

# COMPASS



SPRING 2016

The Official Magazine of the Location Managers Guild International



# FILM AT FAIRPLEX

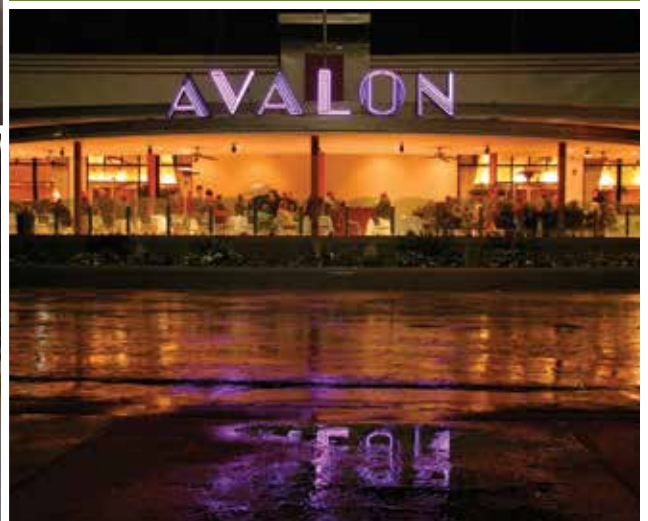


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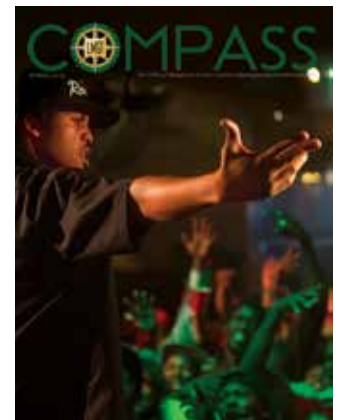


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Pictures

# FROM THE EDITORS' DESK



*"Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning."*

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

What's in a name? Welcome to the Location Managers Guild International rebrand! We are excited about our continued growth, welcome our new members and join them in celebrating excellence on location worldwide.

Rebranding is more than a name change. We are building a more authentic brand, with more direct outreach and impact to our growing worldwide membership. But we can't do it without you! A big world becomes smaller when you connect and share your experiences with fellow members by joining an LMGI committee online. We are truly a global community, and the Guild is an invaluable tool to our profession, encouraging dialogue across borders, transcending different unions and diverse cultures.

This is reflected in this year's nominations for the LMGI Awards, to be held in Los Angeles on Saturday, April 23. Please join us in congratulating our members in "And the Nominees Are ..."

In "Gently Speaking," Claudia Eastman travels north of London in search of the popular BBC series *Inspector George Gently*. In "Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay," we enter an amazing UK time machine, traveling back to the music's heyday through the lens of location pro Mick Ratman who was shooting in clubs at the ripe old age of 15.

In our cover story, reporter Nancy Mills profiles location manager Alison Taylor and chronicles her team's efforts to bring the LMGI-nominated, box-office hit *Straight Outta Compton* to the screen.

This issue's departments include an inside look at Calgary for "In My City," "Career Focus," "In the News" and the "Martini Shot."

As always, we encourage your ideas for articles and photography submissions. We invite you to join the Guild in making 2016 a year of moving forward, getting involved and making a difference in our location community. See you at the LMGI Awards on Saturday, April 23!

Always a pleasure, never too busy,  
Ken Haber, Lori Balton and Stevie Nelson

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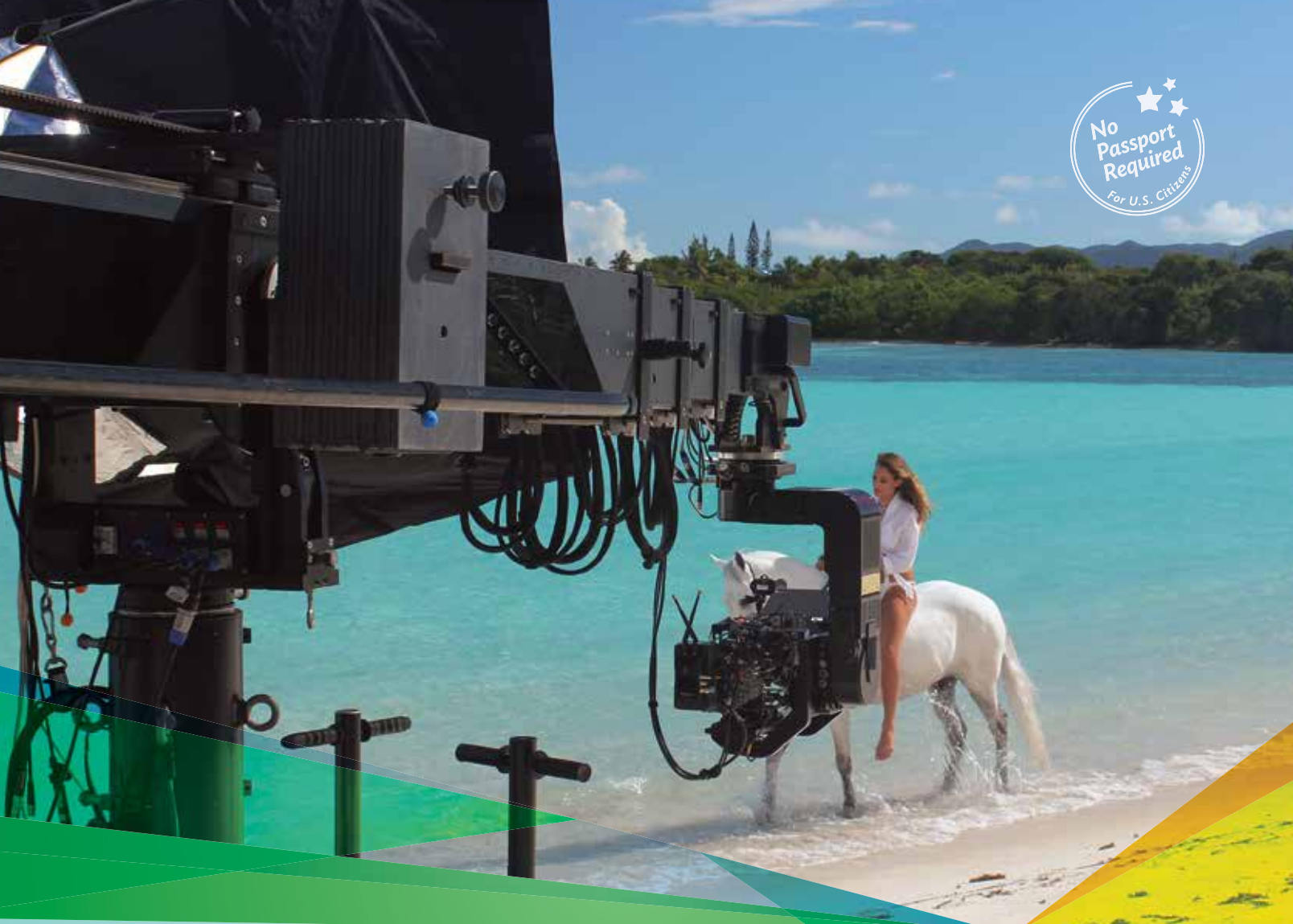
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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



DEAR MEMBERS,

The LMGI was founded to communicate a more accurate view of our creative contributions to the entertainment industry and to celebrate and raise awareness of how profound our craft is. For decades, the work of professional location managers and scouts has been overlooked by our peers and misrepresented to the public.

The LMGI has changed the perception of our work and who we are by highlighting our contributions to the creative process.

Nothing reflects this new perception better than our Awards Show. On April 23, location professionals from all over the world will gather in one room to celebrate and recognize our achievements. On that night, we are united. On that night, there are no country borders, state lines, incentive issues, union affiliations, gender or race issues to divide us. On that night, we are all location professionals with much more in common than not. We have shared realities.

On that night, the possibility of the Guild is crystal clear: sisterhood and brotherhood among all location professionals who share universal goals. These include: acceptance into the Motion Picture and Television Academies, safety in the workplace, retirement and healthcare coverage for all location professionals, appropriate scroll credit placement and an IMDb category. A united guild provides a platform for special interests as well. Guild members in Eastern Europe face different challenges and obstacles than members in North America. United, we can help each other with professional concerns specific to our area.

We continue to advance our mission and achieve our goals with membership participation and support. Your involvement in the award voting process and attendance at the Awards Show communicates to our peers that the LMGI Compass Award is the highest honor and most coveted award that a location professional can achieve. Paying your dues and recruiting new members keep our membership diverse and our foundation strong. Your photo and story submissions to the LMGI website and the *LMGI Compass* shine a light on our work and achievements. We will have a large presence at Comic-Con International: San Diego this year, please attend the panel discussion. This year, we are rekindling the crusade for acceptance into the Television and Motion Picture Academies and we will be participating in the "We Are Sarah Jones" movement to make scouting and location work safer.

The LMGI is a success story. Our founding goals have been achieved and we celebrate this. However, we must remember success is not a destination but a never-ending journey.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the 2016 LMGI Awards Show.

Nancy Haecker  
President

# COMPASS

Official Magazine of  
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Promoting Excellence  
on Location Worldwide

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KEN HABER

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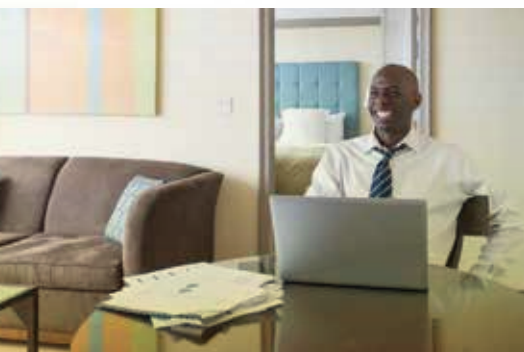
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# CONTRIBUTORS



## Lori Balton

Grateful to have a job that lets her explore the world, Balton is the first location professional accepted into the Academy. She has been lucky to work with the best directors, designers and location managers in the business. A founding member, Board member and past president of the LMGI, she is delighted to see the Guild thrive. When not chasing incentives, she lives in Venice with husband, daughter and four rescue dogs.



## Claudia Eastman

A former college administrator, Claudia's career as a location scout and manager began in 1991. An award-winning photographer, she resides in Hollywood, California. Claudia's credits include *Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol*, *Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer* and the TV series *Lone Star*, *Raising the Bar*, *Vanished*, *Numb3rs* and *Judging Amy*.



## Chris Baugh

Chris Baugh has been a Los Angeles - based location manager for the past two decades. After obtaining degrees in film studies, French and critical theory from UC Irvine and the Sorbonne Paris - III, Chris went on to work as a supervising location manager with directors including Ron Howard, Steven Spielberg, Cameron Crowe, Ben Affleck and Nancy Meyers. His credits include *Steve Jobs*, *The Gambler*, *Argo*, *Angels & Demons*, *We Bought a Zoo*, *Secretariat*, *The Holiday* and *Arrested Development*. As a former LMGI Board member, Chris is dedicated to supporting his colleagues and improving the image of location professionals worldwide.



## Nancy Mills

Nancy Mills is a freelance entertainment writer whose work has appeared in dozens of magazines and newspapers around the world, including *USA Today*, *USA Weekend* magazine, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Us Weekly*, *People*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *The Costco Connection*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Daily News*, *The Guardian*, *International Herald Tribune* and *The New York Times Syndicate*. Over the years, she has visited hundreds of TV and film locations in such far - flung spots as China, India, Italy, France, Germany, England, Mexico, Australia and Fiji. She is a graduate of Cornell University.

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# IN THE NEWS

## LMGI @ FOCUS Location Show, London 2015

16 LPG/LMGA



Left to right: Ken Haber and Mick Ratman. Photo courtesy of Ken Haber/LMGI

Represented by Vice President Ken Haber and member Mick Ratman, the LMGI was front and center in London this winter at the 2015 FOCUS Location Show launch where our members from around the world met each other 'half way.'



Booth at the show. Photo by Ken Haber/LMGI

A spectacular Victorian era agricultural hall in Islington was the ideal setting to showcase London's first international trade show, summit and networking event for film, television and commercials.

Attendees had the opportunity to meet location professionals, film commissions, production service companies and support services vendors. FOCUS Summit was also launched at this event. The Summit is aimed at producers and industry executives looking to network and fund their next project.

The event was produced by The Location Guide, and beautifully coordinated by Clara Lé. For 20 years, The Location Guide has provided the international audiovisual industry with pre-production resources that assist production companies and producers worldwide with planning their overseas or out-of-state shoots.

They have built their reputation as a global source for production contacts with their yearly publication, products and services. We look forward to attending the show next year and hope that all of our international members can meet 'half way.'



## Bill Bowling Meets with LAFCN

*Bill Bowling with the Latin American Film Commission Network.*

Photos courtesy of Bill Bowling/LMGI



In December, LMGI member Bill Bowling went to Buenos Aires to meet with and advise the Latin American Film Commission Network (LAFCN). In meetings with LAFCN members and the Board of Directors, Bill promoted international standards, professional development, expansion of resources as well as increased international cooperation.

The LAFCN is a strong and emerging network committed to actively supporting and promoting all formats of audiovisual activity in the countries comprising the Latin American region—South America, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.

At the Buenos Aires meeting, LAFCN participants included active members from various film commissions

in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The LAFCN supports incentive programs to attract producers, the development of location searches and shooting opportunities, exchange of information and cooperation among members, professional training and educational activities, development of professional standards for film commission operations, as well as the coordination of participation in trade fairs, festivals and film markets.

Informally created in 2010, the LAFCN was formalized in Montevideo in 2012 during a regional film commission meeting. They hope to develop a strong relationship with the LMGI. Bowling's involvement is a great initial step.

The current LAFCN Coordination Office is located in Buenos Aires. For further information, contact Ana F. Aizenberg, Advisor International Affairs, INCAA, Av. de Mayo 1244 (1085) Buenos Aires, Argentina, Tel. + 54-11-4382-7919 or email [ana.aizenberg@gmail.com](mailto:ana.aizenberg@gmail.com).

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## Comic-Con Commandos

The LMGI is planning our upcoming fourth annual appearance at Comic-Con International: San Diego on July 20–24. The LMGI presents a panel of top location managers and scouts to the general public and industry professionals. Each event begins with a sizzle reel of location scouting photos matched to their respective film scenes, followed by a panel and audience Q&A.

Organized by LMGI location manager Scott Trimble, the LMGI/Comic-Con relationship has grown to the point where the LMGI Board voted to form a new committee to handle the planning. Co-chaired by Trimble and LMGI President Nancy Haecker, the committee includes



A panel from 2015. Photo courtesy of Scott Trimble/LMGI

LMGI members Nick Carr, Stephenson Crossley, Mandi Dillin and Tommy Woodard.

In addition to this year's panel, the LMGI is partnering with both the Costume Designers Guild and the Art Directors Guild in hosting a film industry mixer at the Marriott Marquis Hotel. If you are planning to attend Comic-Con, definitely let us know with an email to [cci@locationmanagers.org](mailto:cci@locationmanagers.org) so that you can get on the invitation list.

Speakers from 2013–2015 included LMGI members Chris Baugh, Becky Brake, Nick Carr, Stephenson Crossley, Mandi Dillin, Caleb Duffy, Ann Goobie, JJ Hook, Scott Allen Logan, David Lyons, Stacey McGillis, Michael John Meehan, Kei Rowan-Young, Rebecca "Puck" Stair, Scott Trimble and Steve Woroniecki.



A panel from 2014. Photo courtesy of Scott Trimble/LMGI

Video clips can be viewed at [www.hollywoodlocationscouts.com](http://www.hollywoodlocationscouts.com)

Public badge registration started on February 20, 2016.

Registration: <http://bit.ly/1o7aii1>

As film industry professionals, we can apply to attend for free, but the deadline has already passed for the July 2016 events. You can purchase public tickets. We encourage you to attend and participate in the LMGI panel and events. Comic-Con is one of the largest events out there for film industry networking.

LMGI location manager Matt Palmer has begun working on financing his next documentary film. *Unintended Consequences* is a progressive, comprehensive and science-based story about building the new energy future. *Unintended Consequences* is a conceived transmedia documentary project including a feature length theatrical film, a six-part television series, a public website, and educational websites for students, corporations, NGOs and government employees.

Using systems thinking as a narrative anchor, the documentaries examine how and why we use energy as individuals, communities, businesses, governments and corporations. Palmer looks at the value energy adds to our lives, and how we can move to a more sustainable future with reliable, affordable and abundant energy.

In addition to his location managing work, Palmer has produced and directed the documentaries *Letters From Litein*, *Pay Dirt*, *The Rig* and *On the Edge of Destruction*.

## Hope Is a Renewable Resource in Matt Palmer's *Unintended Consequences*



For more information on *Unintended Consequences*, please visit <http://www.unintendedconsequencesfilm.com/>



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## Indig's River Journey

LMGI member Mark Indig's photography was showcased in the exhibit, *The Los Angeles River: A City Runs Through It*, recently on display at the Keystone Gallery in Los Angeles.

Images within 100 yards of the river from 2008 to the present, represent a fascinating time capsule of the City of Angels. Rivers metaphorically conjure journeys. The idea of a river encased in concrete adds new wrinkles and distortions to that concept. This area around the river has gone from an ignored visual and environmental embarrassment to a newsworthy tabula rasa for artists, activists, developers and city planners. Also during this time, the EPA has declared the river navigable because of the efforts of some intrepid kayakers, allowing for protections under the Clean Water Act.

This show represents the visions of seven very diverse artists and their journeys



along the river; their interpretations informed by their personal histories and experiences; each drawn to the unique mélange of dark-

ness, danger, neglect, hope and optimism that is the Los Angeles River.



For more information, visit: <http://www.keystoneartspace.com/calendar/>



## Safety on Set Always

The LMGI is proud to join a growing list of organizations endorsing the "We Are Sarah Jones" movement. We seek to encourage and affect set safety awareness and responsibility within the entire industry—both union and nonunion, across all genres and job titles.

The movement consists of three clearly defined actions:

**Awareness:** Promoting a culture of safety. Media outreach with the high-profile Faces Portrait and Faces Video campaigns promoting solidarity and a consciousness toward set safety.

**Examination:** Exploring what drives filmmakers to make decisions that could potentially put crew members in harm's way ...

**Change:** Through outreach and educating current and future generations of filmmakers about set safety policies and procedures through social media and by partnering with educational institutions to develop curricula and programs that teach safety.

"We Are Sarah Jones" seeks support from all organizations who want to help in the quest for safer film and television sets around the world. We need help in building industry-wide understanding of who we are and what we are doing. We need support for continuing our awareness campaigns for set safety and solidarity. For more information, contact Eric Smith at [esmith@wearesarahjones.com](mailto:esmith@wearesarahjones.com)



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## LMGI AWARDS Save the Date: Saturday, April 23, 2016



With more national and international nominations than ever before, we are truly promoting excellence on location worldwide.

Final balloting closes at midnight, PST, on Wednesday, March 30. Active and retired members may cast their vote honoring feature films, commercials, television productions, and film commissions around the globe.

Winners will be revealed at a formal ceremony at the newly restored Alex Theatre in Glendale, California, on Saturday, April 23, 2016.

Hosted by David Doumeng, this year we are honored by directors that understand and actively support the contributions of our craft. Wes Anderson, Michael Mann, Brad Silberling and Christopher Guest top our slate.

**Go to [LMGIawards.com](http://LMGIawards.com) for more details and information about event tickets.**



Wes Anderson on location for  
The Grand Budapest Hotel



Caroline Baron received her 2015  
Humanitarian Award from Alfre  
Woodard. Photo by Craig Mathew



Haskell Wexler received his 2014  
Humanitarian Award from Billy Crystal.  
Photo by Deverill Weeks



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## A PSA That's No Bull

LMGI Board member Rebecca "Puck" Stair recently produced a 14-minute anti-bullying short in Albuquerque, NM. Unlike most anti-bullying materials, *Story of Stopping Bull* focuses on the bully, exploring why a young person would act out. The script touches on issues affecting many—PTSD, gender identity, mental health and compassion.

Shot on 16mm film, the project came together during the typical industry "quiet time" in January, and swiftly became a broad community project. Homeowners opened their homes, two schools lent their campuses, award-winning crew volunteered their time and rigging houses donated equipment. "It was extraordinary," marveled Ivan Wiener, one of the producers. "The community stepped up beyond anyone's imaginings, and together we created this important message."

On location in New Mexico.  
Photo courtesy of Rebecca  
"Puck" Stair/LMGI

During the creative scouting process, the production partnered with Central New Mexico Community College's film school, and eventually mentored 14 students in every department. "We did not plan it this way, but it became a film about teenagers gaining firsthand experience on a production about very real issues that teenagers and everyone else in society face today, and it grew so wonderfully," Wiener remarked.

"I'm proud to be involved in one of the first entirely New Mexican projects," Stair commented. "Every aspect—from below the line to above, to actors and the financing—was homegrown. *Story of Stopping Bull* offers a glimpse of New Mexico's creative potential."

*Story of Stopping Bull* will be seen at festivals, and within high schools, as an anti-bullying conversation piece. The team plans to produce another short this winter.

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# THE 3RD ANNUAL "And the Nominees Are..." LMGI AWARDS

by Lori Balton

**CONGRATULATIONS!** The nominations for the 3rd Annual LMGI Awards make us all look good! The Awards honor international features, television, and commercials in which the creative use of filming locations sets the tone, creates a character and enhances the narrative. The LMGI Awards also honor outstanding service by Film Commissions for above and beyond production support.

Winners will be revealed during a formal ceremony, hosted by David Doumeng on Saturday evening, April 23, 2016, at the recently restored Alex Theatre, in Glendale, California.

We are proud to announce our Honorary Award recipients. Director Wes Anderson honors us by receiving the Eva Monley Award. Director Michael Mann will present the Lifetime Achievement Award to location manager Janice Polley. Actor Amy Brenneman and director Brad Silberling team up to accept our Humanitarian Award.

And former location manager Steve Dayan, the head of the Hollywood Teamsters, Local 399, will receive the Trailblazer Award. We celebrate these industry professionals for their overall contributions to filmmaking and to the global community beyond.

This year's submissions encompass creative use of international locations. We opened the submission process this year. Production companies, film commissions, directors, producers and filmmaking fans from around the world provided potential nominees reflecting our expanded global focus.

Additional Award presenters and ticketing information will be announced in the near future. Further inquiries regarding the LMGI Awards may be directed to Lori Balton and Robin Citrin at [awards@locationmanagers.org](mailto:awards@locationmanagers.org). For sponsorship opportunities, please contact [LMGIawards@ingledodd.com](mailto:LMGIawards@ingledodd.com).

Wes Anderson





## THE NOMINEES FOR THE 2016 LOCATION MANAGERS GUILD INTERNATIONAL AWARDS ARE:

### OUTSTANDING LOCATIONS IN A PERIOD FILM

**BRIDGE OF SPIES** (Klaus Darrelmann/LMGI and Markus Bensch – Europe; Jason Farrar – New York)

**MAD MAX: FURY ROAD** (Simon Crook and Paul Tomlinson)

**THE REVENANT** (Robin Mounsey and Bruce Brownstein/LMGI)

**STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON** (Alison A. Taylor/LMGI)

**TRUMBO** (David Thornsberry/LMGI)

### OUTSTANDING LOCATIONS IN A CONTEMPORARY FILM

**BLACKHAT** (Janice Polley/LMGI and Julie Hannum/LMGI)

**BLACK MASS** (Charlie Harrington and Benjamin Dewey)

**CREED** (Patricia Taggart and Dan Gorman/LMGI)

**OUR BRAND IS CRISIS** (Batou Chandler/LMGI – New Orleans; Luis Estrella/LMGI – Puerto Rico)

**SICARIO** (S. Todd Christensen/LMGI and Shani Orona/LMGI)

### OUTSTANDING LOCATIONS IN A PERIOD TELEVISION SERIES

**AQUARIUS** (Michael Haro/LMGI and Stacey Brashear)

**FARGO** (Matt Palmer/LMGI and Rob Hilton)

**GAME OF THRONES: SEASON 5** (Robert Boake/LMGI and Tate Araez)

**GOTHAM** (Keith Adams/LMGI and Pat Sones)

**SLEEPY HOLLOW: SEASON 3** (Nancy Haecker/LMGI and Ryan Taylor)

### OUTSTANDING LOCATIONS IN A CONTEMPORARY TELEVISION SERIES

**BETTER CALL SAUL** (Christian Diaz de Bedoya)

**BOSCH** (Robert Paulsen and Paul Schreiber/LMGI)

**MR. ROBOT** (Demian Resnick)

**SENSE8** (Marco Giacalone/LMGI and Bill Bowling/LMGI)

**TRUE DETECTIVE: SEASON 2** (Michael Chickey/LMGI and Caleb Duffy/LMGI)

### OUTSTANDING LOCATIONS IN A COMMERCIAL

**APPLE MUSIC – HISTORY OF SOUND**

(Peter Orth/LMGI, David Henriksen, David McKinney/LMGI)

**BUDWEISER – LOST DOG** (Patrick Riley/LMGI)

**CHEVY – CHEVY ANTHEM** (Sean Alquist)

**FACEBOOK – FRIEND REQUEST** (Adam Butt/LMGI and Wilson Wu)

**TOYOTA TACOMA – LET'S GO PLACES: COUNTDOWN**

(Scott Logan/LMGI and Scott Trimble/LMGI)

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LOCATION MANAGERS GUILD  
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# CAREER FOCUS

“I love the job for its complexities and challenges ... No other career connects you as intimately to such a vast cross section of society.”

## Chris Baugh

“I REALLY DON’T KNOW WHAT TO TELL YOU.” IT WAS JUNE 1993 AT UC IRVINE. “GOOD LUCK,” WAS THE ADVICE GIVEN TO ME AS I SAT IN THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR’S FINAL OFFICE HOURS VISIT. I WAS DESPERATE FOR AN ENTRY-LEVEL JOB IN FILM PRODUCTION.



Chris Baugh. All photos courtesy of Chris Baugh unless noted.

I stared past the spectacle-wearing academic to the manicured campus outside his window. I had just spent four years earning a bachelor’s degree in film studies ... film history, theory and criticism. And then I spent another year abroad studying critical film theory and French—at the Sorbonne - Paris III. I spoke three languages and could quote masters of cinema from Méliès and Bazin to Scorsese and Kael. I could analyze semiotic subtext in a scene and write a hell of a film review. But, I didn’t know a single person actually working in the Hollywood film industry. I had no family connections. No alumni connections. I couldn’t name a single

production department position.

Three months later, in a small apartment in Pasadena, I depleted my savings while writing a spec script, *The Blue Desert*. My former classmates were giving up on the dream ... moving to careers in insurance, cellular phones and back into academia. The situation grew dire. I got a temp delivery job that took me to all parts of the Los Angeles area. I cold-called the production lists in *Variety*. I attended IFP (Independent Feature Project) mixers. I volunteered as crew on student films. But a real industry job eluded me. For fun, while doing my deliveries, I liked to search for well-known filming locations. I tracked down the classic



Working on Steve Jobs in San Francisco

locations for *Blade Runner*, *Chinatown* and *A Touch of Evil*. This was long before the Internet. It was the closest I could get to the business. I had a good hustle, a photographic spatial memory, but no direction.

That changed after volunteering for the Telluride

Film Festival. The exposure to international, independent and historic films and their makers fired up my passion to find a way in. I had lunch with Robert Rodriguez, hours before the career-launching premier of *El Mariachi*. I chatted over coffee with Wim Wenders, the prestigious German director. I bumped into producer/director Frank Marshall on Colorado Avenue and ended up spending a couple of hours talking about films, how he got where he did ... and my dilemma. He was warm and gracious. Frank’s recommendation: Become a location manager. That had been his path. He laid out the job and it sounded like a pretty good fit. That was the first real tip for me. His advice: “Find a location manager to hire you.”

So, I returned to Pasadena and square one. I knew zero



Portrait of the artist as a young man ... studying abroad, Nevers, France



location managers. I called Ricky Frasier, then the head of the Hollywood Teamsters Local 399. He gave me the same advice Frank Marshall did. I got a list of managers from the California Film Commission and wrote about 300 personal letters which achieved a one percent response rate. Two managers were willing to meet me in person ... and one manager, Amanda Gill, passed my name on to a low-budget Sundance movie called *The Doom Generation*.

I interviewed and got the job, agreeing to do it for little money and with no assistants. I locked my office door and called Amanda. "OK, what do I do?" "Get them what they ask for ... Say 'I'll find out,' not 'I don't know,' and then do it. Figure it out." She told me, "You'll be fine." I never worked so hard in my life. *Doom* was a road movie shot around Los Angeles ... entirely on location ... mostly at night. We shot in Pacoima gangland, heavy industrial zones, high desert and some very dumpy motels. The Northridge earthquake hit the first week, destroying a Northridge market we intended to film in that day. Multiple major freeways were destroyed. Functioning gas stations were hard to find. I worked around the clock. Those were the days of pagers and fax machines ... no cellphones or email. I slept in my car while sitting set, hand drew the maps in the back seat ... began to hear "Locations" barked on the walkie in my sleep. It was easier to buy new clothes at Target than doing laundry. I used the showers of our film locations themselves ... if they had them. Six-day weeks. It was intense. But, like I said, I had a good hustle. I did figure it out. It was the heyday of indie films back in the early '90s. *Doom Generation* went

to Sundance and Gregg Araki, the director, hired me to do his next feature ... which also went to Sundance. Back then, in the indie world, crew sizes were rather small ... everyone under 30. The actors, producers and crew would pile into a condo up in Park City to attend the festivals. We partied our asses off. For the next five years, I jumped from one indie film to the next, sometimes out of state ... It was a great life. But, I still couldn't get the union to give me the time of day. At a certain point, I decided to give directing a shot. In the indie world, directing a film was a real possibility.

I dusted off *The Blue Desert*, made a short and snuck into the AFM through the loading dock. I went door-to-door until I met a shyster producer who was about to get prosecuted for stealing the money intended for a pre-sold Shannon Tweed movie. He had \$250,000 left to make a 35mm sexy thriller or go to jail. He said, "I don't give a fu\*\* about *The Blue Desert*. Do you have any sexy thriller scripts?" I made one up, on the spot, about hustlers fighting over a suitcase of money and he bought it. I told him I needed a week to polish the script and cranked it out from scratch with an indie friend, Geri Barger. A month later, I was directing Shannon Tweed in my first feature. I pulled in all my Sundance buddies and we made a pretty good little film called *Power Play*. It made it to HBO and Blockbuster. I still get checks. The experience led to a larger directing opportunity, *Ping!*, with Shirley Jones, Judge Reinhold and Lou Ferrigno. It was a kid's movie, about a Chihuahua who protects a home from burglars ... kind of a *Home Alone* ripoff with a Chihuahua instead of



Sundance days: *The Desert Blue* in Goldfield, NV, with Chris Larsen.

a kid. It was distributed by Twentieth Century Fox. But, being released a week before 9/11, the film made very little money. And that was the end of my directing career. Then, three guys named John launched me into the world of big-time location management.

After *Ping!* flopped, it took me about a year to burn through the money. My next on-set job, after directing a studio feature, was picking up trash on *Donnie Darko*. It was humiliating. The grip department had worked on *Ping!*. Just brutal. It turned out the location department was short handed and location manager John Agolia pulled me in. I had never been an assistant before. John championed me into 399, just like that. I will always be grateful. I worked hard. I knew how to do things for less. I could solve problems quickly and independently. They told me that I had "an eye." I found that my skill set was in demand. I owe a lot to John Grant and John Panzarella, who introduced me to the world of the Hollywood blockbuster. Both *The Majestic* and *The Italian Job* had me helping to close

huge sections of Hollywood Boulevard for extended time periods. Panzarella carried me on a number of his projects and graciously taught me the ropes of navigating the quagmire of studio politics.

So after all of the twists and turns, I looked in the mirror and I finally saw a location manager. I love the job for its complexity and challenges. I'm fascinated by the evolving magic of the production designer's work. The conversations you overhear in the scout van are the best graduate film studies on the planet. I've worked with 40-plus directors and creative teams. Every time, every show, I learn something new. A perspective ... a style, strength, a weakness. But probably, what keeps me coming back the most is the job's exposure to humanity. No other career connects you as intimately to such a vast cross section of society. It's an education on the world that only we know. Cutting a deal at a billionaire's kitchen table in San Marino and then an hour later, making arrangements with a neighborhood gang leader in Pico-Union to film on their turf. Understanding the parameters of military bases, airports, seaports,



*Baugh scouting with Ben Affleck and team on Argo. Photo by Lori Balton/LMGI*

redwood forests, glaciers or just doing a light study on top of a skyscraper. Learning to respect tribal etiquette, Chinese business practice and Third World village life, helping a middle-class homeowner through an unexpected death of a child ... Negotiating with those struggling with drug abuse, mental illness, narcissism, anger issues, loneliness ... It's our job to find common ground with anyone, anywhere, anytime and I'm fascinated by it. With mass media, I found a way to be intimately involved with a very complex, very powerful form of art that reaches an incredible amount of people around the world and remains a permanent record of our culture forever. I think that's pretty cool.

I've developed a few philosophical ideals that seem

to continually help my career. The film school background was not the wasted time I once thought it was. In fact, semiotics, the study of signs and meaning, is exactly what we do as we scout for locations. Film history comes up on almost every show. International cinema is a surprisingly useful reference tool when fishing for elusive concepts. I think one thing I do well as a location scout is the ability to think deeply and abstractly about what I'm looking for and why its particular role is important. Given the opportunity, I will meditate a bit not just on what the scene is going to look like, but what it is going to feel like, as well.

Locations ... places, emote a subliminal layer, as well as the obvious. Once you tune in to it, your suggestions carry more weight with the creative

team. If a strong rapport exists, I will often suggest something unscripted out of left field. If the tone is right, they'll likely go for it. It's nice to make those kinds of contributions. I think my one-man-department days from independent film has given me an edge in that I'm not so much hung up on how things have been done in the past. Whether it's fleecing money out of the budget, finding fresh locations or a logistics goal with no obvious solution, I try to evaluate problems with an open, creative mind. That means when the roadblocks land in front of you, take a step back, reflect, empathize with your challengers, create a two-sided solution and push as hard as you can. I care a lot about how the final product turns out and make an effort to put the needs of a show in front of the personal agendas. If you're lucky enough to find the types of projects you feel a passion for, it makes it a lot easier to make choices that are best for the film despite whatever coals you have to walk over to get there. Finally, I recognize that we are in a business that must fit within certain monetary parameters to sustain itself. With advance warning and good, assertive communication, budget challenges are not

scary. Respect the budget parameters laid in front of you and don't take the producer-director money battle personally. It's part of the process. Location managers are often just simply information conduits. Finally, if you are feeling truly mistreated by your superiors and repeated efforts to address concerns have not been fruitful, find a qualified replacement and leave the show in a professional



*With location scout Lori Balton, for an NPR interview on the set of We Bought a Zoo.*

manner. Your sanity is necessary to succeed in the long run. When you find a team with the right chemistry, do everything you can to help them succeed. It's nice to do things you can be proud of. That's how I see it, anyway.

*Chris Baugh has worked with directors Ron Howard, Danny Boyle, Cameron Crowe and Ben Affleck. His credits include the feature films Steve Jobs, The Gambler, Transcendence, Argo, We Bought a Zoo, Angels & Demons, The Holiday and the TV series Arrested Development.*



*On set with KALMs Mike Betz and Ryan Neary at the Ontario Airport, Argo.*





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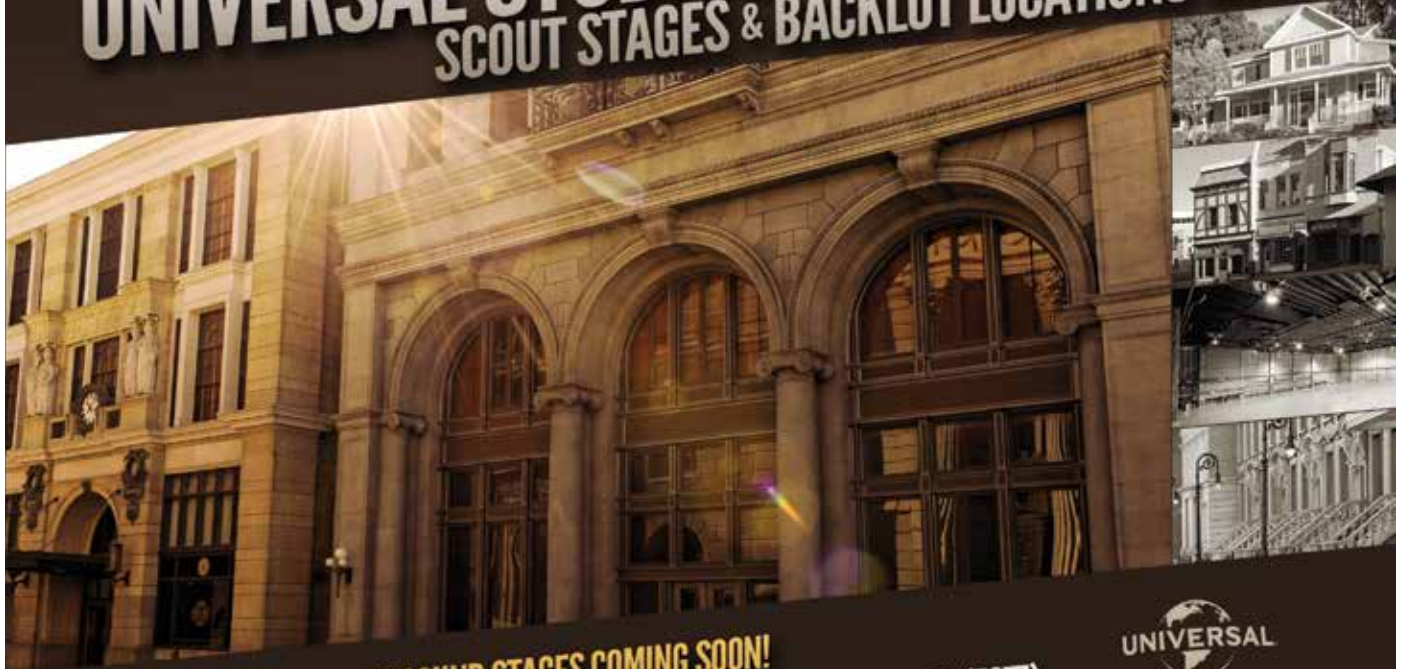
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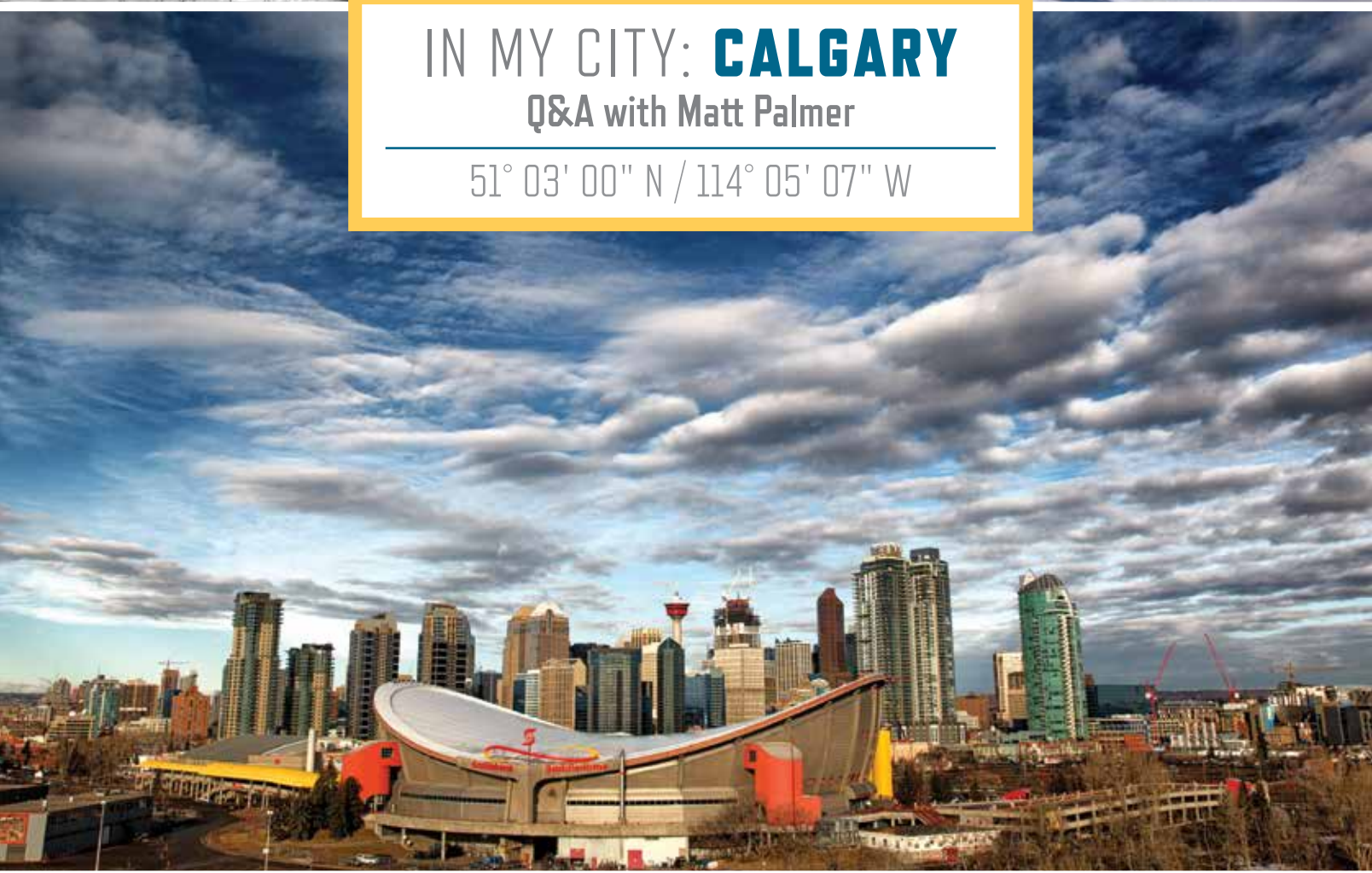




## IN MY CITY: **CALGARY**

Q&A with Matt Palmer

51° 03' 00" N / 114° 05' 07" W





## Co-editor **Stevie Nelson** gets a tour of Calgary from member **Matt Palmer**

**Stevie:** HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN LOCATIONS? HOW DID YOU START & WHAT DO YOU PRIMARILY WORK ON?

**Matt Palmer:** I was born and raised in Calgary. I went to film school at Concordia University in Montreal, and was focused on directing. After I graduated, I worked as programmer on a film festival, and one day, a location manager came through our office, and I gave him my resume. Six months later, he had passed my name on to location manager Rino Pace. I was working at a hotel in Calgary, trying to figure out how I was going to get into the business, when I got a phone call from Rino, who was working on Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, asking if I was available to work the next day. I jumped at the opportunity. The first job I was given was putting together some location photos. I ended up being hired as the Office PA, which was a terrific experience.

In 1993, I went to Vancouver looking for work when I heard *Legends of the Fall* was setting up a production office in Calgary. I called location manager Murray Ord and asked if he had any work. He told me to be at his house the following Monday morning. I quickly drove back to Calgary and when I showed up at his house, he tossed me a script and told me to start scouting. Murray gave me some basic instructions, and camera in hand, I set out on my way. It was a daunting task, but incredibly interesting to be scouting for mansions, box canyons and WWI vintage Paris hospitals.

On one occasion, I was scouting with production designer Lilly Kilvert on the Stoney Indian Reserve west of Calgary looking for a vantage point on the Bow River, where we could build the family cemetery plot. We had a permit for scouting from the Stoney First Nation, but as we were driving across the field, I noticed an old pickup truck in pursuit. We stopped and got out, but we were both a bit nervous. The truck screeched to a halt, and an old man got out with a shotgun asking what we were doing. As soon as we told him we were scouting for a movie, his demeanor changed. He smiled, "Oh, I was an extra on *Little Big Man* and *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*."

Between 2002 and 2013, I took a break working as a location manager so I could focus on directing documentaries. My latest project is about the future of the global energy system. Financing the project has been challenging, so I came back to the location world in 2013, serving as a key assistant location manager on *Interstellar*.



Photo courtesy of Matt Palmer/LMGI

I work on lots of commercials between film and TV projects. I recently finished the second season of *Fargo* for FX, and the first season of *Wynonna Earp* for Syfy with my location manager partner, Rob Hilton.

**Stevie:** WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE PRIMARY DRAW FOR FILMING IN & AROUND CALGARY? WHAT KIND OF "LOOKS" ARE THERE?

**MP:** Many shows come to Calgary because of the numerous award-winning shows that have been made here. The *Legends of the Fall* look was sought after for many years. We have a crew base that is experienced in working in some very difficult conditions. Our crews can literally scale mountains, ford rivers, and know how to work in extreme cold, snow, heat, mud, dust, wind and rain. We get it all here weather-wise, sometimes in the same day, and having crews that know how to deal with these conditions helps save productions money.

Beyond that, Calgary is a very modern city surrounded by prairies to the east and south, foothills and mountains to the west. Ninety minutes northeast is the area of Drumheller and Brooks where there are great badland landscapes. So within reasonable driving distances, we have a great diversity of looks.

The peak of spring and summer brings up to 16 hours of daylight. The lower arc of the sun in the fall and winter were used beautifully in *The Revenant*. Being close to the mountains and big skies provides us with a quality of light that cinematographers love, and the cloudscapes are incredibly dramatic.

**Stevie:** WHAT TYPES OF PRODUCTIONS FILM IN CALGARY?

**MP:** Traditionally, Calgary has been known as the place to come and shoot Westerns. A lot of iconic films have shot here including *Days of Heaven*, *Little Big Man*, *Unforgiven*, *Legends of the Fall*, *The Assassination of Jesse James, Brokeback Mountain* and most recently, *The Revenant*. We have five Western town back lots close to Calgary, each with a different feel and look.

# IN MY CITY: CALGARY

TV shows like FX's *Fargo* have been great in showcasing the city of Calgary, and hopefully, this will attract more shows to take advantage of what the city itself offers with its clean, modern look. Most of the work in Calgary balances between big features, television series and miniseries.

## **Stevie:** WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN YOUR JOB?

**MP:** Time to scout and secure decisions on locations is a big factor that determines how stressful life will be, especially on a series. We are always balancing production decision timelines with the amount of time that is required to get contracts signed, secure permits, get prep crews in and get all of the logistics tied up. And of course, budgets often add another layer to the puzzle.

Because we do a lot of work outside the city, and sometimes on land with limited or no vehicle access, we do a lot of road building or road maintenance. Depending on the place we are filming, we might build gravel or wood chip roads or use rig mats to build temporary roads. The Location Department hires the contractors, does the budget and supervises to make sure it's done properly. In winter, when there are snowstorms, it can be a challenge to find crews to plow and sand roads for access. And of course, paperwork is always there waiting after being out on the road all day.

## **Stevie:** WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES TO FILMING SPECIFICALLY IN CALGARY?

**MP:** The biggest challenge was the super-charged economy as Calgary is the center of the energy industry in Canada. Up until recently, vacancy rates sat close to zero and parking was

as expensive as New York City. This meant production office and studio space were very hard to find. The recent crash in oil prices has drastically changed things. Calgary and Alberta's economy are now in a deep recession. Floors of A grade office space and warehouses are now empty and available for productions. The economic downturn combined with the low Canadian dollar should help Calgary become even more attractive to filmmakers.

In March, we will celebrate the official opening of the Calgary Film Centre, the first production studio space built in Calgary. It's a great first step in providing key infrastructure.

Weather is always an issue for producers. Our weather has recently been in the trades because of the challenges faced by *The Revenant*: a lack of snow during the winter of 2015. It was an off year for snow, combined with mild weather. Warm winds from the west over the mountains called "chinooks" shift temperatures 10 degrees to 30 degrees from negative to positive within hours (the reverse can happen with a cold snap), and the mild weather can last for days or weeks, melting the snow.

## **Stevie:** WHAT ARE A LOCATION MANAGER'S FAVORITE "LOOKS" OR LOCATIONS IN CALGARY? WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL FAVORITES & WHY?

**MP:** I have a lot of favorite places in and around Calgary, but the most popular places are just outside the city.

CL Studios was founded around 1994 when the television series *Lonesome Dove* (based on the miniseries) started, and they built a full Western town that has played time periods





from the 1860s to the 1920s. CL is a cattle ranch a half-hour west of the city, nestled in the foothills, with great mountain views. The landowners, Marshall and Teresa Copithorne, set aside 450 acres of their operation specifically for filming, and they understand how to work with the industry. Over the years, different productions have added to the town and the back lot. Most recently, the AMC TV series *Hell on Wheels* rebuilt much of the town and added a railway. There are also three period farms. Season two of *Fargo* transformed one of the ranch houses into the headquarters of the Gerhardt crime family. *Fargo* also built a 1950s roadside diner called The Waffle Hut off the main access road into the town. CL has great infrastructure including ample parking for base camps, work trucks and crew, three-phase power in the town site, and lots of great forests and fields and roads that allow productions to maximize shooting days by keeping things in close proximity.

Kananaskis Country is a large provincial park to the west of Calgary that has spectacular mountains, lakes, forests and rivers. Permitting in Kananaskis can take a week or more, depending on the complexity of what is being done, and the permit officers are extremely knowledgeable about the filming process. One of my favorite experiences there was on the finale of the TV series *Due South*. We built a submarine on a frozen lake surrounded by mountain peaks and staged a massive battle with snowmobiles, machine guns and Royal Canadian Mounties parachuting out of a giant military aircraft.

Another favorite area is the Drumheller Valley, 90 minutes northeast of Calgary and Dinosaur Provincial Park in Brooks. These areas are world famous for their rich deposits of dinosaur bones, and they are an area of beautiful desert badlands. The town of Drumheller has a great 1960s vintage feel, and has lots of hotel rooms to house crews. The really great coulees are privately owned by film-friendly people.

**Stevie: WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE OR MOST MEMORABLE FILMING EXPERIENCES?**

**MP:** The first memorable film experience that comes to mind is working on Michael Winterbottom's feature *The Claim* as both an assistant location manager and a 2nd unit director in 2000. An 1880s vintage Western town was constructed in the middle of a valley at Fortress Mountain, a location that is a one hour and 45-minute drive from Calgary. Fortress was still operating as a ski hill at the time (it now features cat skiing) and is one of the most popular filming locations in Alberta because it is on lease land, instead of the provincial



or national park. Fortress has been used for many films including the finale of *Inception*, Discovery's *Klondike* and *The Revenant*.

The town for *The Claim* was constructed between November and the end of January. The valley where the town was built is accessible only by snowmobile or snow cat, sits at about 8,000 feet, and is subject to high winds and lots of snow. All the building materials had to be pulled in by snow cats on skids. All of the buildings were insulated and outfitted with a furnace so that any building that was not a practical interior could be used for weather cover by the crew, as well as a place to store all their gear. This became an added complication when the town was destroyed in a practical burn at the end of the show and we built a secondary tent town to house crew and gear.

Filming of *The Claim* took place for seven weeks on the mountain in the middle of winter. Daily logistics were daunting. The catering kitchen was pulled in and a set was constructed around it. The same was done with a washroom trailer which was serviced by a pumper unit on a skid pulled by a snow cat twice a day. Giant people-movers used to ferry tourists on the Columbia Icefields were brought in to transport extras to set. For some key scenes that were 1,000 feet higher up the mountain, we brought in Weatherhaven tents specially designed for high arctic work. *The Claim* was one of the hardest shows I have ever done. It was also one of the most satisfying experiences.

My other favorite experience was working on the second season of *Fargo* last year. I loved season one of *Fargo* and am a big Coen Brothers fan, and once had the immense pleasure of scouting with the Coen Brothers. We had an amazing location team for *Fargo* including my co-location manager, Robert Hilton, our ALM's Katie Kidd, Luke Antosz, Jerry Skibinsky and Javid Best, plus our trainees and amazing PAs, who all worked tirelessly.

# IN MY CITY: CALGARY

Season two was a great challenge as the story shifted in time to 1979. Calgary is a rapidly growing, modern city and there is a premium on making things new and shiny. We were fortunate to start pre-production with the first six scripts, which helped give us time to scout. Show runner Noah Hawley nails the Coen Brothers tone so well. He is also very understanding and collaborative about making the scripts work with production realities.

For one episode, I needed to find a WWII vintage French chateau for a remake of a fictitious 1942 Ronald Reagan war film. One great possibility, the iconic Scottish Baronial-style Banff Springs Hotel, was too far away. Then we remembered that there was still part of an old set from the World War I period movie *Passchendaele* on the Tsuu T'sina First Nation on the west edge of Calgary. The set is the remnants of a bombed-out French town. Production designer Warren Young felt he could make it work, so we brought Noah out to see it so he could write specifically to the location. Two days later, I got a call from my contact at the Tsuu T'sina informing me we could not use the location because of new legal issues with the Department of National Defense. The set sits on a piece of land that was used for decades as a firing range. I was back at square one. In the end, I found a 115-year-old stone barn that we were able to use as an element to build what was needed.

Like every show, *Fargo* had its challenges but we came together as a locations team to make it all happen as seamlessly as possible, helped in no small part by the rest of the crew and fantastic producers.

## **Stevie:** DOES ALBERTA OFFER ANY INCENTIVES TO HOLLYWOOD FILMMAKERS?

**MP:** Alberta has a grant system that covers anywhere from 26% to 30% of Alberta-based costs. The fund operates a little different than a tax credit, is pretty clear-cut and often a payout happens in a much shorter time frame than a tax credit.

There is also the Canadian labor-based tax credit for eligible productions. Most of our unions and guilds offer first-year-

series incentives on labor rates. In March of 2016, Calgary will finally have our first designed studio facility. Everyone in the industry is excited about this project which has been 30 years in the making.

## **Stevie:** WHAT ARE YOUR TOOLS OF THE TRADE?

**MP:** My trusty Canon 5D III with a selection of zooms and primes, but the 24mm-70mm is my go-to scouting lens. I sold my second 5D III body last year and added the Sony A7s, primarily for shooting documentaries, but it is also a great scouting camera with a 16mm-35mm lens and the amazing low-light capability. My iPhone 6+ is great for shooting videos for driving work—we did that a lot on *Fargo*, and the big screen is great for showing photos when we are out on surveys, or going back to set to show a director new location choices.

Lightroom and Dropbox are key programs for processing and cataloguing photos and uploading them. We use Ortelius for making maps. Apps like Panascout are nice for snapping photos with GPS information attached, and Helios is great for tracking the sun, although you do need good cell coverage for that, and we are sometimes in spots where that can be a problem.

Apart from that, clothing for all types of weather, along with an assortment of boots, is necessary depending on the time of year and potential weather, and if I am scouting in the mountains.

## **Stevie:** WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THE JOB?

**MP:** When I first started in the business, I thought the clearest path to being a director, apart from just making movies, was to be an AD. (I have worked as both an AD and a second unit director.) I fell into locations by accident, but soon saw the advantages of being in locations. As a location manager or scout, I get to exercise my creative skills in interpreting the script. Location managing requires diverse skills, especially people skills, and being able to quickly solve problems creatively. Every show is different depending on genre and time period. While we often go to some locations many times, they look different on every production, and that is tremendous fun to watch. It's also great fun to make challenging locations work.

## **Stevie:** WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE LMGI & HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER?

**MP:** I became aware of the LMGI last year, but I was busy and didn't have time to look into membership. I like the idea of an organization that brings more attention to what location pros do, increasing the level of professionalism, ethics and conduct. Caring for locations is critical to the long-term health of the industry in any jurisdiction. I was nominated for an LMGI Award for *Fargo* in December, which spurred me to join. I'm honored to write about the career and city I love, and I look forward to a deeper commitment to the LMGI by volunteering on a committee.





## Matt's Private Tour



### MUST-SEE PLACE:

The Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller is a fantastic place and is just 90 minutes northeast of Calgary, ensconced in the spectacular badlands. Drumheller and nearby Dinosaur Provincial Park in Brooks are two of the great areas of the world for deposits of dinosaur bones. The Museum is world class. You can even go out on digs with the archaeologists.

### FAVORITE SHOP:

Without a doubt, The Camera Store in downtown Calgary is my candy store. The owners, Peter and Julian, are great guys. Julian used to be an on-set stills photographer. The Camera Store has an extensive collection of gear from consumer to pro level, and a growing pro video section. Their staff is knowledgeable, and don't try to sell you gear you don't need.

### FAVORITE RESTAURANT:

The culinary scene in Calgary started exploding about 10 years ago. Calgary is a wealthy city and boasts a lot of incredible chefs and restaurants, some of which have been listed as best in the country and world, for anybody who pays attention to lists. My favorite is Mercato West. It's two minutes from my house, and they have another location close to downtown. Mercato West has two sections, a dining room which also features a large bar, where the cool angles allow parties of four to sit in comfort. On the other side of the restaurant is an Italian deli and pizza bar, great for families. They serve lots of traditional Italian dishes like gnocchi, risotto, linguine, or you can eat family style. Their giant T-bone steak can be a task for four people to finish. Food, wine and service are all exceptional.

### PLACE TO SEE BY NIGHT:

Santiago Calatrava's "Peace Bridge over the Bow River" created controversy because it went over the \$20 million budget. Many residents hated the pedestrian walkway and it was openly mocked. It has since become probably the

most photographed landmark in Calgary. It connects downtown Calgary with the northwest neighborhoods of Kensington and Sunnyside. At night, this red web of bridge lights reflects off the Bow River, with Calgary's glorious skyline rising in the distance.

### BEST DAY TRIP:

Lake Louise is the crown jewel of the Canadian Rockies in Banff National Park. The lake is two hours west of Calgary, and 45 minutes past the iconic town of Banff. Lake Louise is a visual wonder, an emerald green lake surrounded by mountain peaks, glaciers and the spectacular Chateau Lake Louise, a Fairmont resort and UNESCO World Heritage Site. At Lake Louise, you can hike, climb, ski, canoe or eat at some great local restaurants including the dining room at The Post Hotel.

### FAVORITE NEIGHBORHOOD:

My favorite neighborhood is probably Inglewood, the original downtown of Calgary. Inglewood is at the confluence of the Elbow and Bow Rivers and one can walk, bike or run to or from Inglewood along the extensive pedestrian pathways that follow the rivers. Some of Inglewood's highlights include the Fort Calgary Museum, the Calgary Zoo, Inglewood Bird Sanctuary and some fantastic stores and restaurants including the recently opened Nash Restaurant, Rouge, Dragon Pearl—my favorite Chinese "go to," and Salt & Pepper, an excellent Mexican restaurant.

### FAVORITE LOCAL ARTIST:

My favorite local artist is k.d. lang, who hails from Consort, Alberta. I remember

her blowing the roof off of the Jack Singer Concert Hall at an event for the Calgary Winter Olympics in 1988 when she was just starting out as a country/punk artist. Most recently, the Alberta Ballet created a new work celebrating her work and life story called *Balletlujah*.

### BEST BAR/CLUB:

I have a young family so I don't get out much, but my nephew Ted, a bit of a renaissance man (filmmaker, writer, DJ, artist) opened a new bar with some partners last year called Good Luck. Good Luck is an intimate dive bar that holds 60 people. Ted programs some really eclectic and fun events including drag races and film nights. Vice.com called Good Luck "Calgary's Best New Secret" and "refreshingly mediocre."

### BEST PLACE TO HEAR MUSIC:


Calgary has a very vibrant music scene, and has just created the title "Calgary's Music Mile" for an area that stretches from Inglewood to the East Village and the home of the new National Music Centre (NMC). The \$150 million NMC is an architectural marvel of design, and is partially built around the iconic King Eddy Hotel, which in its prime was known as the home of the blues and hosted all the blues greats before being condemned in 2004. The NMC promises to change the Calgary music community with a number of performance spaces for artists of all levels and the largest keyboard collection in the world. The collection also features the recently restored mobile recording studio built by the Rolling Stones for the album *Sticky Fingers*, and it will be used to record a new generation of musicians' work.

### BEST VANTAGE POINT/SCENIC VIEW:

Scotsman's Hill rises just to the east of the Calgary Stampede grounds and is the favored place for people to watch the fireworks during the Calgary Stampede every July. From Scotsman's Hill, you look west over the Calgary Saddlehome—home of the NHL Flames—to the shining towers of Calgary, to the rocky mountains.

# Alison Taylor: STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

by Nancy Mills



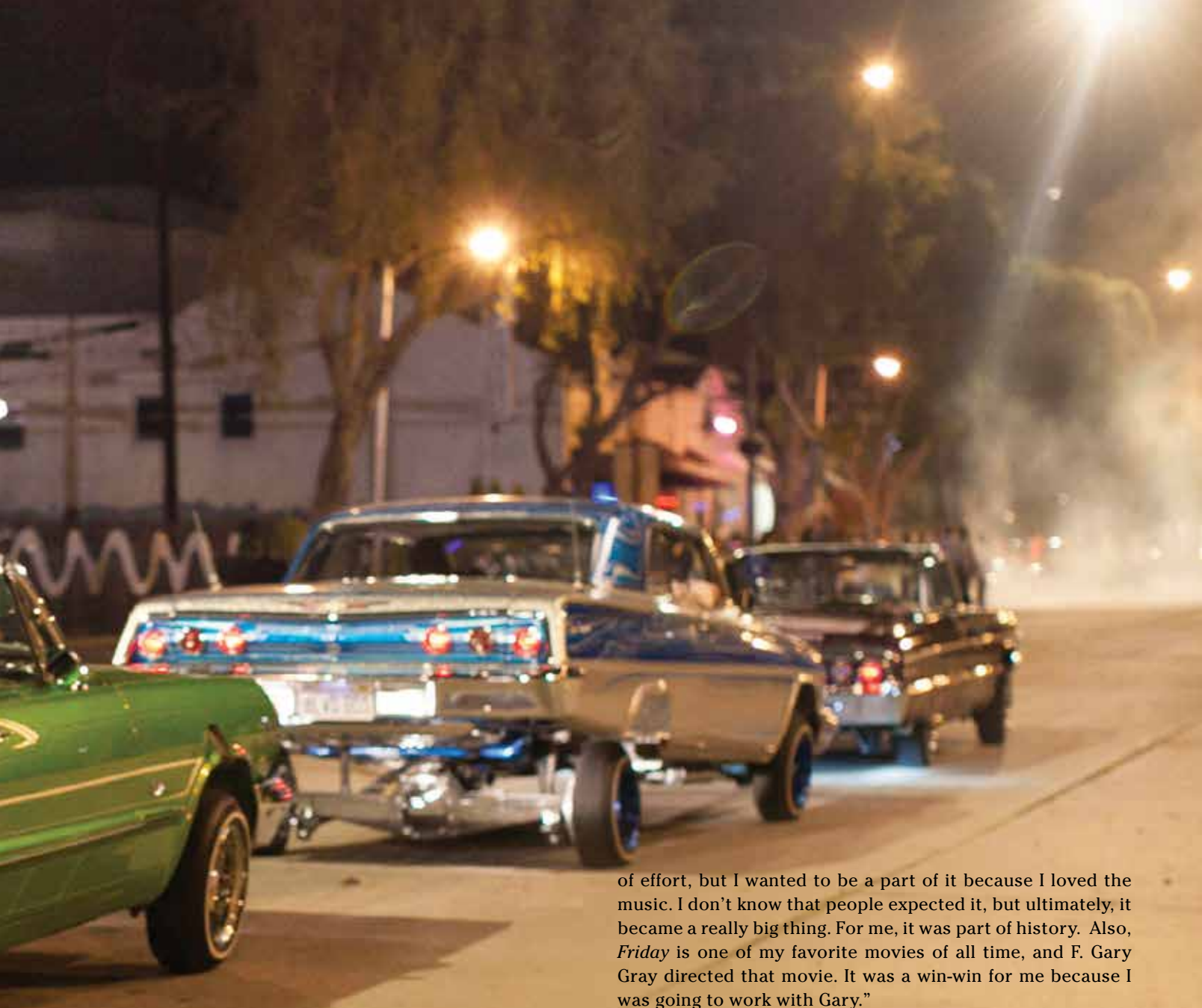
**S**traight *Outta Compton* opens with what appears to be a low-key scene of a young guy parking on a residential street, sauntering up to a home and banging on the door. However, nothing is low key after that—especially when an LAPD battering ram roars down the street, drives onto the lawn and attacks what turns out to be a drug-holding house.

The sequence lasts just under five minutes, but it took supervising location manager Alison Taylor, LMGI and her team several weeks to make it happen. It was worth the effort because it sets the atmosphere and energy that has turned this original story of N.W.A, the groundbreaking hip hop group, into a major box-office hit.

Degnan Boulevard in Leimert Park stands in for Crenshaw Boulevard

All photos courtesy of Alison Taylor/LMGI, except where noted





The film opens in 1986 in Compton, Calif., an inner-city community struggling with poverty, drugs, gangs and police violence. A group of young men get together and gradually transform their frustration and anger about their daily life into a new kind of music.

The drama took 50 days to shoot on nearly 50 locations, with a budget of just \$29 million. “We hardly slept,” Taylor says. “We lived and breathed the film the entire time. Everybody was just grinding. I’ve never seen a crew so wiped out. We won the (2015) COLA Award for “Location Team of the Year for Studio Feature Film,” and I was so thrilled we got that award because it *was* a team effort.”

When Taylor signed on, she didn’t immediately anticipate all the challenges *Straight Outta Compton* would pose. She was just thrilled to be working on it. “I was an N.W.A fan and a huge fan of Ice Cube and Dr. Dre,” she says. “I’m black. Omi-god! N.W.A! Yeah! I want to do it. I knew it would require a lot

of effort, but I wanted to be a part of it because I loved the music. I don’t know that people expected it, but ultimately, it became a really big thing. For me, it was part of history. Also, *Friday* is one of my favorite movies of all time, and F. Gary Gray directed that movie. It was a win-win for me because I was going to work with Gary.”

One of her first jobs was finding the best location for the opening sequence. Her brief from Gray was straightforward: “He requested a look that would represent a lower income neighborhood from the late 1980s,” Taylor says. “It needed to look like the type of area where drugs would likely be bought and sold and would seem rather scary at night.

“Logistically, we needed houses to be close together so a character could jump from rooftop to rooftop. We also needed to find an empty lot next to the main house where we could build a duplicate house to destroy with a battering ram. And, on top of all that, we had to stay in keeping with the director’s vision for the film, which used palm trees and power lines as a theme.”

Location scout Sam Gomez found the house. “It was at 104th and Budlong,” Taylor says. “The neighborhood is complicated, with rival gangs around every corner and therefore, not scouted or filmed frequently, but it was the perfect spot for the scene.”



Opening-sequence house before (left) and dressed (right).

However, safety issues seemed to outweigh everything else. “The neighborhood was so shady that even Ice Cube (one of the executive producers) told us that it was too risky to film there,” she says.

Production designer Shane Valentine explains, “He was concerned that if there were a grudge against him or any members of N.W.A, that it not be taken out on our film crew. The gangs determine who, where and when people are in these neighborhoods. It’s a layer of living that we in the film business don’t normally have to deal with on a daily basis.”

Despite the potential danger, both Valentine and Gray pressed Taylor to proceed. “Once a director falls in love with a location, it’s very hard to backtrack,” she says. “We’d been showing him houses, and they were never quite right—until we got to that house.”



Alison Taylor

So Taylor began nailing it down. Her first step was contacting Cle “Bone” Sloan, a technical advisor whom she met on the 2001 film *Training Day*. They later worked together on the TV series *Southland* and *Gang Related*. Bone, which is what he prefers to be called, also produced and directed the 2005 documentary *Bastards of the Party*, about street gangs, which aired on HBO. He is now working on another

documentary, *Surviving Straight Outta Compton*, about his experiences working on the movie.

Bone speaks highly of Taylor, describing her as “very smart and vibrant. She has a great respect for the community and they respect her. She listens and she understands. There’s a lot of arrogance when it comes to filmmaking. People will say, ‘Oh, I got permits for the street,’ and she will say, ‘That doesn’t mean anything. You need to get permission.’ She’s tenacious and versatile. If you put her in Beverly Hills, ev-

everyone loves her. If you put her in South Central, everyone loves her.”

Bone’s approach to dealing with gang-ridden neighborhoods works. “I go into neighborhoods and hire the worst people,” he says, “people who could stop the production or give the production a hard time. Me being from the same culture means they know me, and they know my reputation. That helps me. I have a little dirt under my fingernails from back in the day.” A former gang member who served time in prison, Bone insists he is not afraid to go into any area. “These neighborhoods used to be afraid of me,” he says. “There are two main stories in Hollywood—cops and robbers. I really know the robbing side because I grew up in the streets.”

To clear the Budlong location, he says, “I got on the streets and said, ‘My name is Bone. Have you ever heard of me? This is what I’m doing now. It’s my job to offer you an opportunity to do this film. If you want to make history with us, I can hire you. If you want to get into the arts, I can help you.’ I speak their language. I’ve buried, bled, cried and celebrated with them. I tell them, ‘This won’t be a one-time operation. I promise you if we pull this off without problems, more productions will come.’ We keep going back, and these guys earn easy money. Sometimes they become production security or assistants. A lot have gotten SAG (background) vouchers as extras.”

Bone’s toughest location to clear was 126th Street and Willowbrook in Compton. “It was Dr. Dre’s mom’s house,” he says. “When he was a kid, his whole street was African-American. Now the block is Latino. There’s a Latino gang who don’t care too much for African-Americans. I had to talk to the leader and explain the historical content of the film and how it’s great for Compton race relations.

“Luckily, he knew who I was. They expected this monster, but I’m just the opposite. I had to negotiate with them and with the Mexican Mafia. I was getting calls from the penitentiary. Universal had no idea what it took to get into some of these places.”

Bone’s approach paid off, but before the production could start filming at any spot, Taylor had other details to work out.





*Eazy-E's Wet N' Wild Pool Party. Below: Eazy-E and Dr. Dre at the recording studio.*







*A crowd gathers in front of the legendary Skateland USA in Compton.*

“I never had a project where so many people had to approve locations,” she says. “First, the production designer and director signed off. Then, the locations went to Dr. Dre and Cube, who were executive producers and actual band members, and to Universal. It was a long process for everything. By the time we had everybody loving it, it gets to Cube, who was shooting a movie, so we had to wait till he was available. He said, ‘I don’t like this neighborhood.’” To try and change his mind, Gray put Cube on the phone with Taylor. “Cube clearly said, ‘I don’t want any of the crew or cast to be put in an unsafe situation,’” she recalls. “‘It’s not worth it. What’s so special about this house?’”

“He didn’t understand the legwork we were doing. We would never set up an unsafe location.” First, she told him how Bone was “clearing the streets,” as he calls it. Then, she explained how important it was to find the perfect situation to keep costs down. “We needed a house with an empty lot right next to it so we could build a fake house,” she says. “We

needed it next door so we could shoot interiors one place and tear up the other house, and we needed the specific look of that neighborhood.

“Also, it was a situation where we could work and not make the company move. It’s important to have base camp and crew parking stay in one place. Otherwise, we have to pay a bunch of truck drivers to move everything. That’s why we try to squash things together.”

Eventually, Cube signed off and final planning commenced. Taylor says, “Together with Bone, who communicated with the warring gangs, the Sheriff’s Department, LAPD, the neighborhood gang task force and our KALMs and ALM, we prepped the location for a month and filmed all night for two nights without one problem!”

Production designer Valentine was very happy. “I’m an advocate of going into the neighborhoods we’re trying to repre-





sent,” he says. “We can cheat locations just for convenience, but I think the patina and character that’s there is very difficult to reproduce. We were fortunate that we had the support of the producers to shoot in neighborhoods the characters grew up in or were part of.”

Valentine credits Taylor for making it all work. “Alison was an incredible ally to the entire project,” he says. “She did a fantastic job. I don’t think we would have found the majority of the locations without her knowledge base. We were out looking for locations 12 hours a day. We had 130 sets. Locations can sometimes accommodate more than one set, but that was a lot to accomplish in a short prep time. It was daunting in terms of how much we needed to find, and there was no relief. We were under so much stress, but Alison has a great sense of humor. We spent a lot of time together, and sometimes we just had to laugh at the situation. Gary was also a producer on the film,” he adds, “and he knew what we were up against. I think he was very sympathetic to our situ-

ation. It was super-challenging, and he was very appreciative of what Alison and I did.”

Dealing with gangs was only one of the hurdles Taylor faced on *Straight Outta Compton*. The film’s modest budget initially affected the size of the location department. Although the film was shot 100 percent on location, she started with just four people on her staff. “In the beginning, it looked almost doable,” she says. “Then, they started changing the script constantly, adding new locations and removing old ones. We didn’t have enough people to keep looking for new locations and starting to prep the ones we had.”

Why no stage work? “None of the back lots look like South Los Angeles or even Calabasas or Encino,” she says, “so they’d have to build something. And if you want to build something, it’s only practical if you have a lot of work on that set. The location we stayed at the longest was Conway Studios in Hollywood. There are several recording studios there, and we used a few different ones.

“About three weeks into filming, we were barely a step ahead of the company. From that perspective, it was the most difficult job I’ve ever done. We had really long days. It was ridiculous. We were doing a feature film in TV fashion. For TV, you have eight days to prep and eight days to shoot.” Valentine adds, “I like to have all the locations set before the tech scout, but we found just 80 percent of them when we started shooting. That’s a difficult place to be. I think the producers were overly optimistic, imagining the locations were camera-ready. But this is a period film, and things have changed drastically in 30 years. You have to be authentic to the time period. Viewers notice small details like door and window hardware.”

Finally, the production gave Taylor more people. “In the fourth week, we brought in another location manager with three people,” she says. “By the time we finished, there were 15 people who’d worked on the movie, although not everyone was there at the end.”

Taylor, who has been doing location work for two decades, had never worked in Compton. However, during her years on such TV series as *Gang Related*, *Southland*, *Lincoln Heights* and *Alias*, she became very familiar with nearby South Central, Inglewood and Lynwood. “People think Compton is a small town, but it’s a big city (around 100,000). The demographics have changed since the 1980s. It’s very Hispanic and Latino now, and that affected us. In our story, they’re all black people, but in real life, they’re brown people.”

For instance, many of the properties look different today. “In the 1980s, there were not as many cast iron fences and bars on the windows,” Taylor says. “They came from the influence of cocaine and the drug trade. People were becoming afraid. We were looking for homes without fenced-in yards, and a lot of Hispanic people have fenced areas. African-Americans have bars on the windows but not necessarily fences. A lot of times we were on mixed blocks.”



The 1992 L.A. riots sequence posed unforeseen difficulties. “It was written as one-fourth of a page,” Valentine says, “but it was very important from Gary’s perspective. He wanted to place those characters in the conflict of the riots. They were observing it, seeing that their music was prophetic. Their lyrics said it’s not as beautiful as it seems in L.A. There are these elements of violence and danger. Palm trees are not always as comforting as you think. L.A. was a boiling pot and it was going to explode. A lot of the crew lived in L.A. during the time of the riots,” he added. “We took personal pride in trying to re-create the riots as best we could. We wanted to be authentic to what was happening in L.A.’s history and U.S. history.”

“Initially, it was supposed to be stock footage that the actors watched on a TV set,” Taylor says, “but the director wanted to re-create the real thing in order to really capture the energy and mood of the time. I think it worked. “We thought it would be easy because there’s an area in North Hollywood off Laurel Canyon Boulevard, where all the commercial buildings are closed, and you can go shoot there. We took the director over to see it, and he loved it. Then he turned around and spread both his hands out and said, ‘Yeah!’ He shifted the whole thing so the side streets would be part of it, but he wanted to bring the riots out to the boulevard.”

Taylor quickly realized a lot more was at stake. “Everyone started looking at me,” she remembers. “There’s a moment for a location manager where you either become a superstar or a complete failure.”

“Gary made it more filmic,” Valentine says. “That’s his job—to try to increase the scope. But that made it much harder for Alison and me. We had three or four cameras and a 360 set. It became a good challenge.” Gray wanted to close Laurel Canyon Boulevard and mentioned to Taylor, “I closed Hollywood and Highland for *The Italian Job*,” she says.

She made it happen, and she credits Film L.A. and City Councilmember Paul Krekorian’s office with smoothing the way. “We prepped that location for days,” she says. “People would drive by and be so confused. They’d ask, ‘What happened?’ It looked so real. I became a superstar for getting it done, but I was too busy to enjoy it.”

Other problems required less dramatic solutions. “Some of the harder locations to find were houses for Dr. Dre and Eazy-E, once they got money,” Taylor recounts. “We had to avoid walls, cabinets and bathroom tiles that didn’t exist in the early 1990s. We found (manager) Jerry Heller’s house in Calabasas and the other two in Encino. Salem Street in Glendale made for a perfect Torrance in the film. It was important to show the contrast between the hoods where the guys grew up and the nice, suburban neighborhood where the group was recording. The police hassled them regularly because they looked as though they didn’t belong there.”

Taylor mentions one of her favorite locations, used for the “Crenshaw Cruising” scene. “Crenshaw Boulevard looks very different from the late 1980s,” she says, “so we used Degnan Boulevard in Leimert Park. The bones of the street were the same as old Crenshaw, but we transformed the block by removing meter heads, changing street lamps, removing street signs and dressing store fronts. Once we put low riders on the block, we were all right back on Saturday nights in the late 1980s/early 1990s, when Crenshaw was nothing but a hangout!”



A re-creation of the L.A. riots.



Looking back at her experiences on the film, Taylor says, “The creative part was finding locations. Then basically, we became event planners. Each location is an ‘event.’ You use the same skill set. You set it up accordingly and keep moving.” Taylor can speak with authority because before she began doing location work she was an event planner. “I was an international tour director in Indiana, and I used to do events on the side,” she says, “planning weddings, bachelor parties and art shows. I moved to Los Angeles with the hope of getting into event planning.

“My college roommate, Kathy McDonald Jones, was a film production coordinator. When I went to have lunch with her and walked through the office, I saw guys with pictures on their walls, and I asked her, ‘What do they do?’ She explained about location work and I said, ‘That’s like event planning. I want to talk to them.’ Kathy set up a conversation with (location manager) Gary De Galla and he let me come out and observe. Then his assistant location manager, Kristin Dewey, LMGI, had to take off a few days, and I filled in. That was my first job (*Barb Wire*). I thought I would travel the world doing films on location, but I ended up having my first child and didn’t want to go anywhere.”

That child, a son, is now a freshman in college, and Taylor’s daughter is a senior in high school. “When they were younger, I’d go to work and then come home and be a mom,” she says. “Now I’m thinking, ‘Oh, I can network and pay attention



The team accepting a COLA Award.  
Photo by Rich Fury, courtesy of COLA

to other things.’ And I can focus more on the job. I want to still work in L.A., but I do want to go on location and actually get more involved with the union and the guild. I’ve never had an opportunity to try and be on the LMGI Board. Now I can attend meetings and go to functions. I feel like I have something to say.”

As for getting out of town, Taylor says, “I did get my feet wet last fall. I did a show for two months in Rhode Island. It’s only six months until my daughter graduates. As soon as she’s safely off to college, I can hit the road.”

Taylor landed the *Straight Outta Compton* gig through location manager Beth Melnick, LMGI. “When I did *Southland*, location manager Mike Haro, LMGI and I won the 2012 COLA Award for Location Team of the Year for Episodic TV. At the ceremony, I was chatting with Beth at the bar, and we got to know each other a little. “Someone referred her for *Straight Outta Compton*, and she said, ‘This is not what I do at all.’ She remembered me because of my work on *Southland*, which crossed over into all sorts of neighborhoods. She tracked me down and said, ‘Have you ever heard of N.W.A?’”

## The Location Team:

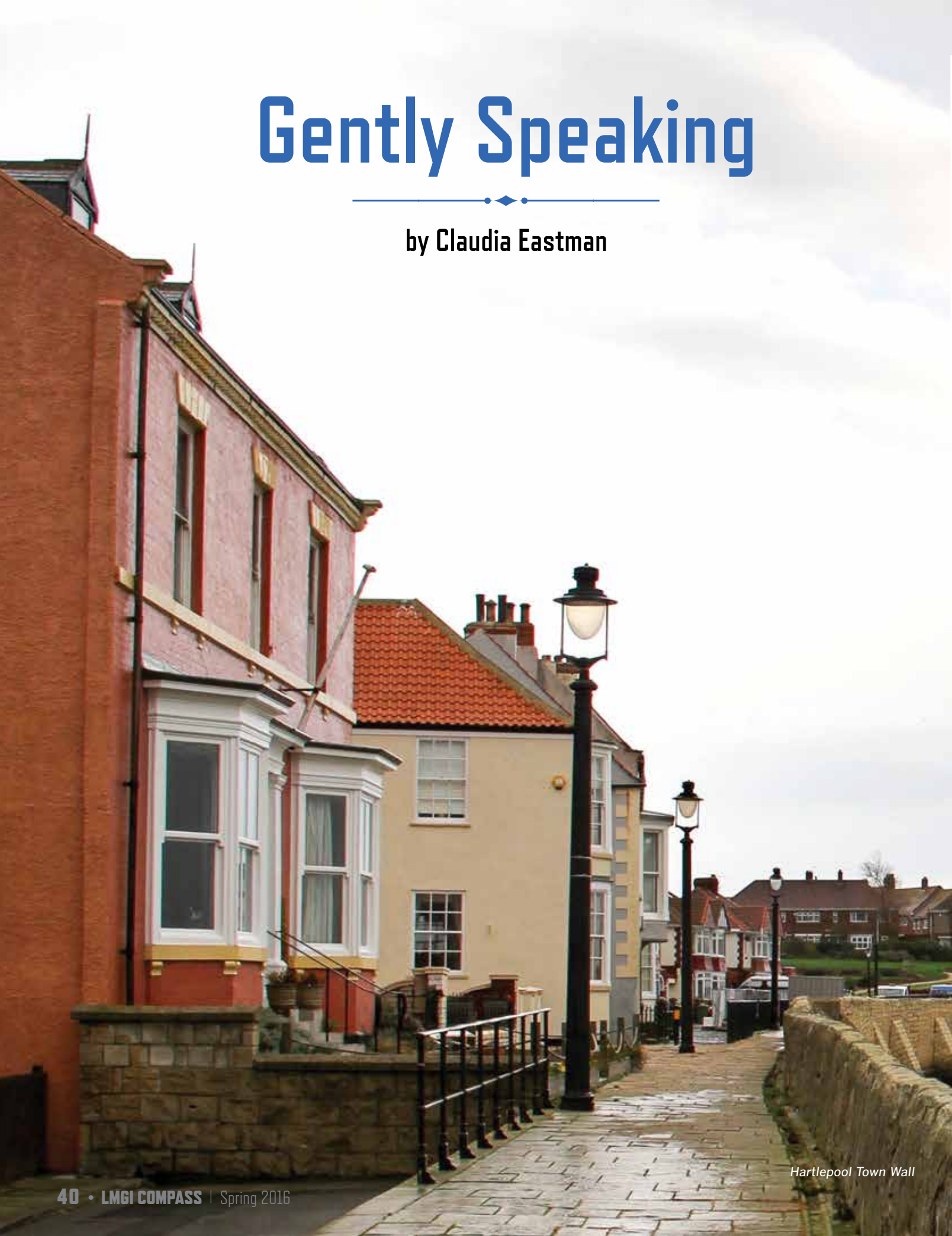
- Alison Taylor, LMGI:** Supervising Location Manager
- Craig Van Gundy, LMGI:** Co-location Manager
- Kokayi Ampah, LMGI:** Additional Location Manager
- Elisa Ann Conant, LMGI:** Key Assistant Location Manager
- Scott Fitzgerald:** Key Assistant Location Manager
- Karen Gilbert, LMGI:** Key Assistant Location Manager
- Tisha Jefferson:** Key Assistant Location Manager
- Pedro Mata:** Key Assistant Location Manager
- Larry Ring:** Key Assistant Location Manager
- Kirk Worley:** Key Assistant Location Manager
- George Carrera:** Assistant Location Manager
- Hektor Larios:** Assistant Location Manager
- Sam Gomez:** Location Scout
- Jeff Shepherd:** Location Scout
- Dorion Thomas, LMGI:** Location Scout
- Cle “Bone” Sloan:** Technical Advisor





# Gently Speaking

by Claudia Eastman







I left London by train in search of *Inspector George Gently*. The popular BBC series set in the 1960s airs on PBS in the United States. Produced by Company Pictures, the show filmed in Ireland for its first three seasons, then returned to England for the last four. As a veteran location manager with a brain predisposed to view programs through a location scout's eyes and a fan of the series, I wanted to see where and know why. The hustle and bustle of London quieted as I was treated to glimpses of smaller towns and villages with rolling hills drenched in gold and green hues. A pastoral England. My train was en route to Durham, three hours to the north.

In an online BBC article, executive producer Claire Ingham commented: "We're delighted to be filming *Inspector George Gently* again in Durham and the North East—and it's fantastic to be able to re-create the world of 1969. There were such vivid and colourful changes in society at the time—and hopefully, our series will continue to give a real portrait of the age." Her remarks resonated and defined my quest. Before my departure from the States, I'd corresponded with Gayle Woodruffe, production service manager for Northern Film & Media, and Mary Owen, line producer for *George Gently's* season seven. The three of us were to meet the morning after I arrived.

North Eastern England encompasses Northumberland, Counties Durham, Tyne and Wear, and the Tees Valley. A hilly region of natural beauty, the coastline is comprised of pristine beaches, bays and headlands. Sparsely populated in the north and west, patches of urbanization are solidly established in the south and east. Over the last decade, TV production crews for *Inspector George Gently*, *Wire in the Blood* and *Vera*, as well as *Harry Potter* filmmakers have spent numerous days here on location. Why had this part of England become a beloved backdrop?

As I walked down the road from the train station, a striking visual clue appeared. An impressive multi-arched railway viaduct. Constructed in 1842, it loomed over the outer edges of central Durham. My scout's eye engaged. Combined with nearby row houses, all a production team would need to do was remove a few satellite dishes, place period automobiles along the curbs, dress extras in paisley, white go-go boots, peacoats and Bob's your uncle ... *Gently's* '60s Britain.

Northern Film & Media is a creative agency. They coordinate location recces (the informal British term for reconnaissance) but the group also nurtures talent, supports media businesses and drives production in the region by facilitating collaborative projects with key instrumental UK partners such as BBC, Film4, Arts Council England and BFI. Their production service manager, Gayle, drove up the street right on time and I hopped into her car.



Lee Ingleby and Martin Shaw





but the existing last few blocks of the old town centre are virtually absent of inhabitation and modernization. Perfect for a 1960s production.

From there, we drove to Old Hartlepool, informally known as the Headland. The small harbor, complete with lighthouse and traditional homes, has caught the eye of location scouts. In 2014, both *Vera* (set in present day) and *Inspector George Gently* filmed there. An article in the Hartlepool Mail newspaper noted: “The Headland has been a hive of activity this week as actors, crews and extras have been filming scenes for *Inspector George Gently*, a detective drama set in the 1960s for the BBC and, ITV crime drama *Vera*.

A forecast of rain had been predicted, not unusual for a November day. We were to pick up Mary at the same train station I’d arrived at the afternoon before. Both of them combined their resources and created an itinerary of locations to see firsthand. As we pulled out onto the motorway, the clouds burst. The torrential downpour nearly doomed the windshield wipers but we drove on. After 10 minutes, the rain ceased and we were treated to a gorgeous rainbow as we neared Hartlepool.

Both crews are expected to be on location for the rest of the week, and residents on the Headland have been watching with interest as the shows’ respective stars, Martin Shaw and Brenda Blethyn, go about their work.”

A harbor town, with historic ties to the Romans and Vikings, Hartlepool was heavily industrialized by ironworks and shipping docks prior to WWI. It suffered greatly between the wars due to the 1930s depression, then regained form via ship building during the Second World War. Following the end of WWII, the region endured another severe decline which resonates to present day. New monies have been invested in the Marina

After strolling along the town wall, we visited Borough Hall, a two-story brick building adorned with arched windows built in 1866 that once housed courtrooms, the jail and police station. Today, it’s a venue for concerts, meetings and weddings. Virtually unaltered save for the lobby’s glass-encased elevator, there is a gem of an auditorium inside the building. As I strolled across the freshly buffed hardwood floor, I understood why filmmakers enjoyed the look. It resembled an old-time music hall. Another wonderful unanticipated surprise was the traditional-looking pub adjacent to the auditorium. Closed to the public, it can be rented for private functions. As I admired



Production offices and police station set in Stanley





Durham Cathedral





the interior, I couldn't help but utter aloud, "This building is a location scout's dream."

Andrew Bainbridge has been a location manager and 1st AD since the late 1980s. The location manager for ITV's *Vera*, he was asked to do *Inspector George Gently* and leapfrogged between those shows for three years. Via email correspondence, I asked why he favored working in North Eastern England. "It's a great place to work because the area is relatively new to the whole filming concept and has not become spoiled or jaded in any way. Local authorities are very helpful, welcoming and do make an effort to assist wherever they can." Professionally, we both agree that the region is visually stunning, helping to define the distinctive mood of both programs.

Following lunch and respite from the rain at a cafe in Seaham, we left the coast and drove inland to Stanley. Here, Mary pointed out alleyways and neighborhoods used in the show. Unadorned areas provided a blank canvas for production. The closed Greenland Community Primary School was used as the show's seventh season production offices. It also housed sets while the exterior doubled as the police station. Expecting to see only the exterior of the building, we were pleasantly surprised to find the padlocked gate open and cars lining the interior quad. As I walked into the area that had been dressed

as the inspector's office and police station bull pen, I was bemused to discover individuals diligently boxing charity Christmas packages for European refugees. A local church group had taken over the "to be demolished" building to complete their humanitarian task. Buckets were well placed to catch raindrops, electric heaters staved off the cold. Boxes of food items, clothing and toys were stacked on tables lining the room. Movie magic made way for the spirit of human generosity.

The last part of our day was set aside for Durham, a town famous for its university and cathedral. We were to explore the hillside neighborhoods, town centre and back streets but were under a time constraint as we needed to get Mary back for her afternoon train to London. As we drove up a street I blurted out, "We're near where I'm staying. There's the pub where I had dinner." Mary laughed as she pointed to a nearby red doorway. "That was the door used as a brothel entrance in the season seven 'Gently With the Women' episode." At night, under the street lamp's glare. I'd not recognized it as I'd walked past.

We dropped Mary off with time to spare. Moments later, Gayle and I parted ways but not before she'd given me the contact at Durham Cathedral. Regarded as one of the finest examples of Norman architecture, the Cathedral is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and to *Harry Potter* fans, the home of Hogwarts. Its



Durham Cathedral



“ Regarded as one of the finest examples of Norman architecture, the Cathedral is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and to *Harry Potter* fans, the home of Hogwarts. Its architecture is so striking that the nave was filmed as the interior of Cate Blanchett’s castle in *Elizabeth*. It was also where scenes for *Inspector George Gently*’s season six finale filmed. ”

architecture is so striking that the nave was filmed as the interior of Cate Blanchett’s castle in *Elizabeth*. It was also where scenes for *Inspector George Gently*’s season six finale filmed.

Looking at the Cathedral from the riverside walk presents an unfettered view of history. I walked toward the bridge where a scene had been filmed that generated my interest in writing this article. Gently was meeting his partner to discuss the murder of a young woman found on the riverbank below. The frame of them on the bridge with the river and Cathedral spires in the background conveyed to me how much a perfect location can

accentuate the look of a show. Apparently, I wasn’t the only person to appreciate the view—a young couple was there with friends snapping wedding photos and continued to do so until night was upon us.

I phoned Ruth Robson, Durham Cathedral’s head of marketing and events, early the next morning. Taking time out of a busy schedule to hear my plea, she arranged a private tour for me later that afternoon. Before I walked up the cobblestoned street to the Cathedral, I spent time exploring Durham and visiting the Christmas market in the town square. I enjoyed wandering about the adjacent Durham Castle anticipating to turn a corner and run into Dumbledore. Diane McIlroy, the Cathedral’s events officer, and head porter John McGowan approached me as I sat admiring the Cathedral’s nave. Over the next hour, I was shown every nook and cranny of the impressive edifice. John (the person all location scouts adore, the person with the keys) and I climbed very narrow stairs to the nave’s balcony. Normally off limits, the area appears in a *Harry Potter* film and was

where a sniper perched to shoot at Inspector Gently. I cautiously peered down wondering how had Andrew gotten permission to film gunfire scenes inside this house of worship.

He explained: “I did a huge amount of groundwork and eventually was called to meet the dean to discuss the issue. He was the man who would make the decision in consultation with the Cathedral’s governing body. I also know he consulted with the Bishop of Durham. The dean was charming and I enjoyed talking with him about how the Cathedral had been a place of sanctuary and brutality over its long history. The conversation turned to how drama is read in many ways and how we judge the use of violence in the context of a story. T.S. Elliot’s famous drama, *Murder in the Cathedral*, which has been performed in many cathedrals, was mentioned. The dean was open-minded, recognizing that if violence is used within a narrative to make a clear moral point, it is not gratuitous. He’d seen the script and saw the episode as kind of a morality play with good and evil clearly identified. He relaxed and mentioned that the show was his wife’s favourite programme.”

My three days in Durham and North Eastern England were not enough but friends were flying in from California and I needed to meet them in London. On the train ride back, my mind recounted the visit. In 72 hours, I’d found answers, new friends and *Inspector George Gently*. The perfect recce.









Marianne Faithful

# Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay

... and Location Pro Mick Ratman Has Proof

**by Lori Balton** Here's the thing about the LMGI going international ... it's been the start of some great friendships, and a whole new breed of fabulous stories. I knew UK location manager Mick Ratman had a history in rock 'n' roll. But when he shared his images with me, shivers ran down my spine ... he captured amazing moments in music history.



Portrait of Mick, courtesy of Mick Ratman

Born in South London, Mick grew up within sight of St Paul's Cathedral. He claims to simply have been with the right crowd at the right time, and had his ears opened to music—jazz, blues, rock and gospel—by watching *Jazz on a Summer's Day* on television. This documentary featured the highlights of the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival. Young Mick was hooked.

A few years later, he began going to the clubs in Soho, where he witnessed the birth of the R&B scene in England. He began taking pictures of bands and performers in the '60s, including the Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson, Eric Burdon and the Animals, the Yardbirds, the Who, the Supremes, the Miracles, the Spencer Davis Group and Bob Dylan. It started at high school, where he tried to get a music magazine together with some friends. Ever the fixer, Mick was the co-editor and would set up interviews and photo opportunities. When the photographer couldn't make appointments, Mick started snapping, and has yet to put his camera down.

He simply called agents and managers from a music directory. He'd ask if he could come take some photos or interview their bands. They almost always said yes, and one lead to another, in an amazingly natural progression. As an inner-city London kid, Mick went everywhere at an early age. From working in his parents' tobacconist/newspaper shop, he developed the gift of gab, comfortable speaking with all types of people. If he went on the subway or down to the docks, he'd run into customers who would remember him. He developed a charming temerity that appealed to agents and managers who would get him into clubs for free.

The Who

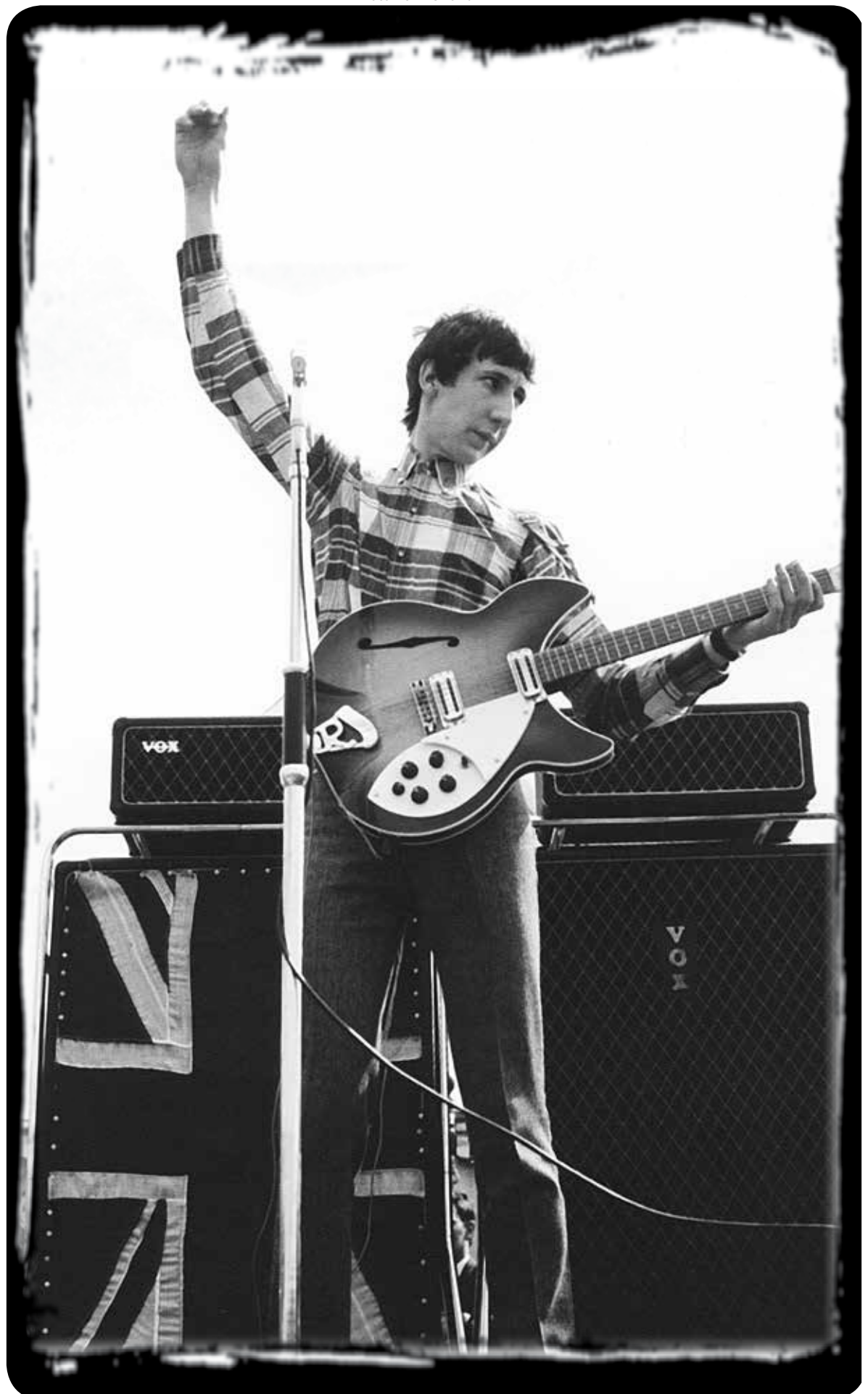




“

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”



*The Rolling Stones rehearsing with Ian Stewart in background*



*Wilson Pickett*



*Bob Dylan & Joan Baez*





Rod Stewart (right) in concert



Smokey Robinson (far right) and the Miracles

By 15, he was selling his photography, and realized that the money was considerably better than what he might earn for “real” work. Not only did he not need to work all the time ... it never seemed like work.

His most memorable experience from his teens was the first time the Stones performed, in a basement club on a Sunday afternoon. Or in 1965, at the gate-crashing reception for Dylan at the Dorchester Hotel. Dylan stopped security from throwing them out, mainly because Mick was with British pop sensation Dana Gillespie. Dylan commented on liking Mick’s jacket from Carnaby Street, and an obliging Ratman swapped it for Dylan’s blazer.

His favorite images are one of Dylan and Joan Baez sweetly smiling, and another of Mick Jagger performing, his preening swagger just beginning to emerge.

Thirty-five years later, Mick Ratman’s location managing and scouting career has taken him all over the world including the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Czech Republic, France, Holland, Ireland, Canary Islands, Germany, Outer Hebrides, Barbados, Grenada and Jordan. His many credits include international spots for Canadian Club, Gallo Wines, McDonald’s, Peugeot, Royal Bank of Scotland, BSkyB, Sony Playstation and the feature films *Welcome to Sarajevo*, *Joyrider* and *Hotel Rwanda*.

Never hanging up his rock ‘n’ roll shoes, Mick has worked on hundreds of music videos as both a location manager and 1st AD, for artists including Jim Morrison, Paul McCartney, Tears for Fears, Erasure, Madness, Culture Beat, the Pogues and Frankie Goes to Hollywood. Mick credits his early years with laying a solid groundwork for his long career in locations. He learned to talk his way into nearly anywhere, how to shoot handheld in low-light conditions, how to frame an image, and in general, he developed a love for photography that continues to this day.

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Santa Anita Park  
Santa Barbara Location Services INC  
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Santa Monica - Malibu  
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SKYE RENTALS  
Skyline Locations  
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Kathy Berry  
David Berthiaume  
Justin Besemer  
Michael Bigham  
Brian Bird  
Marylin Bitner  
Stephen Blake  
Robbie Boake  
Keith Bohanan  
Christine Bonnem  
Brooks Bonstin  
Per - Henry Borch  
Bill Bowling  
Alasdair Boyd  
Taylor Boyd  
Paul Boydston  
Paul Brady  
Becky Brake  
Kenny Brant  
Mike Brewer  
Kevin Briles  
David Broder  
Terry Brooks  
\* Bruce Brownstein  
Bree Brozey - Chierighino  
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Joe Burns  
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Fermin Davalos  
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Roberto De Biase  
Robert Decker  
Kristine Delgado  
Brian Deming  
Alissa Desler  
Scott Dewees

## LOCATION PROFESSIONALS

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Ted Alvarez  
João Alves  
Kokayi Ampah  
Thom Anable  
Stephen Andrzejewski  
Andrew Areffi  
Melissa Areffi  
John Armstrong  
Gerald Averill  
Jimmy Ayoub  
Greg Babcock  
Andrea Babineau  
Lori Balton  
Mike Barry  
Roger Barth  
Chris Baugh



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Valerie Douroux  
William Doyle  
Pamella D'pella  
Dale Dreher  
Douglas Dresser  
Rita Duffey  
\* Caleb Duffy  
Frank Duffy  
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\* Todd Feaser  
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Billy Fox  
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Kevin Funston  
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Andre Gaudry  
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Dow Griffith  
Klaus Grosse Darrelmann  
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Chris Gutierrez  
Heather Haase  
Ken Haber  
Russell Hadaya  
Nancy Haecker  
Wes Hagan  
Raine Hall  
Jimmy Hang  
Julie Hannum  
Jof Hanwright  
Paul Hargrave  
Howard Harnett  
Michael Haro

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Kenton Harris  
Gahan Haskins  
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R. Richard Hobbs  
Andrew K. Hodge  
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Thomas Holaday  
Jonathan Hook  
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Jody Hummer  
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Mark Indig  
Ariel Leon Isacovitch  
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Ilt Jones  
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Maida Morgan  
Dennis Morley  
Nick Morley  
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Alison Naifeh  
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Galidan Nauber  
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Stuart Neumann  
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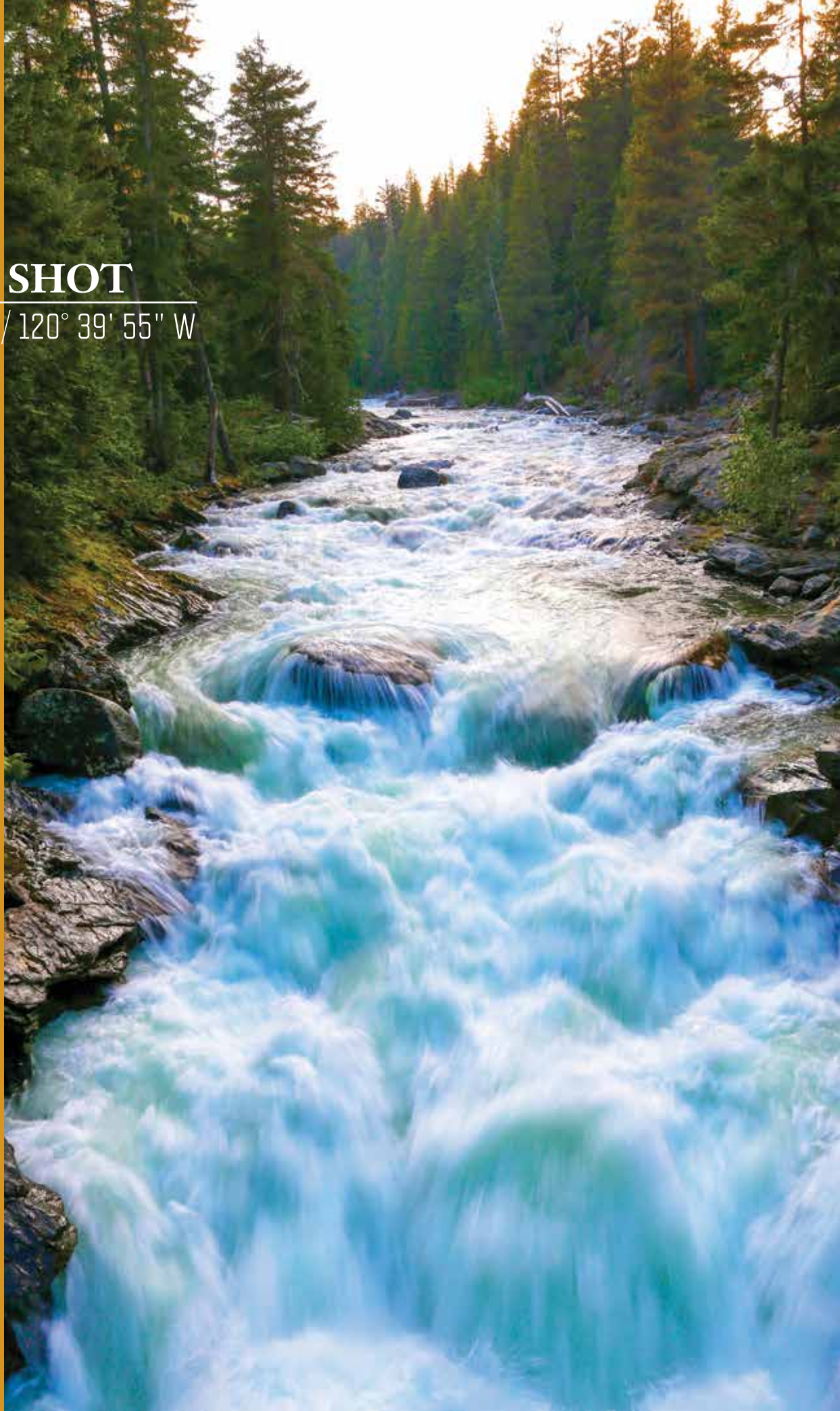
Richard Prince  
Neal Prosansky  
Zachary Quemore  
Ron Quigley  
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\* Jonathan Ramos  
Mick Ratman  
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Michael Soleau  
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Randy Spangler  
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Jason Stowell  
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Golden Swenson  
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Gina Vreeland  
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Joe Wolek  
Nancy Wong  
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Louis Zuppardi

# MARTINI SHOT

47° 35' 47" N / 120° 39' 55" W

Wenatchee River  
Leavenworth, Washington  
Photo by Doug Dresser





“The quality of the light and the kind of faces you can cast locally are priceless for what they establish for the look and feel of a film.

- Julian Higgins | Director, *Winter Light*

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# POLAND ZOOM IN

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