

MEDIA MYSTIC by the white hat

We are in the midst of the greatest revolution of all time, a Media revolution. In case you missed it, no one under 30 is watching Television!

- IPODs
- Webcasts
- Videophones
- Text messaging
- PDAs
- Tivo

THESE are the media tools used by the “under 30” crowd today to get everything from news to music videos and even video blogs!

But analog television, that old-fashioned media that our parents watched when they were growing up, is still very much alive.

In February of this year, President Bush signed an indefinite extension for Analog Television stations. That is because these stations are being utilized, more and more, for programming aimed at our increasingly varied ethnic communities.

Take, for example, Korea Television, which hit some very high numbers recently with a unique programming twist, subtitles in English.

Largely unnoticed by other ethnic groups, “The Golden Age of Warriors” and “Yi shun Shin” had massive viewership World Wide. In fact, “Sabado Giagante” is still one of the most widely watched shows in the World.

So, along with HDTV, regular TV (Analog) lives on.

Add to that the fact that DVDs and independent cable and cable satellite services abound, and you can see why there’s more media than ever!

And it just never seems to stop!

New FLASH memory capabilities mean we will soon have laptops without hard drives!

YouTube, where school aged kids upload their OWN projects for others to look at, just sold for 1.6 billion dollars (.6 billion more than we predicted it would!)

And the big studios and broadcast networks are not sitting idly by while Google co-opts what they feel is THEIR territory. They are already scrambling to make THEIR mark on this “New Frontier”.

NBC’s new site “.itsyourshowtv.com” even offers weekly prizes to encourage moviemakers to upload to their site!

It’s Media madness.

The average IBOOK owner has the editing capability that used to fill two 30’x40’ rooms, and cost 1 million dollars.

So what does this all mean to the budding young Movie Makers out there?

It means that opportunities abound!

This New Media World is bigger and more Independent than ever.

Even the music world, long the Bastian of copyright control, is affected. Now, bands and other music groups can make and distribute their own product, completely bypassing what they see as an outdated and unresponsive distribution system!

So, by the way, can movie makers, writers, photographers...you name it.

So how did we get to this state of media affairs anyway?!

First let us understand how it works.

Whether you're just starting, or have already begun, you must realize these keys. ANY project, If you are still in school take and English Major, understand composition and sentence structure, how periods and comma's work. What makes a sentence? The difference in structure between a Poem, a Novel, a Short story, A Narrative, a comic book.

Why? Because they all tell stories. ALL ART TELLS A STORY. You must understand HOW to tell a story, in all its basic forms whether it's a picture, a painting, a sculpture, a poem, a music video, a movie, they all tell stories. Understand writing, as you're first and foremost tool. Techno wonders aside, it all starts in your head, so your FIRST GOAL is to get it on paper. Laptop or not, everyone can afford a pencil and paper and this is where ALL GREAT ADVENTURES begin.

When whoever built the house or whatever you're living in. They sat down a drew a blueprint, a plan. When the Great explorers went searching for New Worlds they laid out a route, with information they had. This you must realize. Pencil and paper are your first tools. Make a mistake, you can erase and start again, it costs you nothing. Make a mistake while running a Movie (If it's BIG you could be spending \$3000 a MINUTE)

So whether it's a wedding for a friend, a Birthday for your buddy, a Commercial for a local merchant, a Music Video for your band, or a Movie (Large or small) It Pays to PLAN. The Great FELLINI started his career as a storyboard artist for a photoplay magazine (For those who say:"wha dat", it like a Giant comic book with pictures.

Fellini's "The White Sheik" is a great film if you want to see what the Original Film makers had to do to make a Movie.) Work out your ideas on paper, draw pictures, even if you can only make "stick men" you need to construct your "blueprint" like you would a comic book, or that old dinosaur stamp book. "Oh I got it all in my head" Well trot it out into the light so we ALL can get a look. Your crew wants to understand exactly what you "see" so they can help make it happen. Pictures ARE worth a thousand words.

BUT WHY IS SENTENCE STRUCTURE IMPORTANT?

Because each "cut" is like a period. Each "shot" is like a word. I can tell you something in long form i.e.: John, regrettably, had to go visit a sick aunt who lives.... Or

In short form i.e.: John had to go

Or: Gone

So to understand how not to make costly mistakes let's lay out a plan for EVERY PROJECT before we begin. Let us study all forms so as to understand all the traditional rules for any genre (Even if we are going to "Break" them) lets look at editing.

The first thing a beginner should do is to take their favorite piece of music and cut some Images to it, Learn beats and Rhythm. CUTS only, to The Beat. If you don't own any Laptop or PC with IMOVIE or any edit program, find someone who does and practice this basic skill. The images don't have to connected, just cut to them on the beat.

REALIZE that the same structure that makes a song (Bass and Drums for Rhythm and Beat) makes a story. Then try to take unrelated images and cut a story to that. Everything has a Rhythm and a Beat; it is your Foundation, just like a House. This basic skill is VERY IMPORTANT in understanding how to group a series of "shots" to tell a story.

You must understand so when you are shooting you don't waste time. TIME is your most expensive commodity, you only get so many hours of Daylight, and sometimes the Picture you want can only be gotten at a certain time of day. You want to plan for every second of your day. EDITING is the last stop for CORRECTING mistakes. I started my

career as an Editor. "Fix it in the Edit" is just another way of saying "I have NO idea what I'm doing" Directors who shoot a multitude of angles, do so because they have not planned properly (Exception: ACTION< EXPLOSIONS require multiple angles because you can usually only afford to blow it up once.) Editors see every type of mistake ever made (They have to fix them) DON'T WASTE TIME ON SET OR IN EDIT. Plan for what you want and try to get it. Often what works on paper, may not work in practice. So many times we throw away the plan and work something new out "on the spot" So remember, the "Plan" is really just a guideline to help you work toward your goal. Paper and pencil are your best friends; make your mistakes with them and save your self from the start. Once you understand how cuts work, how to edit a sequence comes next. Let's say we show a person washing their hands. What do we see first? How do we tell that story?

Wide shot: Person enters bathroom

Close-up: Hand turns on faucet

Medium shot: Person reaches for soap.

Close-up: Hand "feeling" water temperature

Medium shot: Person in mirror lathering hands and face.

Every story can be told in a variety of ways, But WE must first decide HOW before we march our "crew" out on this great adventure. We must learn to have a Plan, a Plan B, an alternate plan, all in place before we begin. A Great Movie Maker should know what each department does and be capable of doing it themselves, if the need should arise. We won't all be the next Fellini, but with proper planning we can avoid costly mistakes no matter what Genre or Format we are working in. Learning Editing should be your first step in learning what mistakes not to make. Part of this process, too often ignored is SOUND design. Every one is always so attentive to the Picture, they forget about SOUND. In order to make an illusion real, sound is a big part. In future articles we will get into more detail, but understanding how everything in EDIT is a SERIES OF LAYERS is also VERY IMPORTANT. To build the house, we must know each brick, where it can be best utilized to bring out the emotional response we want from our audience, to best tell our "story". Take your favorite film and watch it with the sound off. See if you can still understand the story. Early Filmmakers told whole stories, by editing in camera (another good rehearsal drill) Leone's' films have very little dialogue in them. The actor's expressions tell the story; the settings betray the background of the characters.

GREAT STORYS ARE ALWAYS GREAT no matter how many times you tell them, or how.

So you want to be a storyteller? Well tell your story no matter how small. Whether you selling soap, a friends wedding, a music video, a documentary, or the BIG MOVIE. The world is waiting to here it. So tell us all. Only take a clue from the Masters, have a plan. Know all the rules, if only so you can break them. This Hat hopes to share more tips and tirades with you, you on your great journey. Time moves fast in this business, so as the old adage goes" lead, follow, or get out of the way" PEACE....

[Note: Jody hope this is what you want...please call me after receiving this]

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If this meets your criteria please send the dough forthwith, since, being a writer, I'm like most writers, broke. Hope your like it, feel free to re-arrange it anyway you like. Future articles will include, "How to tips" "Horror stories" and more "Basic reviews"

BIO: With over 30 years experience in Film, Video, Poetry, and performance, "The Hat" has been an on-line Editor, Director, Cameraman, Writer and Producer in Video. In Film, a DGA member (1st AD) and Council member, with Features, Commercials, Music Videos, Industrials, and Corporate Image Videos, and a Co- Creative for a Chicago production company. Currently in development with a Feature script "The Hat" likes to stay behind the cameras. Well versed in both Video and Film, he has crossed over many times and hopes to share his vast experience of practical knowledge with our readers.