/film, is one of the most important things you can add to your movie. When I first showed my short film to my crew it had no music in it at all and they were pretty bored. I told them to not worry and that I will be spicing it up with some music in a few weeks. I had talked to someone that creates music on his computer and he had agreed to score the film. He ended up getting into some scheduling problems and wasn't able to do it when I was ready for the music to be added. I had already scheduled the premiere and sent out invites and I needed music - quick!! Luckily I had dabbled with a few music programs and knew my way around them, but I surely needed some major training on how to use these programs. The two programs I used were Sonicfire Pro by SmartSound and Acid Pro 5 by Sony.

Sonicfire Pro is a very neat program that fortunately came as a bundled package with my Avid software. What this program does is takes pre-made songs that are built from a group of loops. You can have different "feels" or "moods" to each of the songs and this is a very neat tool. I needed music fast like I said earlier and I used Sonicfire to make the intro credits music and the end credits music for my short. They both worked great for what I was trying get accomplished and I was able to create this music in less than an hour! Sonicfire is available for both the PC and the Mac.

Acid is a much more robust program but also takes much longer to create music in that can match the quality of the music created in Sonicfire. What you give up is the speed of music creation when using Acid instead of Sonicfire, but what you gain is much more customizable music. I created one piece of music for one of the scenes using Acid. This took me only a couple of hours and I was able to throw in all kinds of sound effects to add to what I was trying to create. Acid is also a loop based program but what you have to do is put all of the loops together by hand to create the songs. You can hear a few of the songs I created using Acid on my website <http://www.bohoc.org/music.htm>. Acid costs a little more than Sonicfire but is only for the PC. Acid by far is the best scoring software that I've ever used and it is surprisingly easy to use.

There are a few bundle packages for both of these software packages and there are many other CD sets that you can purchase to add to your loop library.

Propellerheads Reason – This is an amazing program for those of you who want to create loop based music and/or create music using your own musical talent. I've already put this on my list of programs that I will be purchasing within the next few weeks. The website for this program, <http://www.propellerheads.se/>, has so much information regarding their programs that it's a very wise decision to visit it and see the power of this program. If I decide to compose/score my own films using this software then I would be getting the Korg microKontrol [http://korg.com/gear/info.asp?a\\_prod\\_no=microkontrol&category\\_id=8](http://korg.com/gear/info.asp?a_prod_no=microkontrol&category_id=8) keyboard to use with it. A very nice feature of Reason is that it has been designed to work with many control surfaces and the Korg microKontrol is one of them. When you switch to a new voice on the keyboard it changes the voice in Reason and visa versa. It's an incredible program and you can purchase it at the SRP of \$499 or cheaper from some online vendors such as B&H. <http://www.bhphotovideo.com/>

## **Software Must Haves**

There are a few essential pieces of software that will help you film your movie. In my opinion you need three programs in addition to the ones I mentioned earlier to help you along your path.

Magic Bullet Editors (or suite) – I mentioned this in the color correction area above, but I have just recently added this program to the must haves. For the amount of money you spend on this program, it is absolutely incredible the amount of work it does for you. If you do not have a large budget, then you really need this plug in. Just click here for an example of what you can do to your digital footage - <http://redgiantsoftware.com/lookguide.html>.

DV Rack – This is a great program made by the folks at Serious Magic <http://www.seriousmagic.com/>. This program allows you to hook up your laptop (Windows only) to your video camera via firewire. What it does is can capture your video directly to your hard drive (this is huge), act as a monitor for the director to view what the camera is seeing (this is huge), and also has a vast amount of tools to assist with things like focusing, color correction, etc...

Compression software – I was also gifted with Sorensen Squeeze when I purchased my Avid software. This is a compression software program that takes your finished product out of the editor and converts it to either streaming video for the internet or converts it to the format that is needed to be used on a DVD. You really will need a program like this. NOTE: If you purchase the Final Cut Studio, you get Compressor, an Apple compression program.

DVD creation software – You don't necessarily need this but if you want to create a DVD to show people then you will. There are a lot of DVD creating software programs available ranging from very cheap to very expensive. If you have chosen to go the route of the Adobe Video Collection or Apple Final Cut Pro Studio then you are already set as these come with DVD programs. <http://www.dvdcreation.com/> has some good information on the different types of programs. Keep in mind that some of the programs are for only SD and some of the newer updated programs have the ability to burn HD DVDs! Apple's DVD program that comes with the FCP Studio can do HD and some of the new Sonic brand DVD programs can also do HD.

## Other Essentials

There are a few other things that I have learned along my travels to become the next Francis Ford Coppola that I need to share with you. I read a few books and have bought a few DVD sets that really helped me along the way.

### Books

Digital Filmmaking 101 – This book is a must read. It's funny and very informative. You will learn how to make a movie from start to finish with this book. They tell you every little nuance that you would have NEVER thought about. I even had a question about which tripod I should get which I emailed them and they responded to tell me that I had chosen a good one. Great book!!

Killer Camera Rigs That You Can Build – This is another great book that tells you how to put together your own cranes, dollies, car mounts, stabilizers, and all that fun stuff. The book has over a thousand pictures to illustrate the exact product you need to purchase and the pictures to show how to put together these pieces to make your rig a reality. I've also emailed the author, Dan Selakovich, with questions and he is super quick to respond and extremely knowledgeable. This is another must have book for the Indie filmmaker. <http://dvcamerarigs.com/>

On Film-making: An Introduction to the Craft of the Director – This book was recommended to me by Dan Selakovich. He said that it's the best book on directing he has ever heard of. The book is comprised of lessons that were taught by Alexander "Sandy" MacKendrick (he directed "The Lady Killers (1955)", "The Man In The White Suit", "The Sweet Smell of Success" among many others). Sandy taught lessons on directing and all of his handouts were put into this book.

### DVD Instruction Sets

There is usually a DVD tutorial or instruction set for your editor. I highly recommend picking one that was created for the editor that you choose to use. I bought 4 DVDs that taught me how to use my Avid software and it taught me so much more than the book I read on it did. It shows you visually how to do things, what to look for, how to color correct, and create special effects. I can't say enough how much these DVDs taught me.

Hollywood Camerawork DVD set – This is a 6 DVD set all geared towards camera work. It tells you how to block your shots, compose your shots, how to create moods using only the camera and not relying on your cast. Think Alfred Hitchcock – he was a master at creating a mood just by using the camera. Many times he would tell his actors to just stand there and do nothing, and he’ll take care of what needs to be done. This DVD set runs about \$479 but when you compare this to a forty thousand dollar film school degree, it looks pretty darn cheap. These DVDs are incredible and will make filmmaking more enjoyable and more intuitive. This is a big must have. [Visit http://hollywoodcamerawork.us/](http://hollywoodcamerawork.us/) to purchase.

Dov S-S Simens’ DVD Film School – this DVD set is incredible. It gives you real life teachings (not theory) about filmmaking. He teaches you everything you will need to know about making a movie, but doesn’t get into detail about art; it’s only geared towards the business of making a movie and how to handle yourself in the different stages of a film’s life.

### Publications

Studio Monthly - There are quite a few excellent publications that I currently read. My favorite is Studio Monthly. This is a great magazine that offers quite a few reviews, how-to articles and many other great areas to read about. This magazine is also offered FREE. All you have to do is visit their website at <http://www.studiodaily.com/> and sign up for the Studio Monthly magazine.

DV Magazine – This is another great magazine and just like Studio Monthly, it is offered for free to filmmakers and videographers. Simply visit their website at <http://dv.com/> and click on the menu item called “DV Magazine” to subscribe. This magazine has great articles, wonderful reviews, and is geared towards the serious professional or hobbyist.

## Film Festivals and Distribution

OK, so now you've created your masterpiece. What do you do now? Two words – “Film Festivals”. There is a great resource out there on the web at [www.withoutabox.com](http://www.withoutabox.com) and you can search for either feature film or short film submissions (or any of the other search options they offer as well). There are a great many prizes out there to be won if your film is good! Remember that you need a press kit, the director's bio and picture, your lead actor(s) bio(s) and picture(s), and cash to submit the film for review.

Distribution information can also be found on the withoutabox website. Another neat website I ran across is [www.microcinema.com](http://www.microcinema.com). Make sure that you have all of your legal forms (location release, actor releases, copyright permissions (if you used any copyrighted material in your film), and composer release. If you don't have these releases, then a distributor won't touch your film with a 10 foot pole.

Good luck!

## Movies to Study

After you watch the Hollywood Camerawork DVD set, go and watch a few movies. I would recommend watching how the camera moves, when the edits occur, and just make yourself aware of the movie. If it's a good movie, then most of these things will be transparent to the untrained eye. You will know if something is wrong in a movie because it will stand out. I'm sure you have seen these movies before. Even if you have already, I highly recommend watching them again, but this time look for those things in them.

Here is the list of movies I recommend:

- Jurassic Park – Look at the little things in this movie like the cup of water that ripples when the T-Rex walks.
- 12 Monkeys – Look at the wild and amazing camera angles and production/set design in this movie. Be aware of how the camera angles make you feel uneasy.
- Lord of the Rings, The Fellowship of the Ring – Pay special attention to the shot composition in this movie. Be aware of the amazing close-ups that Peter Jackson uses in his shots.
- Rear Window – This is one of those movies where Hitchcock doesn't really show you what's happening and he creates the mood strictly on camera work and the storyline.
- The Godfather – Watch this movie to see how the actors are so incredible. This is the epitome of acting ability. As a director, strive for this quality, even if you don't achieve it, still this is your goal.
- Big Night – No special effects, sometimes there are long moments of silence but this movie captivates the audience because of the wonderful acting and storyline. Simplicity can be extremely effective if done properly.

## Conclusion

This guide is a collection of all the things that I have picked up in the year and half that I've started researching Indie filmmaking. Each one of the things I've learned here can be easily researched on the internet or using forums, but what my guide does is tell you, the newbie filmmaker, what to look for and what to research. I hope that what I've written in here will help you and your movie a success! Feel free to contact me with questions or visit my website at [www.bohoc.org](http://www.bohoc.org)

Good luck!