

## CINEMATOGRAPHY is VISUAL STORYTELLING

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“Nobody tells this to people who are beginners, I wish someone told me. All of us who do creative work, we get into it because we have good taste. But there is this gap. For the first couple years you make stuff, it’s just not that good. It’s trying to be good, it has potential, but it’s not. But your taste, the thing that got you into the game, is still killer. And your taste is why your work disappoints you.

A lot of people never get past this phase, they quit. Most people I know who do interesting, creative work went through years of this. We know our work doesn’t have this special thing that we want it to have. We all go through this. And if you are just starting out or you are still in this phase, you gotta know its normal and the most important thing you can do is do a lot of work. Put yourself on a deadline so that every week you will finish one story.

It is only by going through a volume of work that you will close that gap, and your work will be as good as your ambitions. And I took longer to figure out how to do this than anyone I’ve ever met. It’s gonna take awhile. It’s normal to take awhile. You’ve just gotta fight your way through.”

**Ira Glass**

**Your greatest asset as a storyteller and filmmaker is you. Your unique, specific way of looking at the world.**

“Every person — every artist — has one gaze, which is the result of who they are, what they’ve lived, their life experience, everything that they’ve done until that moment when the camera is rolling.

I consider myself more an emotional poet than a narrator, in a way, so I tend to gravitate to the filmmakers who also have that approach. I believe in telling stories in less conventional ways. You can be more poetic with the image and let the viewer complete the picture.” *Natasha Braier, ASC (Neon Demon, The Rover, Milk of Sorrow, etc.)*

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“Cinematographers should connect to projects where they can see themselves and the community that they identify with in the film. I’ve had the opportunity to work on projects that didn’t seem to have a clear bridge between the community that I identify with and the material on screen. But I still brought my community to the project as a prerequisite. My career is about my cultural acumen, more so than my technical acumen.

We’re in a time where we can be unapologetic about who we are. So if we’re black, queer, trans, Chicano, European-American, Southeast Asian, we should know that what we can bring to the table is important. And it is something that should be embedded in the films that we make.”

*Bradford Young, ASC (Arrival, Solo, A Most Violent Year, Selma, etc.)*

### **Graduation is just the beginning.**

“Very few people find themselves becoming a cameraman after finishing USC or UCLA. Very seldom will you become a cameraman in less than ten years. You have to put a lot of work in those years. You have to sacrifice a lot. You cannot lead a terrific life, play around and then occasionally think about becoming a great cameraman. You have to work hard at it every day.” *Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC (Deer Hunter, Close Encounters, etc.)*

### **What is the Cinematographer?**

“My job is to help the director realize what's in his head.

The cinematographer creates a consistent look for the film and makes images that help tell the story. It's what's in the frame, the lighting, getting the mood right - getting images that push the story along and keeps the audience inside, not outside, the film.” *Danny Cohen, BSC (The King’s Speech, etc)*

“A cinematographer is a visual psychiatrist – moving an audience through a movie ... making them think the way you want them to think, painting pictures in the dark.” *Gordon Willis, ASC (The Godfather, Kluge, Annie Hall, etc.)*

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"I joke around sometimes and say that the DP is like a shrink for the director, but there's some truth in there. I want my directors to feel that they can completely rely on me once the shoot begins and that I'm in their brain – almost an extension of their brain. It's my duty is to make everybody feel secure, from producers to directors to actors. Especially the actors – if I don't make the actors feel as comfortable as possible in front of the camera, it's possible they're not going to be able to give their best performance. As a DP, I've found that my most invaluable skills besides lighting and using my eye are problem solving, diplomacy and being a great communicator." *Reed Morano, ASC (Meadowland, I Think We're Alone Now)*

**The gear and tech is subservient to the storytelling. (*It's going to change, and we live in one of the most exciting times of yearly re-invention ever. Learn to work with your limitations and make them assets.*)**

"There is an obsession with technology that I don't care for. You pick the camera for the job based on cost and many other factors. I think 'In This World' or 'Slumdog Millionaire' are good case studies in this regard.... Cinematography is more than a camera, whether that camera is a Red an Alexa or a Bolex. There is a little more to it that resolution, colour depth, latitude, grain structure, lens aberration etc. etc. etc.

The lenses use for 'Citizen Kane' were in no way as good as a Primo or a Master Prime and the grain structure in that film is, frankly, all over the place. But the cinematography? Well, you tell me."

*Roger Deakins, ASC (Shawshank Redemption, No Country for Old Men)*

**The three biggest factors to lighting/cinematography: budget, schedule, & story. All are important...you have to be a pragmatic perfectionist, technician, & artist. (And remember – sometimes – less is more.)**

"I have shot in some places like the Smithsonian Institution and big museums....I couldn't have lit it even if I wanted to and was astounded by how beautiful it looked on the screen. I said, "Jeez, good thing I didn't have a full crew and a full set of lights, I might have screwed it up." *Haskell Wexler, ASC (One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, etc.)*

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"Subtractive thinking is very important, meaning less is better than more. Generally speaking, if something's not working, you're doing too much." *Gordon Willis, ASC (The Godfather, Klute, Annie Hall, etc.)*

"During the rehearsals we learned when the locations had the right feeling Alejandro wanted to capture. Sometimes you'd arrive at the location at noon and it looks like a park. But when you're there at 4pm and the steam of the river starts to rise, then you feel you're in the middle of a primordial place that has never been seen by man. All that stuff was very important, and a lot of it came from the rehearsals." *Emmanuel Lubezski (Children of Men, Revenant, Gravity, etc.)*

### **Be intentional about what you're trying to do and why.**

"In other words do you want it to be slick? Do you want it to be unreal and help to tell the story by making the light unreal or do you want to help tell the story by making light real? ... All compositions have a function and you choose the composition based on the concept of your story and how you're trying to tell your story." *Conrad Hall, ASC (In Cold Blood, American Beauty, Road to Perdition)*

### **Cinematography is not a formula, like 3 point lighting; it is a subjective artform with guidelines.**

""Pretty photography is easy; it really is the easiest thing in the world. But photography that rounds a picture off, top to bottom, and holds the content together, is really the most beautiful. That means it can be visually very beautiful; it can also be very pedestrian in certain ways if it happens to be appropriate for the story. You try not to put the photography in front of the story; you try and make it a part of the story." *Gordon Willis, ASC (The Godfather, Klute, Annie Hall, etc.)*

"A lot of people think a scene is dull if the camera's not moving. What makes a scene dull is the content of the scene. If that's no good, the camera can move back and forth forever, and it's not going to help." *Gordon Willis, ASC (The Godfather, Klute, Annie Hall, etc.)*

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"You can teach someone the rudiments of anything but you have to learn how to use them for yourself. I mean, we do have within us something that allows us to be different from somebody else. That's how composition is; it's quite individualistic. As a result it's hard to teach....

You've got to be able to do it the way you want to and know why it is that you're doing it. And at least, if you don't know intellectually, you know emotionally that it's right. It feels right to you....My validation about the rightness or wrongness was always an emotional one. It affected me emotionally when it was wrong. When it was right, I didn't pay much attention to it."

Conrad Hall, ASC

"Angles tell us emotional things in ways that are mysterious - emotional things that I am often unaware of. I think a particular angle is going to do one thing, and it does something quite different often. I no longer have any sure sense that I have any grasp of it.. Occasionally you will hit on an angle that is absolutely inevitable: its just the right angle..its puzzling and mysterious."

Michael Chapman, ASC

### **Be performer-conscious as you create images.**

"How do I create an environment that the performer can work in so that they can find their character and feel comfortable to let it out? I like to leave the set open—I try to put minimal equipment on the floor so that the actors can have something to see that seems natural." *Matthew Libatique, ASC (Black Swan, Requiem for a Dream)*

"I do "area lighting." I light the whole set so that the actors and the camera can be free within that space. I try to make 360° shots possible, which is basically having the light come through the windows and from top lights or practicals, and to keep it simple. This lets the actors come into a pre-lit set so that they can play with the atmosphere. Sometimes they tend to play just near the light, and sometimes they will find the darker space in the room; if you got it wrong you have to be very quick to save your ass, and your gaffer is your best friend." *Sean Bobbitt, BSC (Hunger, 12 Years a Slave, Place Beyond the Pines)*

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"I light a room and let the people inhabit it, as opposed to lighting the people. It's more organic. You want to protect the people you're working with, and there's a constant battle between the best light for their face and the best light for the story. You don't want to get to the point where the audience notices the light."

*Harris Savides, ASC*

### **Great cinematography doesn't always look "pleasant" but it does always tell the story.**

"...that's the way I started. We had nothing. I was not frightened to shoot a complete film with one lamp. Or no light at all. As people dare to do it and take the consequences of it, they will go into the light."

*Robbie Muller NSC, BVK (Breaking the Waves, Paris, Texas, etc.)*

"I have a theory that you can take a terrible movie and photograph it very well and it won't help the movie at all. And you can take a very good story and photograph it very badly and it won't matter. But the ideal thing is to take them both, put them together again and come out with something special...there's not much you can do with a bad story." *Gordon Willis, ASC (The Godfather, Kluge, Annie Hall, etc.)*

### *What is style?*

"Style, basically, comes out of you. Generally speaking, there's no formula, although people always want to know the formula. Style comes out of watching an actor do a scene; style comes out of a process of the material many times, but it's indiscriminate...As an example, I decided how *The Godfather* should look about 20 minutes before I started shooting. I watched rehearsals, I listened to people, I just stood there, and then some idea came to me and I said, 'That feels right; that feels right for this.' *Gordon Willis, ASC*

"In *Fat City*, the idea of extraordinary tonal variations was like a style for picture. The interiors—bars and places like that—were very, very dark, so you have a sense of blackness. And when you come outside, I made the exteriors all very bright and glaring....and when those things cut together, they create a kind of emotional sense,

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which is productive for storytelling.

You approach every project from the spirit of the film. Once you get the spirit of the film, then that determines everything for me.”

*Conrad Hall, ASC*

“We were shooting in anamorphic, which doesn’t always lend itself to the type of soft light we wanted. Sometimes the image didn’t always look sharp, which is okay when they’re edited into a scene with music and everything flows together. But when we first began watching the dailies everybody was complaining that individual shots weren’t sharp enough and they were scared. So I told them that if they wanted to play it safe there wouldn’t be any problem. But if they wanted the film to have a certain look, they’d have to take the chance that things would sometimes be softer or underexposed or bad. Eventually everybody was willing to take that chance.”

*Harris Savides, ASC*

### Prepping a film.

“There are many different ways to prep for a movie. The most important thing is to try to stay in touch with the first emotion I had when I read the script. As I continue along in the film making process, the days become more about logistics, costs and actors schedules, which isn’t perfect for the DP. That’s why it’s important to remember the things that were there when we first read the scripts, before the problems.”

*John Shwartzman, ASC*

“No matter how much prep time you have, you’re ultimately going to photograph the film in an unknown way. Every film poses its own problems and you have to think and experiment to find a solution.”

*Dariusz Wolski, ASC*

“I think all filmmaking, in some way, is creative improvisation. You are constantly improvising every day, but certainly not making it up as you go along. Improvisation is a worthwhile filmmaking technique that allows you the freedom to fall back on your

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own creativity and not be restricted by rigid preconceived ideas.”

*John Toll, ASC*

“A lot of the time, when you talk about the script, people leap straight to the visual, but with Dominic, it was about the emotion. It was about the dramatic arc of the characters and what the story was really *about*. I found that very refreshing and stimulating, to approach it initially from a purely intellectual point of view as opposed to a purely visual point of view.

For me, it's about understanding the story so that the look evolves out of that understanding, as opposed to coming up with the concept of a look and trying to impose that upon the story, which I always find less satisfying.”

*Sean Bobbitt, BSC*

**It's more important to make images that make you feel something than for them to be technically perfect.**

“There's kind of a different environment now in the world of cinematography. You can make a film with your iPhone. So the question becomes: what distinguishes you from another person who's making a film?...

It's not about creating shots; it's about trying to create the story using the camera and the lighting. it's about trying to create the story using the camera and the lighting.”

*Ellen Kuras, ASC (Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, The Betrayal - Nerakhoon)*

“I think the process is to make it as personal as possible.... That's the journey...to get to the point where you are confident, where you are at ease with yourself, where you are open to all the possibilities..... The process is actually the process of you.” *Christopher Doyle (In the Mood For Love, 2046, Hero)*

“I think lighting is the only metaphor that works in film. This is advanced secret knowledge! You have all these elements you deal with in organizing images: color, lines, volume, etc. all in 2-dimensional space. In representational art it's about where



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the light is coming from, how light falls on the objects, and how it tells you what is going on. It's the one visual metaphor and going back to the ideas of this whole tradition, it tells you about the gaining of knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and transcendence.

We light the set in a way that supposedly is a correlative for a state of a character, or the nature of the scene, or the mood. It's hopefully more than just the mood of what appears in the theatre, but it becomes a dialectic. There's a sense in movies that things are not standing still the way they are in the theatre. We are recreating a realistic space and trying to make something optically real even if it's not naturalistic. We're trying to create the illusion that time is advancing: it's early morning, late afternoon, midnight. This infuses the story with some kind of meaning."

*Robert Elswit, ASC*

"My philosophy is that you shouldn't move the camera unless you have to."

*Harris Savides, ASC*

"It's not what you light that counts, but what you do not light."

*Jordan Cronenweth, ASC*

"I believe that it's good for actors to be in the dark and not always to be lit brightly when they deliver a line."

*Darius Khondji AFC, ASC*

### **Stay connected with people just as passionate about film as you.**

Form alliances with people who are as obsessed and as passionate about film as you....then you all go out and try to make your way. Somebody is going to make a big leap up. Whatever you do, don't be all over them asking for jobs and favors right away because they won't be able to do anything for you the first time they get a big break to do an important picture." (*Allen Daviau, ASC, ET, Empire of the Sun*)

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As you step into the world, realize that you're just starting to cultivate your aesthetic

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and interests. Lighting is an individual journey that involves finding your aesthetic. It is a lifetime endeavor.

### **Random thoughts on shooting your first feature.**

It's an endurance race not a sprint. Take care of yourself and your crew. Make sure you invite your crew to give great ideas and have your back. Features are a lot of fun. The first few shots are always nerve wracking and then I feel like I'm back to knowing what I'm doing.

*You will shoot material you don't like at some point in the day or during the film, so make sure you compromise on the right material. To that end you have to learn to let it go and move on without making the same mistakes twice.*

*Don't shoot your most important scene at the end of the day when you're tired--you'll regret it. And don't shoot the most important stuff at the end of the film, everyone is already booking other jobs and checked out emotionally.*

*You can't save the production so don't try to. Do your job, do it well. Have the director's back, and you just might make a great film.*

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**From [ascmag.com/blog/the-film-book/interview-with-harris-savides-filmmaking-process](http://ascmag.com/blog/the-film-book/interview-with-harris-savides-filmmaking-process)**

"We make rules. The rules are a simple mandate. Very simple. Like very little dialogue, try to shoot as long a take as possible, put the camera at this height.

It's very interesting, because a lot of decisions are taken out of the mix. It imposes an integrity on everything. But also it imposes a speed, and a decision-making that's pure, that's only about a few things.

...I think that's the essence of freedom. You can't be free and be a wild filmmaker. You really have to have rules, and a discipline of sorts, that, of course, conspire to make the film that you've set out to make.

...The beauty of those movies was that one of the rules was no coverage, unless we need to. No close-ups, unless we need to. So when you have a close-up, it's very important.

In the standard coverage, where you do master shot, medium shot, 2-shot and close-up, the crew become like robots. It's like "Okay, got it", then everybody starts moving, the tape measures come out... That's not filmmaking, it's the dumbing down of the people who make movies. And everybody's just covering their asses, "just in case". Why do you need a close-up? "He's buying fish! Why do we need to see a close-up of a man buying fish?"

Instead of shooting everything and looking at it later, please make a decision. It's hard to make movies. We don't have money, and we have to act like the police are chasing us. So let's try to do this with some dignity. And do it well, and have some fun. And do good work."

*Harris Savides, ASC (The Yards, Milk, The Game, Zodiac, American Gangster, Somewhere, The Bling Ring, etc.)*

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<https://www.indiewire.com/2012/06/woody-allens-cinematographer-has-6-life-saving-tips-for-low-budget-dps-46574/#articleHeaderPanel>

*Darius Khondji (Se7en, Lost City of Z, etc.) gives 6 great tips for shooting low budget films.*

### **Go on scouting trips as early as you can so you have a say in what will work or not work.**

"I love going to see the last two or three locations to choose from, to be able to say something," Khondji said. "When I do a movie on location, it's really important for me to go and scout locations even before the technical scout with my crew. It's crucial to go with the production designer — and the director, if you can — to figure out how you're going to make the best out of it for the storytelling."

### **Lighting can highlight character. And headaches, if you're not careful.**

"Of course, your work has to first correspond to who the character is and what the story is about," he said. "The most important thing to bring out when you shoot a movie is to figure out how you're going to light the location in order to bring it into this area of the character. Often you want natural light coming in through the windows, let's say. When you do movies on low budgets, you don't want to have a location that requires a very big light right outside the window when you're 10 stories up. You have to find a location where you have a terrace outside, or you can light from a second floor, or you can light through the windows for daylight. You also want to have a certain height of ceilings so you can put toplights."

### **It helps to be strategic (and lucky) about the mutability of locations.**

"If you like a location for its architecture or mood, for the feel of it, but you don't actually like the color, you need to have a location where you're allowed to change the color," he said. "It's all always aiming at who the character is that lives in this location. For instance, when we were doing 'To Rome With Love' with Woody in Rome, we were looking for a location for young architects (Jesse Eisenberg, Greta Gerwig). We looked in many locations. Woody had a problem finding a location that really fit what he had in mind. So with the art director and production designer, we sketched how we could transform one into what Woody had in mind, because we found one that we really liked in the Trastevere area. There was an artist living in this kind of loft in an old house. Then we transformed it, we made it to what Woody had in mind. And the artist's daughter was actually a location manager on another movie!"

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### **Leave yourself a wide-angle option.**

“Then you do your technical scout with your crew,” he said. “Working in Rome on this movie was a wonderful experience, and very easy thanks to the excellent Italian crew we had – the production and all camera, lighting and grip crew were a dream to work with. But when you shoot on location, you have to be incredibly prepared because you can’t move the wall around like when you’re in a studio. You really need to know that the camera is going to fit there, that with the focal lens you’re going to be able to go back far enough to get a wide shot without putting on a ridiculously wide lens that would be very vulgar or warping. In order not to do that, you need to have a location where the wall or the side of a room allows you to go back enough to get the wide shot that the director wants. This sounds obvious, but sometimes let’s say you shoot CinemaScope anamorphic with 2.35:1, you have to go much further back to go to a wide shot, in terms of height. Otherwise, you shoot medium and close-up all the time. If you don’t scout out your location, it can be really bad.”

### **Learn how to use natural light on interiors.**

“Unfortunately, a lot of these low-budget movies have to shoot small-format digital,” Khondji said. “You have to calculate. If you shoot daylight, what would be a great thing to do is have a Plan A and Plan B with the Sun. If you don’t have the money to put up lights, you have to think about how the building is in front of your location and bounce the light into the apartment. Or try to schedule your shooting around the sunlight. I light mostly from outside the windows for daylight, but if you had to light from inside the windows or on top of the windows to reproduce the light, then you have to make sure you have high enough ceilings.”

### **Have one strong thematic idea, not a bagful.**

“I’ve learned one general thing in filmmaking: to work with one strong idea,” says Khondji. “One strong concept that pushes you to work in a certain way artistically. Then you can bring it into a family of ideas. Then it’s like a tree: You have an idea for each scene, but one main idea in the film. The more you have concepts and ideas like this before you plan the film, the better it is. I’ve found that the great directors I work with, usually for the movie they have one strong idea visually that makes the film what it is. I realized that usually they don’t have multiple ideas, because you always get clogged when you have so many ideas to tell a story visually. I don’t think it’s great to come with a bag full of ideas. It’s better to be behind one strong statement or one strong idea for a film. For ‘To Rome With Love’ it was the saturation of the colors, the fact that the Italian scenes were more like the old Italian cinema of the ’60s

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and '70s, and the modern scenes, when the Americans are in Rome, are more wide angle, a little bit colder, sharper, less saturated. It's thematically brilliant."

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Selected from: **“25 Pieces of Juicy Filmmaking Knowledge  
from Cinematographer Roger Deakins”** (theblackandblue.com)

Roger Deakins, ASC – *Blade Runner 2049, Shawshank Redemption, No Country for Old Men, Prisoners, Sicario, Skyfall, In the Valley of Elah, Revolutionary Road, Fargo, A Beautiful Mind, True Grit, The Big Lebowski, etc...*

### 2. You Must Discover Your Own Style

“I am very wary of showing too much in the way of plans and diagrams. Not because I am secretive and I don’t want to give away something that is personal. Not at all!

I just remember that when I began as a film maker and a cinematographer I never watched another cinematographer at work. The closest I ever got to seeing ‘how it was done’ was by shooting some documentary footage of Doug Slocombe at work on ‘Pirates of Penzance’. I loved seeing him work but it had absolutely no influence on the way my work evolved.

Our styles could not be more different. That’s my point really. You can’t learn your craft by copying me or anyone else. I hope what I do can do is in some way inspire others but I would be appalled if I thought my work was being studied as ‘the right way to do the job’. My way is just one of an infinite number of ways to do the job.”

### 3. Compromise is Sometimes Needed for a Better Film

“Sometimes, as with the death row scenes on ‘Dead Man Walking’, it is better to compromise composition, lighting and perhaps even sound a little and shoot with two cameras in order to help an actor get their performance. Sometimes it is better to go wider to include a prop in frame than break an actor’s concentration.

When an actor appears on set ready to do a take it may be too late to change anything. At that time if I see a bad shadow or an eyeline that is slightly off I might talk to the actor or I might not. Perhaps I might think it better to change things for take two. If not then I judge it my mistake and I must try not to let it

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happen next time.

In the end a film can look lousy but work because of a great performance but not the other way round. That's something always worth remembering."

### **4. Work Inside Your Practical Limits**

"I rarely took lights on the documentaries I shot in Africa. Much of the time I worked without an assistant so carrying more equipment than absolutely necessary was out. I did carry some white bed sheets and a silvered space blanket, which I used for sleeping in on cold nights (and it can get very cold in Botswana for instance) protecting the raw stock and equipment from the sun as well as for lighting.

I think the most important aspect of shooting documentary is to make use of what light is available simply through your positioning of the camera - and the subject if you are controlling what you are shooting. For me, using extra equipment, whether it was a tripod or a reflector, was usually a distraction and counterproductive."

### **5. Every Film is the Director's Film**

"I do have a problem with the ease with which you call what we do 'art'. That is for someone else to conclude. To me it is a job, a creative job that I love to do but a job nonetheless.

The collaborative aspect of the job is very important but then so is the hierarchical nature of a film crew. Every film is the Director's film and we must never lose sight of that."

### **10. Camera Choice is a Personal Decision**

"In the final analysis you can only judge picture quality by eye and make a personal decision as to what you like and what you don't like. Perhaps some people really can not see a difference between a 2K scan and a 4K scan of the same negative and I am sure some people really do prefer the look of an image



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produced by the Red Camera to one shot on film. The choice of a camera system is no different than the choice of a lens set, a camera position or where to put a lamp."

### **11. Filmmaking Never Gets Any Easier**

"On one of my first dramatic films I had got to the set early only to hear the 1st AD and a Carpenter questioning why someone whom they had never heard of was shooting their film. They turned to me and asked if I knew the cinematographer. I said I did.

I then told the Carpenter to rig a beam at the ceiling for lighting and asked the AD to send out for some asprin [sic] whilst I went outside to be sick.

I still have times when I feel totally stressed out and sick in my stomach. I explain it to myself in thinking that I have ever higher expectations for what I am working on and consequently it never gets any easier."

### **12. There is No "Right Way" or Expected Career Path**

"If you work your way up you might find it easier financially. Also, you will have time to learn your craft and become confident in what you do. On the other hand you may well find yourself stuck for some time at one level and find it hard to make the jump from an assistant to an operator for instance. If you try to start shooting right away you may find yourself waiting a long time between pay days. Have you a showreel? Friends that might give you a break? A family that you need to support?

I never assisted. I went to film school and started shooting right away after that. Well, to be honest I couldn't get work as an assistant so I called myself a cameraman. I found it no easier to get work as a cameraman but at least I felt better about myself. It was probably 6 months before I got my first paying work but it built quickly after that."

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### **16. Internships Are Scarce, Learn By Discovery**

“For good or bad I never, as a student, had the luxury of observing another cinematographer at work on a set. It was only when I came to work in the US that I actually visited another set. I say this because I genuinely feel that cinematography, like photography in general, is not something that can be learned but, pretentious as it may sound, can only be discovered.”

### **21. Know What You’re Talking About**

“I think you need to be very familiar with grip equipment just as you need to be familiar with the range of lighting units available; otherwise you might ask for something that is really impractical or might not produce the right result. It is a Key Grip’s job to come up with a technical solution to a task and also the most efficient way of achieving it but it is the cinematographer’s responsibility to know if the concept will work in the first place. I think this requires a general understanding of the equipment to hand and it’s various usage.”

### **22. Communicate with Your Key Crew Members**

“More important than any notes is to spend time with your gaffer and key grip so that you are all in sync with the plans you have of the work ahead. I do remember telling my gaffer once or twice ‘It’s on my diagram’ only to be told that he was going by his memory of what I had said and not diagram I had given him.”

### **23. Feeling Intimidated is Normal**

“I generally feel intimidated! One of my first films was with Richard Burton and I felt intimidated by his talent, at least I felt was until he gathered the crew, thanked us all for one of the most pleasant days he had ever experienced on a film, and then told us he had in fact felt totally intimidated by our youth!”

### **25. It’s Your Job to Find a Way to Work with Others**

“As I have said before every director is different and may require something different from a cinematographer. The onus is on the cinematographer to find out how best to work for and with a director and with other members of the crew, for that matter.”

## CINEMATOGRAPHY is VISUAL STORYTELLING

### SELECTED RESOURCES:

#### **Magazines:**

**American Cinematographer Magazine**

ICG Magazine

#### **Websites:**

\*RogerDeakins.com

shellyjohnsonasc.com/

<https://ascmag.com/blog/the-film-book/eric-kress-lighting-workshop-1>

\*Ask David Mullen Anything Thread on Reduser.net

Cinematography.com

RonDexter.com

HurlbutVisuals.com/blog

JohnBrawley.wordpress.com

TheBlackandtheBlue.com

#### **Youtube Masterclasses and Interviews:**

Cooke Optics – Sean Bobbitt Interviews and Case Studies

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Ya9gBlwOhRwtloTn1hvbA>

ArriChannel – Look thoroughly, I loved the masterclasses with Tom Stern, Reed Morano, and Sean Bobbitt, among a great number of interviews

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ARRIChannel/featured>

DP/30 Interviews with cinematographers, actors, directors, etc.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheHotButton>

Interviews with famous cinematographers including Gordon Willis, etc.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/crafttruck>

#### **Books**

\**The Visual Story: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media* (Bruce Block)

## CINEMATOGRAPHY is VISUAL STORYTELLING

*\*Cinematography: Theory and Practice: Image Making for Cinematographers and Directors* (Blain Brown)

*\*Cinematography: Third Edition* (Kris Makiewicz, M. David Mullen)

*\*Masters of Light: Conversations with Contemporary Cinematographers* (Larry Salvato, Dennis Schæfer)

*\*Darius Khondji*

*Cinematographer Style: The Complete Interviews, Volume I, Vol. II*

*Motion Picture and Video Lighting* (Blain Brown)

*Every Frame a Rembrandt: Art and Practice of Cinematography* (Andrew Lazlo)

*New Cinematographers* (Alex Ballinger)

*FilmCraft: Cinematography* (Tim Grierson and Mike Goodridge)

*Cinematography (Screencraft)* (Peter Ettedgui)

*Principal Photography: Interviews with Feature Film Cinematographers* (Vincent LoBrutto)

*Master Shots vol. 1 & vol. 2*, (Christopher Kenworthy)

*Setting Up Your Scenes: The Inner Workings of Great Films* (Richard D Pepperman)

*Set Lighting Technician's Handbook: Film Lighting Equipment, Practice, and Electrical Distribution* (Harry Box)

*The Camera Assistant's Manual* (David E. Elkins SOC)

### **Documentaries**

*Cinematographer Style* (directed by Jon Fauer)

*Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography* (directed by Arnold Glassman, Stuart Samuels, Todd McCarthy)

<https://ascmag.com/blog/the-film-book/christopher-doyle-interview-the-artistic-process>

### **Podcasts – Filmmaking Specific**

American Cinematographer Podcasts

The Director's Cut

The FilmStruck Podcast

Director's Table

Art vs. Commerce

Go Creative Show

WTF with Marc Maron – features many terrific interviews with filmmakers and actors

## CINEMATOGRAPHY is VISUAL STORYTELLING

[Super Secret Filmcast](#)

[Cinematography Database](#)

[Filmmakers Drinking Bourbon](#)

[Cinematographer's Insight](#)

[Respect the Process](#)

[Good. the Podcast](#)