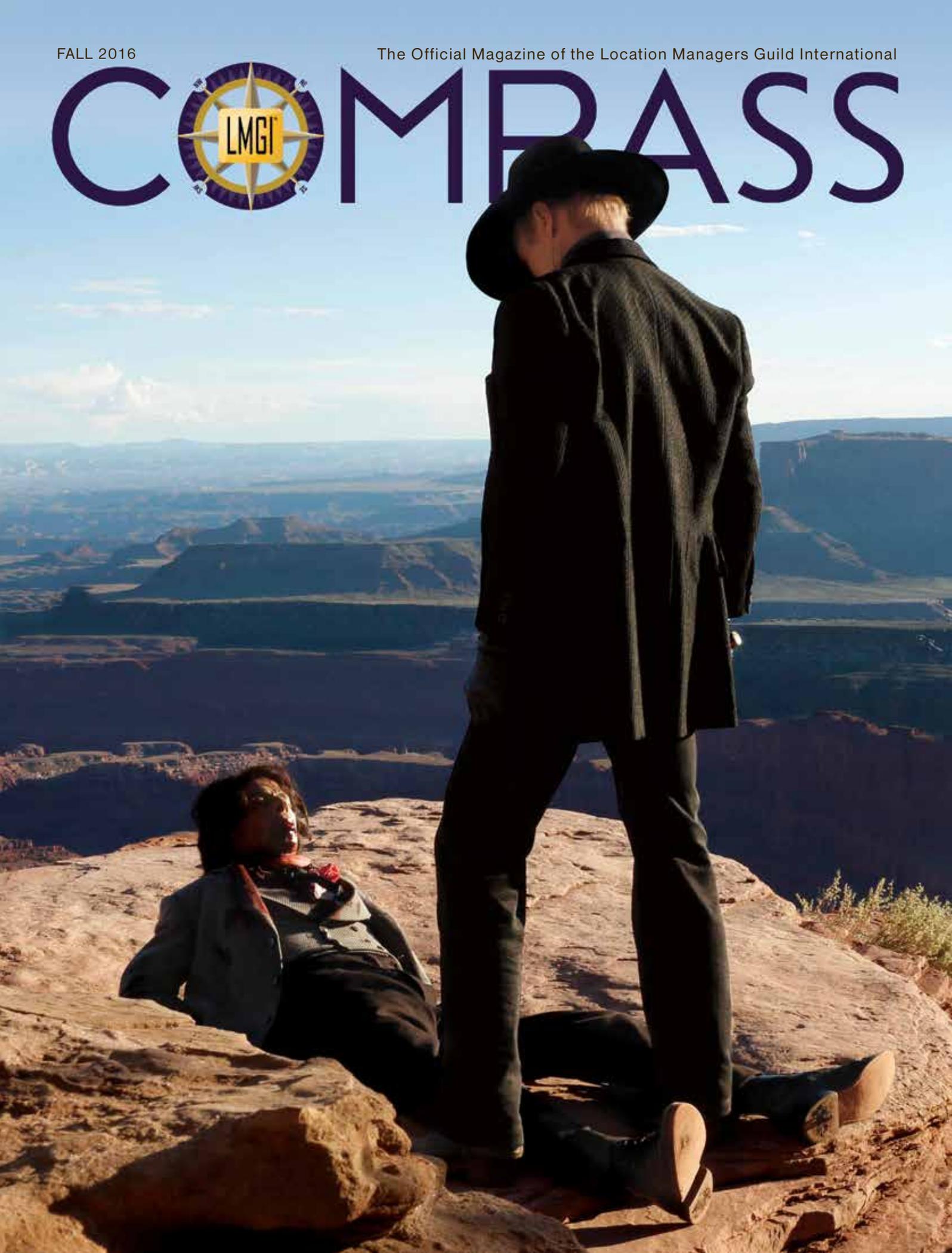


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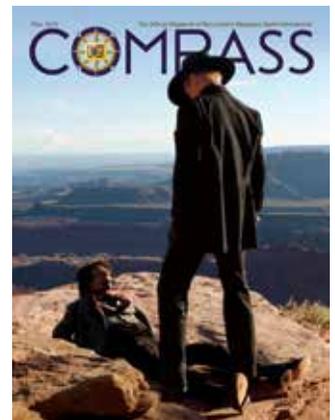
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Ed Harris on the set of the
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Photo by John P. Johnson/
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FROM THE EDITORS' DESK



"All of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You."

—TOM PETERS IN FAST COMPANY

The LMGI was conceived as your publicist; a tool to help you brand yourself as a vital part of the creative design team. Location professionals are often uncomfortable "tooting our own horn" but in today's fast-paced digital age, promotion is critical to marketing your unique brand ... and make no mistake—you are a brand, whether you realize it or not. The question is, are you doing all you can for yours?

If self-promotion makes you uncomfortable, think of it as self-invention, and understand that your success speaks volumes for all of us.

Use your profile at our website for maximum effect ... are you current? The numbers show that people use our member listing as a reference for finding location pros.

Let us know about your accomplishments and leave the promotion to us. When someone googles you, let your accomplishments and expertise stand out. The *Compass* (print and digital) reaches far beyond our membership. Its audience includes producers, directors, production designers, studio heads, media contacts, the leadership of sister unions, film commissions—people who matter in our industry. An "In the News" story or an in-depth article will strengthen your brand and help us all. Send us your stories for "Career Focus." Give us your ideas for "Tech Talk." In our jobs, we are seekers, negotiators, promoters, warriors ... if we want our careers to thrive, we need to use some of that energy to market ourselves.

The 2017 LMGI Awards is an opportunity to shine. If you have seen or worked on a location-driven story, let us know. You are our eyes and ears around the world, and we are your biggest supporters. Together, we've got this!

Our 2016 fall issue features a galaxy of our shining stars, every one of them spreading the word that location managers and scouts are an integral part of the Hollywood machine. Mandi Dillin and her team play to win in our *Westworld* cover story. Comic-Con was a sweeping success, as reported by Nick Carr. Patrick Mignano treks to Georgia—the country, not the state—on a revealing Famtour. When family duties call, Marie Healy reinvents herself, mightily assisted by her location management skill set.

Congratulations abound as "In the News" celebrates Kokayi Ampah's acceptance into AMPAS and the new LMGI Board. Award-winning location manager Todd Christensen gives us a glimpse of his trajectory in "Career Focus." And location pro Aaron Holloway shows us the town and turns on the southern charm when "In My City" goes to Dallas/Fort Worth in the Lone Star state.

So step right up and don't be shy. As your partners in promoting you and our unique career field, we want to hear from you!

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Ken Haber, Lori Balton and Stevie Nelson

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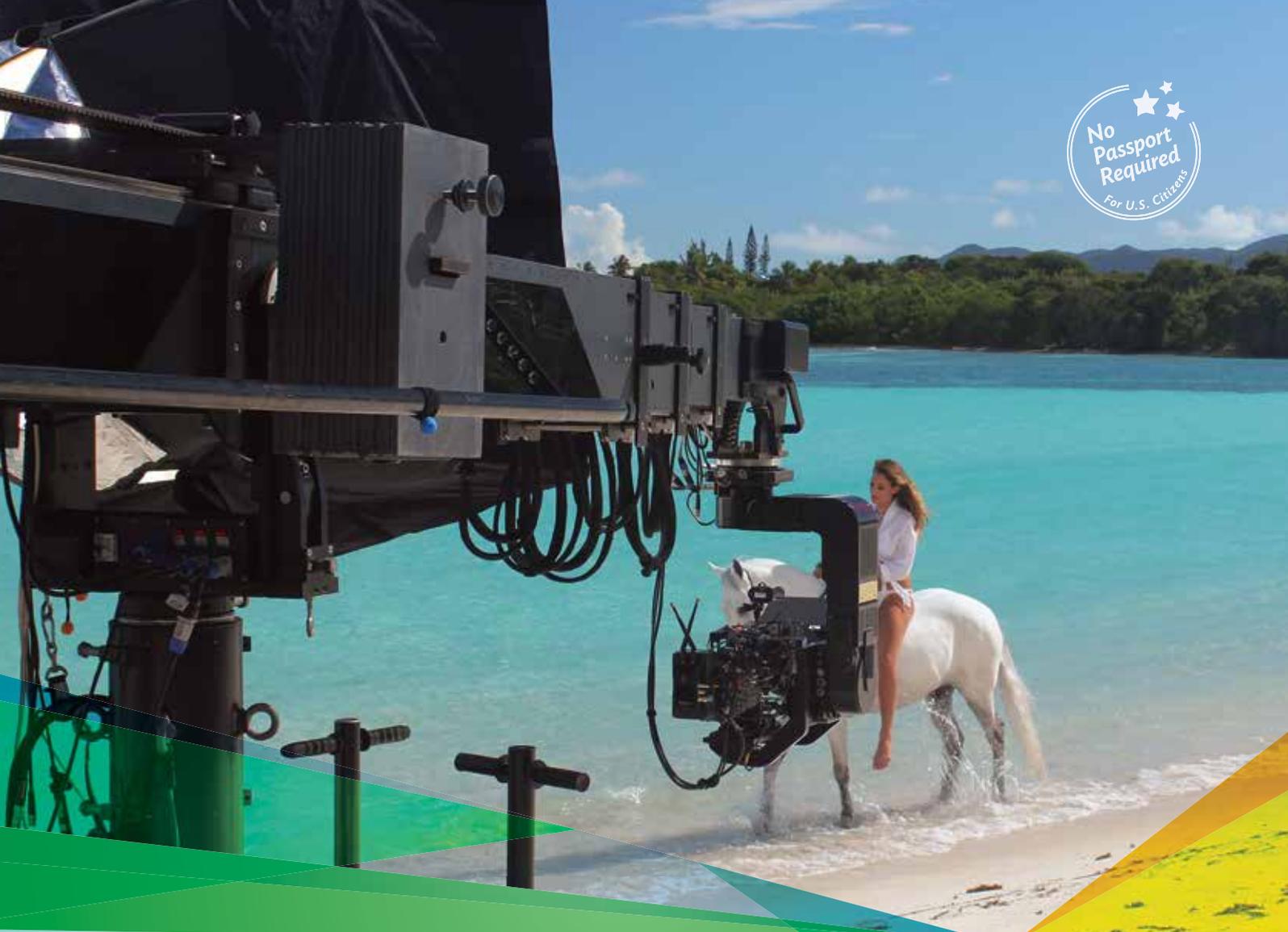
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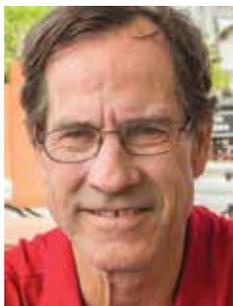
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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



DEAR MEMBERS,

I am humbled and honored to serve as president of the Location Managers Guild International. It is fitting that I write to you from Ventana del Cine Madrileño in Madrid. This co-produced conference brings together filmmakers from Romania, Mexico and Madrid. I couldn't be more grateful to have this opportunity to represent location professionals from around the world. LMGI Board members Jimmy Ayoub (NY) and Rebecca "Puck" Stair (NM) were able to share this experience with a diverse group. I'd like to give a shout-out

to our host, Samuel Andres Castro Hansson, from FILMADRID. Thanks for a great tour of your region of Spain.

I want to thank Nancy Haecker, LMGI for her three years of outstanding leadership. Her dedication to our website has provided a solid foundation for our members and others to connect with the location community and find out what's happening.

I also want to thank LMGI members Robin Citrin, Marie Healy, Tony Salome and Lori Balton for the continued success of our awards show. The 2016 LMGI Awards was an unqualified success, making us three-for-three in spotlighting and rewarding the work of location professionals worldwide.

Thanks to Stevie Nelson, LMGI, Lori Balton, Ken Haber, LMGI and the *LMGI Compass* staff, this magazine consistently delivers high-quality, in-depth articles and photography.

As I begin my tenure as president, I plan to further expand the scope and influence of the Guild by motivating our members to take an active role in spreading the word through social media, photography exhibitions and trade events such as AFI and FOCUS. All of us on the Board of Directors of the LMGI are working for you, our members, to raise awareness of and recognition for our craft. But we cannot do it alone and welcome your involvement. With the acquisition of our own category on IMDb (Location Management) and the addition of a second location professional to the ranks of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, we are making strides to reach and sustain our goals. Let's all take a few moments to pat ourselves on the back and then get out there and make the LMGI even better.

Eric Klosterman,
President



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Promoting Excellence
on Location Worldwide

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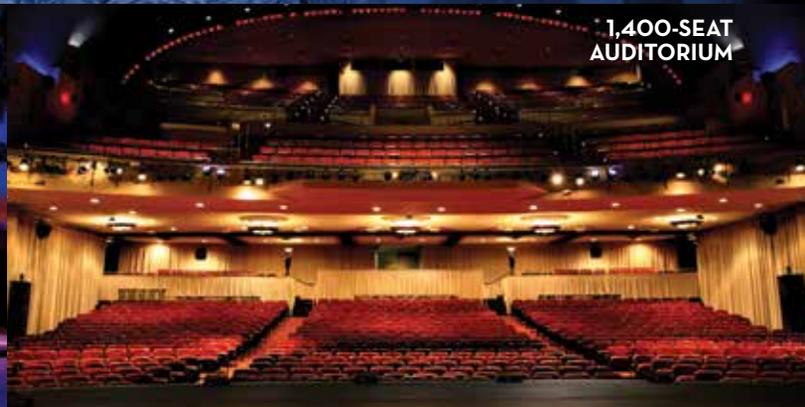
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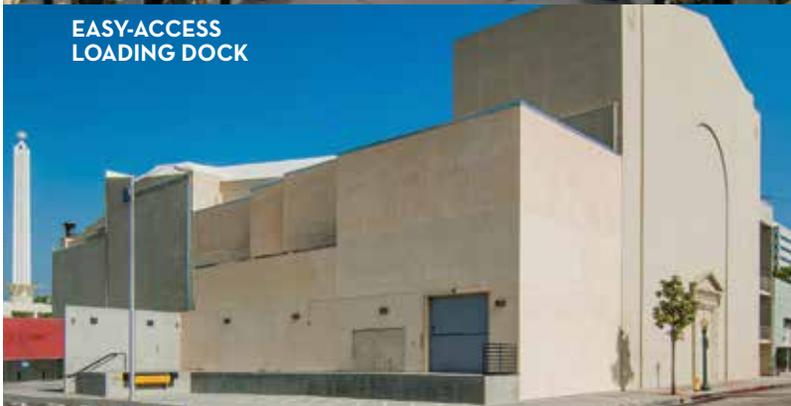
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CONTRIBUTORS



Nick Carr

For the past 10 years, Nick Carr has worked as a key assistant location manager and scout in New York City. He is also the creator of the popular locations - oriented website, scoutingNY.com, where he writes about all of the interesting, beautiful, historical and downright weird places he comes across in his travels as a location scout. He recently relocated to Los Angeles to continue his career on the West Coast.



Marie Healy

Marie headed west from her native New York, lured by her passion for location scouting. She exchanged a promising advertising career for perpetual sunny days and the L.A. entertainment industry. She proudly served on the LMGI Board of Directors for four years, was the first administrative director, co - editor of the LMGI *Compass* for nine issues and co - produced the 2014 and 2015 LMGI Awards. Marie's many credits include Tim Burton's *Planet of the Apes*, *Terminator 3*, *Walk the Line*, *The Aviator*, *Shutter Island*, *Anchorman*, *21* and *The Judge*. She most recently produced the inaugural Vero Beach Wine + Film Festival.



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.



Patrick Mignano

Patrick graduated in film and television from Montana State University late in the 20th century. He has been in locations ever since, becoming a manager in 1996. Since then, he has been fortunate enough to work with influential filmmakers like Clint Eastwood, Bruce Beresford, Todd Phillips, Ben Affleck and Zack Snyder. In 2014, he won the COLA for "Location Manager of the Year" for his work on *American Sniper*. His credits include *Justice League*, *Mr. Church*, *Sully*, *Jersey Boys*, *Need for Speed*, *Trouble With the Curve*, *Hereafter*, *J. Edgar*, *The Hangover 2*, *The Town*, *Invictus*, *Gran Torino* and *Changeling*. When not doing locations, he writes, produces and directs his own films. In 2010, his short film *Absaroka* won the Wyoming Short Film Contest. The grant given for winning the contest went a long way to producing the second in the *Absaroka* series, "Sins," which was featured in an earlier edition of the *Compass*. His other pet project is a series of tongue - in - cheek nature program shorts that he produces entitled *This Planet We Live on Here*. He splits his time between Los Angeles and Cody, Wyoming.

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IN THE NEWS

New LMGI Board & Executive Committee

Congratulations to the new LMGI Board of Directors



President Eric Klosterman has worked as a location manager for 39 years.

Former LMGI Treasurer, Klosterman has been actively involved in film, television and commercial production throughout California and across the United States. An LMGI member since 2007, he is currently retired from active location managing and has recently joined the staff of the California Film Commission. Klosterman plans to stay involved in promoting and fostering the work of location professionals around the world.



First VP, location manager Jennifer "JJ" Levine, has extensive

experience in television, features, commercials, music videos and new media. Prior to location managing, she worked as an executive, producer and production manager for TriStar Pictures, Columbia Television, TNT, NATGEO, PBS and CBS TV. She was also a Brand Marketing/Public Relations Manager for Ironstone

Vineyards. Co-chair of the Marketing/Communications Committee, Levine strongly believes in the location pro wheelhouse: the ability to balance logistics with creative and strategic thinking, along with interpersonal and PR skills.



Second VP, location manager Mike Fantasia, worked

for the US Forest Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for 13 years after college. He transitioned to a life in the film industry, working as an assistant location manager, location manager and production supervisor on more than 30 feature films. Nominated for four COLAs, Fantasia won Location Professional of the Year twice. He loves to explore new countries and work has given Fantasia the opportunity to travel to more than 35 states and a dozen foreign countries. He is a proud 23-year member of the Teamsters Local 399 and is a founding member of the LMGI.



Treasurer Sinclair Anderson has been a great asset to

the LMGI Board, bringing a clear head and years of business ability. He founded Acumen Services Group Inc to provide a more robust complement of services to the entertainment industry, including provision of facilities, practical filming locations and production services. Prior to that, he was responsible for the startup and growth of

Skyline Locations. He worked on productions of all sizes and varieties in equally varied facilities from California to Edinburgh. Anderson serves as Planning Commissioner for the city of Ontario, California, and continues to serve on several public service boards and committees. He was elected to the LMGI Board in 2014, when he served as Secretary. His reelection this year enables him to continue to serve the locations community in a proactive manner.



Secretary Melissa DeMonaco brings a great energy to the Board.

In the family entertainment business for 30 years, she began at Walt Disney Imagineering where she gained valuable project management experience. She is currently Director of Sales at the Fairplex in Pomona, home of the Los Angeles County Fair, where she specializes in sporting events and filming opportunities. DeMonaco's goal for the LMGI is to expand its social media outreach and awareness, focus on marketing and communication opportunities, utilizing her experience in producing events.

Rounding out the new LMGI Board of Directors are **Kokayi Ampah, Jimmy Ayoub, Bob Decker, Wes Hagan, Phill Kane, Matt Palmer, Mario Ramirez/Reel Security, Rick Schuler, Rebecca "Puck" Stair and Dorion Thomas.**

We are grateful for the many years of service from departing Board members **Nancy Haecker, Lori Balton and Ken Haber.**

UK Media and Entertainment Union BECTU Votes for Prospect Merger

On August 30, BECTU members backed the planned merger with Prospect, the union for public and private sector professionals, by an overwhelming vote with 83.4 percent of members voting in favour and 16.6 percent against.

BECTU represents staff, contract and freelancers across the UK's nations and regions in broadcasting, film, theatre, the arts and digital media, with recognition agreements taking in a host of employers, large and small, including the BBC, ITV and Royal Opera House. The union's freelance members, which include location professionals, work at all levels of film, TV and commercials production and in live events. The merger will come into effect on 1 January 2017.

BECTU will become the largest sector within the merged Prospect union when its 27,000 members join with 14,000 members in Prospect's Communications Media and Digital division, where BT is the biggest of several employers. The new 40,000-plus sector will continue to have industrial autonomy within the new union, with its own executive reporting to the union-wide and enlarged Prospect executive.

Commenting on the members' vote, Gerry Morrissey, BECTU's general secretary, said:

"Today's decision by BECTU members will strengthen the new BECTU sector going forward. The pooling of our resources and experience with those of our new colleagues in Prospect will enable BECTU to provide an even better service for members; we'll also be able to reach out to even more of the thousands of creative sector workers across media and entertainment who need advice and representation."

Support for the merger became official union policy at BECTU's conference in May this year, after two years of talks and internal consultations. The central rationale for the merger was to strengthen the union's foundations given the long-standing deficit in the staff pension scheme, an issue which challenges the majority of organisations with established defined benefit pension arrangements.



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With additional resources, BECTU, as part of Prospect, will be freed up to build on its organising success. Membership of BECTU grew

12 percent in the two years to 2015, a proud, hard-won achievement for a specialist union, providing services to both staff and freelancers across a broad sector.

Today, Prospect is 115,000 strong and supports members across a large swathe of the public and private sectors. In the new union, BECTU will retain its own identity and its own website, having established a distinctive character in the media and entertainment industries during its 25 years.

Mike Clancy, general secretary of Prospect, said: "Joining forces puts us in the strongest possible position to deal with the challenges we face as well as securing the best possible service for the combined membership.

"The two unions have much in common, not least in our expertise in the fields of communications and media, and we will quickly adapt to working together, with both organisations being the product of previous successful mergers.

Gerry Morrissey continued: "The NEC and I are proud of what we, our members and reps, have achieved in 25 years of organising and campaigning. However, very soon, together with our colleagues in Prospect, we will begin building on our current strengths to create a new union which workers in our sectors, both new and established, will join with enthusiasm knowing that through workplace organisation we can improve their working lives."

For more information, please visit www.bectu.org.uk/home

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CONGRATS

Location manager Kokayi Ampah, LMGI joins the 2016 class of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS)

Ampah is the second location professional to be invited into the Academy, preceded by former LMGI President Lori Balton.

Ampah's career in locations spans four decades. From black beaches for *Flags of Our Fathers*, to the iconic tree in *The Shawshank Redemption*, Ampah has been a key



Kokayi Ampah receiving his award from Debbie Allen in 2015

contributor to the creative look of such illustrious films as *The Color Purple*, *Mystic River*, *In the Line of Fire* and *The Soloist*. Among others, Ampah has collaborated with directors Frank Darabont, Tim Burton and Curtis Hanson, as well as the legendary Clint Eastwood. Ampah traveled the globe scouting for and managing motion

picture locations. He was the recipient of the 2015 LMGI Lifetime Achievement Award.

Production designer Wynn Thomas, who supported Ampah's recognition by the Academy, had this to say about his work, "When you get accepted into the Academy, they send you this beautiful certificate with the Oscar emblem and the following words: 'Having demonstrated excellence in the art, science or industry of the motion picture.' The key words here are 'excellence' and 'art.'" Both these words can be used to describe Kokayi Ampah's career. It is his understanding of the script, his ability to collaborate and his unique vision that has given shape to many wonderful movies. The location manager is a large part of the foundation of all movie projects. Not only

has Kokayi been excellent at putting a first-rate team together to service the movie, he also brings a filmmaker's artistry and vision to every project he works on. I am thrilled that the Academy has recognized his achievement."

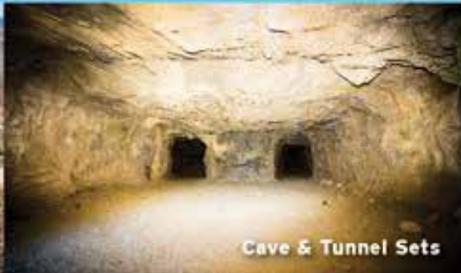
Lori Balton, who also supported Ampah's AMPAS bid, adds, "I could not be more delighted nor think of anyone more deserving. In addition to his stellar résumé, Kokayi's unfailing work as a mentor and his strong belief in giving back makes him a natural fit."

In addition to location management, Ampah serves on the Board of Directors for the LMGI and has been a Diversity Workshop facilitator for the DGA Trainee Program for eight years. He is also in the process of producing his first feature length film.

Photo by Craig Mathew

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LMGI at Ventana del Cine Madrileño

This September, three LMGI Board members took part in the Second Annual Ventana del Cine Madrileño in Madrid, Spain, as guests of FILMADRID. As the recently formed film commission which handles filming for the region of Madrid, FILMADRID invited Eric Klosterman (CA), Jimmy Ayoub (NY) and Rebecca "Puck" Stair (NM) to share their location experience with filmmakers from Madrid, Romania and Mexico, who were in attendance also to pitch co-production deals on a wide variety of films. The location trio were wined and dined in high style by Samuel Andres Castro Hansson, who showcased both the city and region of

Samuel Castro with Jimmy Ayoub in Madrid.

Madrid and its state-owned location treasures which can be filmed for free. Highlights included a brewery-turned-national archive and library, an electrical plant for the Madrid Metro built in 1922, the majestic Circulo de Belles Artes building, the Plaza de Cibeles with the Madrid city hall and El Retiro Park, with its lake and crystal palace. Naturally, the tour also included a bullfighting arena!

Madrid is a picture waiting to be taken: across broad tree-lined avenues, down narrow ancient streets, through bustling plazas adorned with statues and surrounded by towering balconies, monumental office buildings and Moorish churches, and lush gardens and historic museums; all of them pulsating with people enjoying the intoxicating Spanish light. Venturing out into the countryside, we visited ancient villages, an enormous monastery in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, a castle from the 15th century in Manzanares el Real, a palace from the 18th century in the small town of Aranjuez and the home of Cervantes in Alcalá de Henares. LMGI President Klosterman reflects: "We left the city longing for more time to explore its many corners, and hoping to return soon."



Jimmy Ayoub and Rebecca "Puck" Stair in Madrid.

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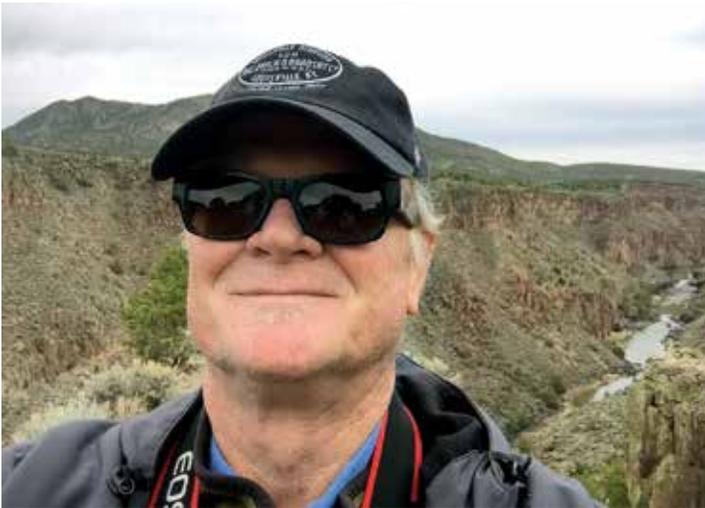
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CAREER FOCUS

The Art of Location Work: Mapping the Achievements of Todd Christensen

BASED IN CALIFORNIA AND NEW MEXICO, TODD CHRISTENSEN HAS WORKED ON A VARIETY OF PROJECTS, INCLUDING *SICARIO*, *THE HUNGER GAMES*, *SYRIANA*, *THERE WILL BE BLOOD* AND *PEARL HARBOR*. BETWEEN MOVIES, HE SPENDS MOST OF HIS TIME PAINTING IN HIS SANTA FE STUDIO.



Todd Christensen scouting the Rio Grande Gorge.
All photos courtesy of Todd Christensen/LMGI, except as noted

I was born in 1949 in Yankton, South Dakota. Tom Brokaw was my neighbor. Named after the only non-nomadic Sioux tribe, Yankton was as comfortable a spot on the planet as you could find. I left immediately after graduating high school. Adventure was always on my mind. My studies began in 1967 at the University of New Mexico (UNM), then the University of South Dakota, finishing and at UNM. I studied law, concentrating on conflict resolution, international law and diplomatic service—strangely that's what I do now as a location manager.

I took film and photography classes my last year at UNM.

After hanging with a new group of artist and musician friends, I decided to in some way, make art. I met artists Ken Price, Ed Ruscha and Larry Bell; music phenom T Bone Burnett and the inimitable Dennis Hopper in the early '70s. I thought I might get into movies through Dennis (he was blackballed at the time because of not turning over footage to Columbia Pictures of *The Last Movie*). That didn't work out and I became Ken Price's assistant, beginning my career as an artist. I've done more than 50 art shows. I continue to put together art exhibitions with other artists, outside the gallery system.

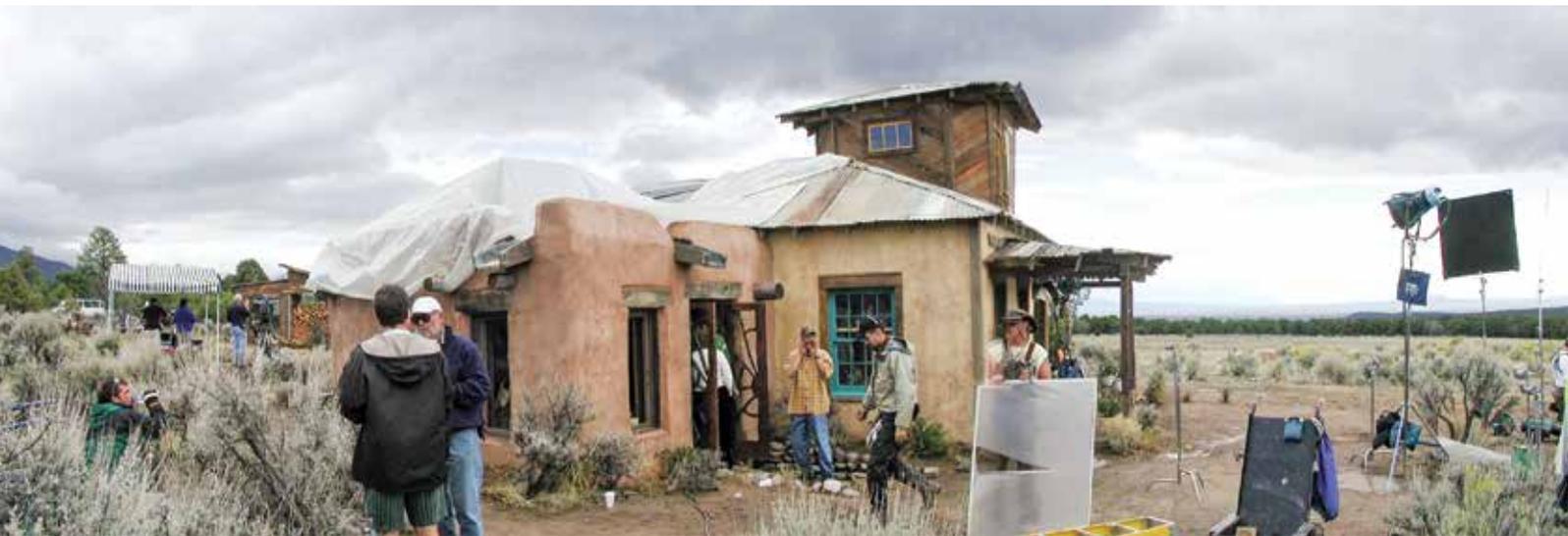
I was living in NYC making art, doing some shows and driving an art truck to pay the rent. I managed a dozen buildings in SoHo when I decided to move to Los Angeles, where I did scenic painting for three years—in music videos, commercials, Six Flags' Batman: The Ride and buildings). One day, location manager Mitchell Binder came by my studio to look at my paintings. He never bought one, but he opened another door for me. He said he was looking for someone to work with whom he could trust. He said, "You're creative and good around people. There's a union and health insurance." I agreed to give it a shot. I did some day playing on a TV show, then did a

pilot—from start to finish. I loved the process and all of its disciplines—well, most of them.

It seemed like my life as a creative person was being utilized and that all of the odd jobs I had over the years, from working cattle in Texas, to artist assistant, to building manager and other jobs too numerous to list, all became my college for locations. I remember standing in front of the 10 buildings in SoHo I managed. Tenants would yell at me about one thing or another and somehow it calmed me down. I told them the truth and eventually gained their trust. Similar yelling happens now and then in the process of making a



Scouting in the Caribbean



Off the Map house. Photo by Billy Sarokin

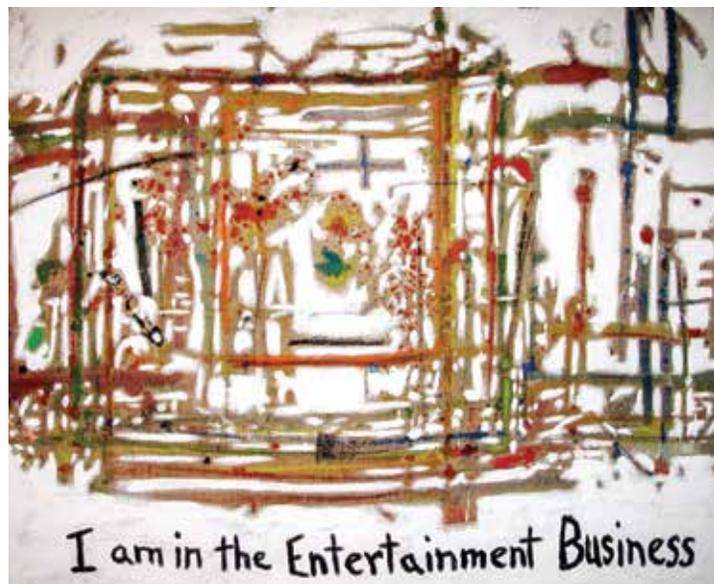
movie and I ask “how I can help, what can I do?” Solutions negate problems.

I scouted for music videos until location manager Ralph Coleman called me to work on *As Good as It Gets*. I loved it—Ralph was a great teacher. I showed up early and left late, and I was hooked. I loved

as a creative composition. I worked on other movies and learned from some of the best, including Mike Burmeister, LMGI, Arlene Kehela, Jim Morris, LMGI, Ken Haber, LMGI and Curtis Collins. Ralph gave me the opportunity to move up to location manager on *Inspector Gadget*. We were a good team.

the Teamster 399 Location Managers’ shop steward and held that position for nine years. I took the classes initiated by Steve Dayan and other members. I cannot begin to tell you how much I learned from the classes, Steering Committee meetings and contract negotiations. I continue to paint and work on movies, having the best of both worlds.

to see how close I can get or if my idea is what the director wants. I look outside the box—I let the story lead me to the places. I use my instincts to lead the way as much as knowing areas. I have always driven around—I have always loved discovery—whether in a new way to paint or a new area to scout. I like the idea of looking and seeing and visualizing the story while driving, while walking.



Painting by Todd Christensen/LMGI

scouting—from Locations 101, to finding the needle in a haystack. Learning how to photograph a location, to tell a story and discovering how to quickly read a site’s pros and cons. I was invigorated by the process and viewed it all

Then it was “find your own job” time and that was an exciting challenge. I worked on five reshoots in one year and made more connections. Eventually, I earned a reputation and got my own movies. I became

My life as an artist informs my work as a location manager and scout. As a visual person, when I read the script, I visualize the locations. Coupled with information from the production designer, I create an expanded-yet-precise idea of the sense of place. I then do the research

I was always good with numbers and as a struggling artist, I had to make due and know where every penny goes. Doing a budget, I figure out the estimates that are best for production and best for locations—a fair deal. When I paint, it’s a composition.



There Will Be Blood set

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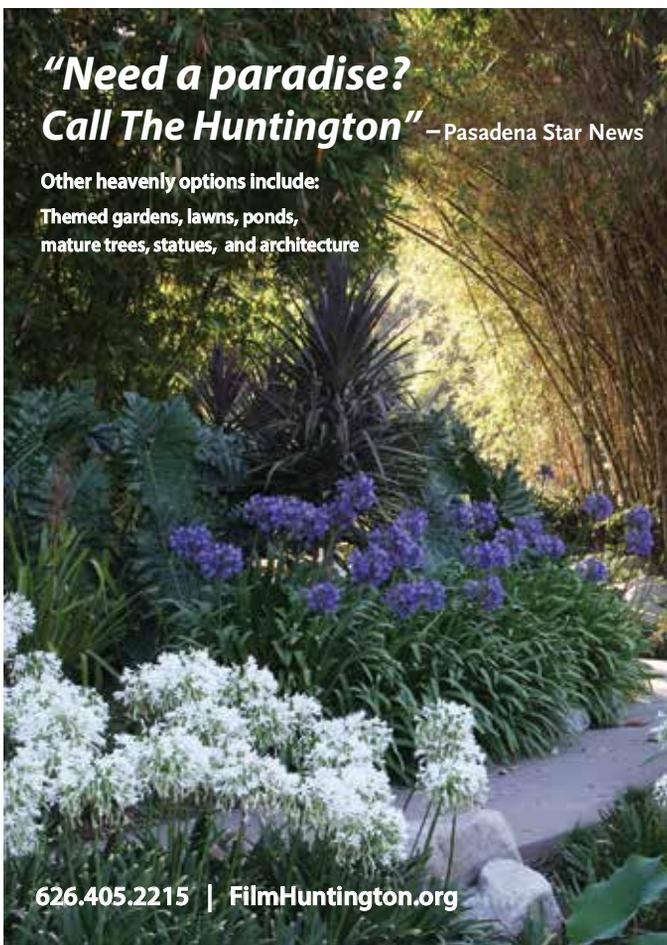
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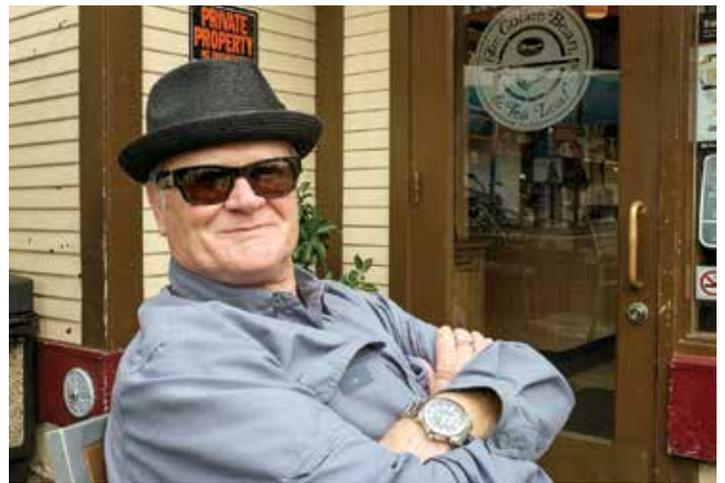
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Todd Christensen. Photo by Richard Gelfand

When I set up a location, it is the same—the catering, parking and trucks are put in place so there is a flow. When you live on nickels and dimes as an artist, you crave a bigger experience and there is always a way to make it happen. Movies enhance my artistic life—I made a series of painting based on maps. I always liked maps and in the earlier years, I hand-drew the maps to the locations.

In 2002, I drove to Taos to visit my son. A friend told me about a movie in need of a location manager. I was working nonstop for a number of years and needed a break. But it was impossible to turn down *Off the Map*,

about Taos in 1971, when I lived there. The movie was an extraordinary experience. Campbell Scott directed and later, I produced an indie movie with him. From that experience, I decided to be more selective about what movies I worked on. I won't have the best retirement package but it's tempered by great experiences making the movies I wanted to make.

I'm a huge baseball fan and flew in for an interview for *Moneyball*. The next day, I was in the Oakland Coliseum two rows behind the Yankee dugout. I got to work on a project featuring a subject I knew about, with amazing people.



Off the Map base camp



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Sicario border patrol checkpoint

Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey was a gift job, working with Neil deGrasse Tyson and Ann Druyan, Carl Sagan's widow—brilliant and engaging people. I gave them seven countries, the moon and Mars—all in New Mexico, Arizona and California.

From then on, I worked on

such movies as *Syriana*, *Hollywoodland*, *There Will Be Blood*, *In the Valley of Elah*, *Paul* and *Sicario*. The movies have been very good to me and all I can do is think of ways to give back by passing on what I have learned. My advice to newcomers is to take the high road. Tell location

owners exactly what's going to happen and return everything to the way it was. I would be welcomed back to every location I've filmed at over the last 20 years, and they would be happy to see me.

I have been extremely fortunate, in most cases, to

work with producers, crews, directors, DPs and production designers who encourage and collaborate rather than berate to get the finished product. We have all worked with fear-filled people. Working as a positive, collaborative team is what it's all about.



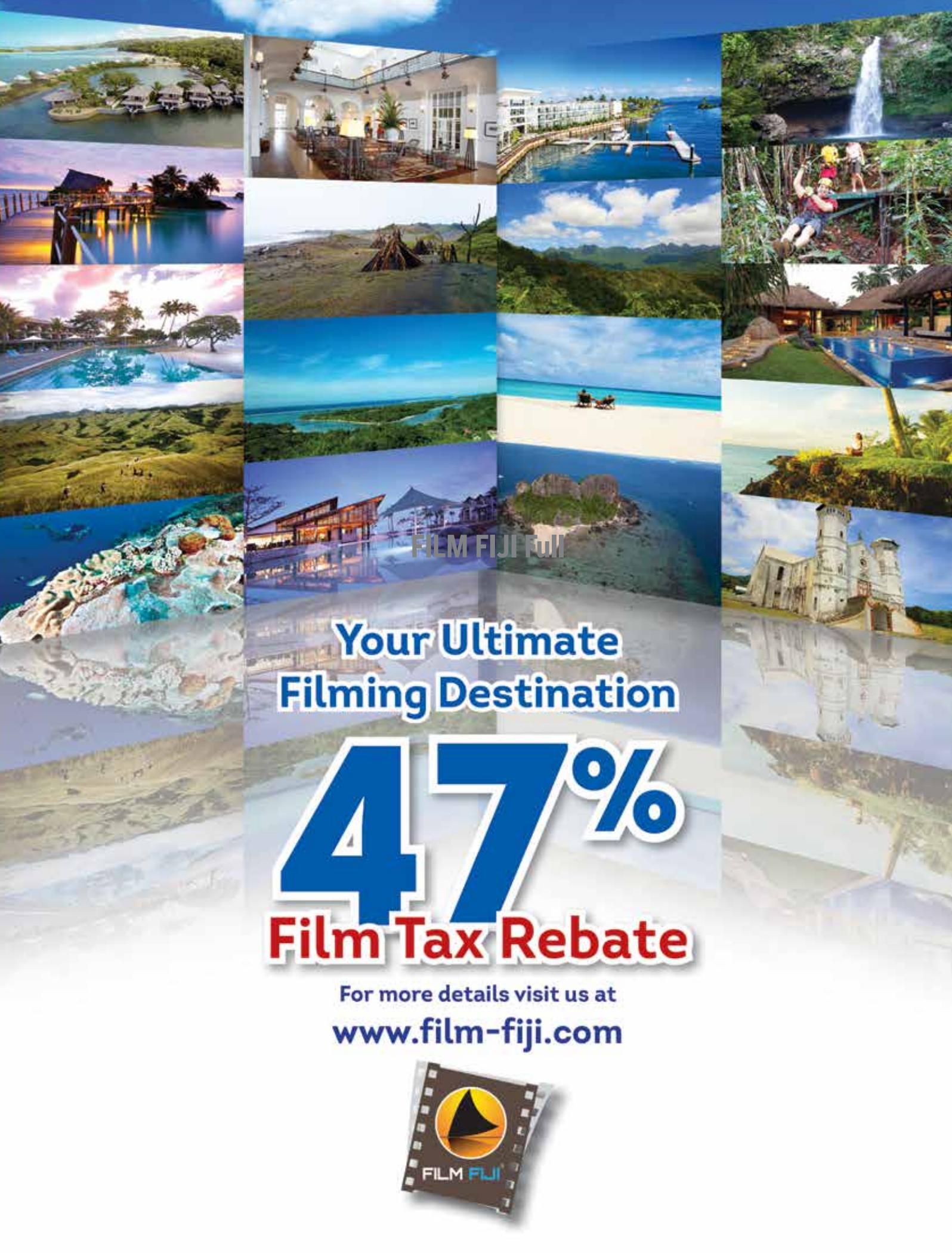
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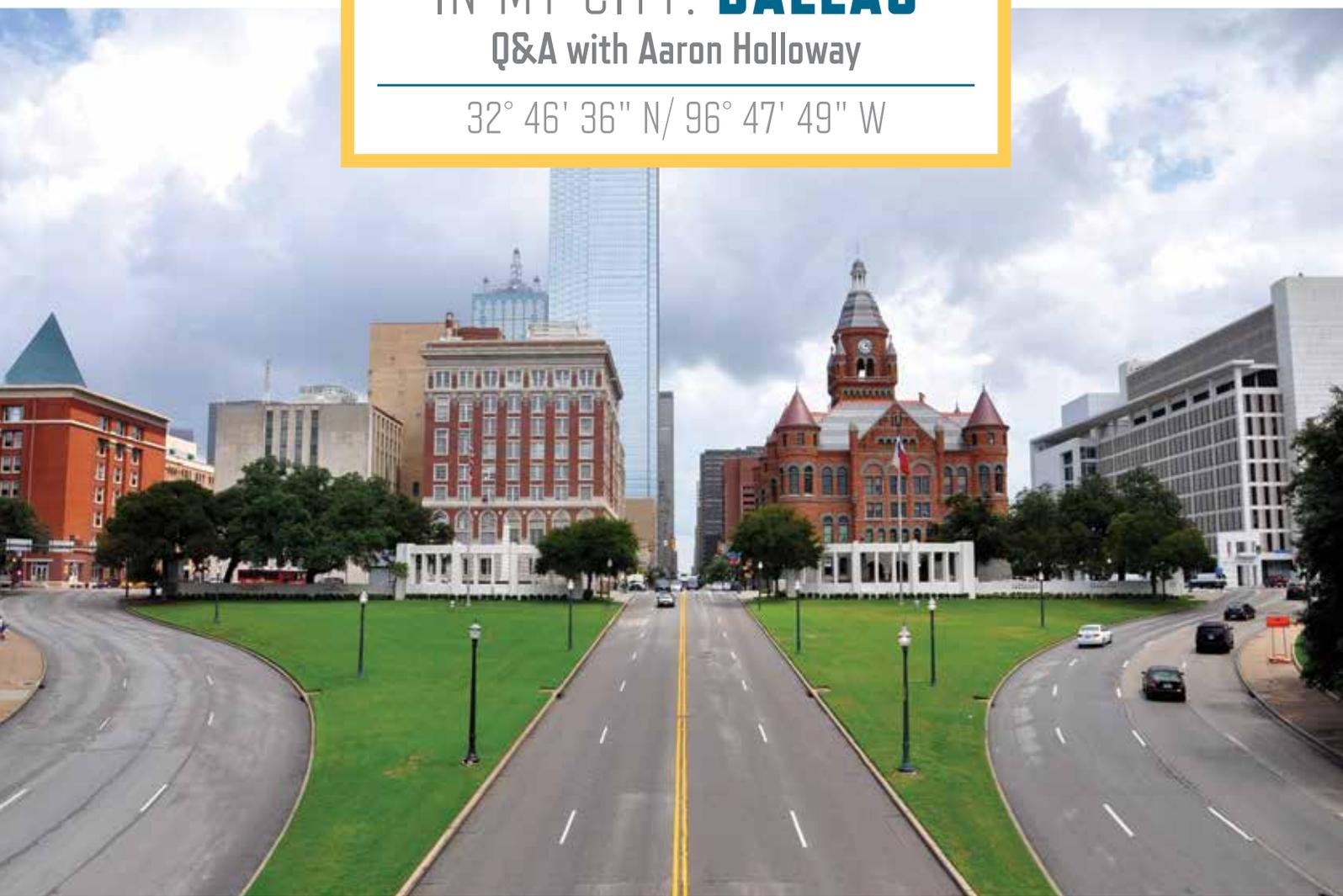




IN MY CITY: **DALLAS**

Q&A with Aaron Holloway

32° 46' 36" N/ 96° 47' 49" W



Co-editor **Stevie Nelson** gets a tour of Dallas from member **Aaron Holloway**

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

Aaron Holloway: I grew up in Arlington, Texas, which is a suburb of Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW). I have been in the industry for roughly seven years. I attended the University of Texas, Arlington, and studied film with a focus on directing. While at school, I was fortunate enough to meet producer Joe Dishner, who became my mentor and friend. After graduating with my BFA in 2009, I got a call from Joe offering me an interview for a location scout position on the FOX show *The Good Guys*. My experience at the time was limited to student films and some commercials. I had no idea how to really scout and had some reservations that it might distract from my directing goal. However, as a new father, a steady paycheck sounded like a really good idea. So I put on a tie, pulled my hair into a ponytail and showed up for the interview, trusting that I would figure out how to get the job done. Joe told me later that I looked like an ice cream salesman. Luckily, I got the position and have never looked back since.

The first four years in my career, I worked primarily on studio television shows like *The Good Guys*, *Chase*, *Good Christian Bitches*, The Discovery Channel's *Fast N' Loud*, the revamped *Dallas* and then, films like Hulu's *11.22.63* and Rob Reiner's *LBJ*.

Thanks to the work of the Dallas Film Commission, the town has been able to keep a steady stream of larger budget shows. In 2013, I transitioned over to managing commercials, where I found my true passion. The flexibility of commercial work allows me to balance my love for film production and parenting my three little monsters, ahem, daughters. I do occasionally dip back into feature/TV work. It just has to be the right script or a show runner that I would love to work with.

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

AH: The Dallas/Fort Worth area is truly unique for film production. There is a diverse culture and historical background in both cities and we have been able to find matches for everything the writers have thrown at us: from Old Mexico, to Swiss beaches, billionaire mansions, New York skylines and Iraqi slums. What I find exceptionally helpful is the amount of



Photo courtesy of Aaron Holloway/LMGI

different looks we can achieve within "the zone." Dallas is a thriving metropolitan city with many booming suburbs. There are museums, convention centers and modern green spaces. The lakes and beaches surrounding the city also offer a variety of looks. The Design District has a distinct modern warehouse feel. The Bishop Arts District is charming and laid-back with unique shops and streets.

The Good Guys was shot primarily in gritty Deep Ellum. With its historic tattoo shops, biker bars and intimate music venues, it provided texture that really fit the show. The feature *Saving Jessica Lynch* used the Cedars District to cheat for an Iraqi slum. The upscale *Good Christian Bitches* shot primarily in the historic "Swiss Avenue" District and in the upscale Preston Hollow area. The series *Chase* shot throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth area. A lot of the Mexico scenes took place close to Denton and some of the main cartel shootouts were in the abandoned "Old Fort Dallas" and in the nearby city of McKinney.

Uptown Dallas brings a fresh take on modern-city life with a fully functioning trolley car system on McKinney Avenue and many vibrant restaurants, hotels and gastro pubs. The Arts District boasts some of the country's most renowned facilities, including the Meyerson Symphony Center, designed by I.M. Pei. Santiago Calatrava's Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge, spanning the Trinity River, enhances the city skyline.

Fort Worth, our neighboring city, offers a completely different downtown look from Dallas. So, anytime we need a different urban direction, I have been able to pull another skyline out of my back pocket. We also have multiple airports in DFW, one of the largest communities of craftsman-style homes, and the best damn BBQ in the country. It truly is a diverse and vibrant backdrop for any productions considering filming in the great state of Texas with some of the best crew the business can offer.

IN MY CITY: DALLAS

Stevie: WHAT TYPES OF PRODUCTIONS FILM IN DALLAS?

AH: On top of a steady commercial market, we have managed to always keep a handful of studio television shows and reality TV in town. This is due to the hard work of Janis Burklund at the Dallas Film Commission. One of several local stages, South Side Studios in particular, has been booked since its opening. This space has housed many sets from the reboot of the show *Dallas*, to the recent *Queen of the South*.

Stevie: WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN YOUR JOB?

AH: I would say what I find is the most challenging is juggling the needs of the production company and the location. I'm a people person and strive to make everyone I meet happy. Sometimes those lines can be stressed when it comes to your location and the people who will hire you in the future. Luckily, at the end of the day, I have always managed to keep everyone happy. I don't intend for that ever to change.

Stevie: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES TO FILMING SPECIFICALLY IN DALLAS?

AH: The challenges of filming in Dallas are no different than any other growing city. We are gifted to have a city that is thriving with construction and opportunity. As many of us know, this can sometimes present logistical challenges in filming. Coordinating with larger activities in concert halls and local festivals/marathons present some of the biggest challenges in this town.

Dallas does a great job of offering many creative and athletic events for all its local residents. In order to avoid any potential conflicts, a constant dialogue with the Dallas Office of Special Events is a must. You don't want one of the marathons or parades coming right through your set!

Lately, the struggle has been over Dallas's sensitive drone policy. Because the majority of Dallas falls under a Class Bravo Airspace, it makes it hard to permit any drone flight within that zone. It has become a weekly battle with out-of-state producers explaining why they cannot use a drone within the CBD—even if it's a consumer drone. That being said, the new FAA guidelines seem to be helping out that situation. I am looking forward to how those guidelines are implemented.

And yes the heat ... bring a big hat.

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

AH: I personally prefer filming in and around downtown. I find the challenge keeps things interesting. Any project with a heavy logistical footprint gets me excited. I also really favor our neighborhoods near downtown. "Munger Place" in particular, is full of picturesque craftsman homes and streets and a local community that "gets it." The houses are cute as a button. Their owners know the drill and are very film-friendly.

The Fair Park complex is also a little gem in town. Home of





Top right: Photo by Kim Dillinger Davis/LMGI

the 1936 World's Fair, it offers a slice of some of Dallas's most iconic art deco structures, expansive parking lots and the classic Cotton Bowl. Not to mention, the staff there is extremely accommodating and affordable. We've used the spaces there for countless sets and stunts, and if you hang around long enough, you'll get to enjoy the Texas State Fair.

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

AH: My most memorable filming experience to date was when I was hired to manage the Dallas portion of the J.J. Abrams/Stephen King miniseries *11.22.63*, starring James Franco. The project entailed a three-day full shutdown of Dealey Plaza to re-create the Kennedy assassination in its entirety. Almost 1,000 extras dressed in 1960s attire, the full-blown motorcade down Main and Elm, along with live "blank" gunfire from the book depository building. Directors and producers wanted to make this the most historically accurate production to date and took no shortcuts re-creating that look.

This job was a dream to take on but quite the logistical challenge. The three roads leading in and out of Dealey Plaza are the heartbeat of downtown Dallas. I was about to juggle rush hour with the daily activities at the county courts buildings, records buildings, valet/tour companies, museums and an Army PTSD rehab center located next door. No one had done anything close to this since Oliver Stone's *JFK* and I was not Oliver Stone. I was concerned about the amount of control production needed to get the shot and I knew there was no

other way to pull this off with just simple ITC (intermittent traffic control), so I put on my favorite rattlesnake boots and went to work.

I managed to work a deal out to film in Lee Harvey Oswald's actual apartment before the assassination. This could have been cheated anywhere in Oak Cliff, but it was important to the producers to make it feel as accurate as possible. The house was abandoned and in ruinous shape from the outside but to my amazement, the interior of the Neely Street apartment felt almost untouched. It was quite surreal having a key to that man's house during the duration of the show.

It was an immense undertaking with the usual set of unanticipated challenges that were eventually overcome. I could not thank my team enough—Andrew Clemmons, John Mitchell, Ruby Lorenzana, Brendan Feltrup-Exum and Cooper Carr. I also need to thank Dallas PD film coordinators, Maj. Andy Harvey and Lt. Samuel Sarmiento; they are my go-to guys to make it all happen. It's my goal as a manager to always have fun and work hard. I believe we hit that nail on the head on this project.

One of the main things I took from that shoot was reverence. Although my generation wasn't born when the Kennedy assassination happened, it deeply affected me to hear the gunfire and see the people screaming in the streets. Movie magic really existed that day in the most haunting and emotional way. It has never been more real to me and I don't ever think I will ever experience anything like it again.



IN MY CITY: **DALLAS**

Stevie: DOES TEXAS OFFER ANY INCENTIVES TO HOLLYWOOD FILMMAKERS?

AH: Texas does offer production incentives for filmmakers and on a case-by-case basis. The city of Dallas will even add a “sweetener” to the state incentives. We also have a great diversity of locations, ease of filming, fantastic crews and equipment available. That in a nutshell equates to a lower cost of doing business, which means a competitive bottom line. But let’s be real here, you and I know you’re coming here for the boots!

Stevie: WHAT ARE YOUR TOOLS OF THE TRADE?

AH: Well, my cool-headed temperament and southern charm. Keeping a positive attitude when logistical curveballs are thrown your way is the greatest asset any location manager can have. I don’t take things personally. I just assess the situation, handle it and move on.

I also rarely head to set without my favorite rattlesnake cowboy boots, a good handshake and my trusty measuring wheel (I measure EVERYTHING). The usual suspects of cones, signs, your typical array of apple products and some baby powder!

My go-to lens is a Tamron 17mm-50mm f/2.8 and I will always and only shoot with a Nikon body.

I have several hard drives cataloged with location photos but my online photo-sharing site the last few years has been smugmug.com. I have found its simplicity and adjustable layout allow a client to navigate through our hundreds of photos. It also allows you to file and bin accordingly, keeping the “show and tell” process from being too convoluted.

Let’s not forget my Toyota Tacoma “Jasper.” And I would be nowhere without Leon Bridges’s album *Coming Home*. That little gem is the gift that keeps on giving.

Stevie: WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THE JOB?

AH: Hands down, I love the people, from

Top & middle photos by Kim Dillinger Davis/LMGI

crew to location owners. This job has taken me to more places than I could have possibly imagined. It has given me more insight into industry and business than I could have possibly paid for. I am extremely thankful that fate took me this direction. I couldn't have asked for more. Not gonna lie though, pulling rabbits out of my hat once and a while feels pretty damn good too.

I am still pursuing a directing career, however, with my three beautiful kiddos I have to be practical. My position in life no longer allows me the starving-artist route. That being said, I am currently prepping for a feature of mine which is scheduled to be shot next fall. Location managing has only sharpened my eye for creative storytelling. The many different people and experiences you gather from managing allow you to be true to your story and realistic in your approach. Before, in my personal work, I would pick and shoot locations that weren't production-friendly. This would burn up our day with complicated load in and outs and could jeopardize getting the day's work done. Through the contacts I have made and experience gathered, I feel I will exponentially save time and money on my upcoming feature without having to sacrifice anything creatively. Good, fast, cheap (pick only two) is the rule of thumb, but through location managing, I confidently feel I can execute all three now without a hitch. I think I will always location manage. It is a great income while I take the time to button up my other creative outlets. I don't believe it's either one or the other. Both careers work symbiotically.

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

AH: I decided to join the LMGI this year, after working with



Bottom photo by Kim Dillinger Davis/LMGI

Edward Mazurek, LMGI on an Ashley Judd pilot called *Salvation*. I was hired on as a local key assistant. Edward stressed to me the importance of LMGI membership and how it will only help grow awareness and respect for our department. Ed was a great mentor. I cannot emphasize how much I grew professionally from the time he came to Dallas. We have been friends ever since.

I think location managers all agree we should not be at the bottom of any credits list. We are the first on with the director/producer/show runner and last to leave. I am excited to be a part of an organization of professionals who are striving to make what we do relevant and respected.

Aaron's Private Tour



If you're visiting with the family, spring and fall are a fantastic time to see the city. However, there is nothing like a good Texas pool party in the dead of summer.

MUST-SEE PLACE:

Deep Ellum will always hold a key to my heart. I feel it houses the true grit of Dallas, Texas. Its roots are dug deep in the beginnings of the Dallas blues and punk rock scenes. Saying it has character is an understatement. Coming out of the ashes of the '90s, it has redefined itself into a vibrant collaboration of art galleries, music venues, noodle shops, back alley dive bars and some of the most famous tattoo shops in the nation. This is a must see. Believe me.

FAVORITE SHOP:

All location managers know REI is the place! However, if you're in town, Dolly Python, Good Records, Lusters Boots and Peters Bros. Hats will give you a lot of fun for your money.

FAVORITE RESTAURANT:

Smoke at the Hotel Belmont or Lockhart's BBQ in Bishop Arts. No description needed. Just trust me.

PLACE TO SEE BY NIGHT:

Well, hell, if you took my suggestion and went to Smoke, you're in the right place. Bar Belmont

has one of the best views of Dallas. Bring a seasoned liver and a swimsuit and you're in business.

BEST DAY TRIP:

I personally enjoy going out to cow town (Fort Worth stockyards). Seeing the original red cobblestone streets and the daily cattle drives down Exchange Avenue really put a smile on my face. Vintage cowboys on horseback and kids smiling makes me proud to be a Texan. The White Elephant Saloon is a location that you have to see. Hats from past cowboys cover the ceiling and its roots are riddled with genuine Wyatt Earp stories. Bars and boot scootin'. Get a shot and a beer for me when you're there.

FAVORITE NEIGHBORHOOD:

Munger Place Historic District. Developed in 1905 and listed on the National



Register of Historic Places, it represents more than 250 households and has the largest collection of prairie-style homes in America.

FAVORITE LOCAL ARTIST:

Erick Swenson and musician Leon Bridges. Eric is a wonderful local artist and now has pieces in many major galleries throughout the United States. Leon is a sweetheart who comes out of Fort Worth. Hard to believe that within a year, he went from washing dishes at a local steakhouse to singing at the Grammy awards.

BEST BAR/CLUB:

The Double Wide. The coldest beer, stiffest drinks and some of the best live music this side of the Trinity. You'll know it when you see it.

BEST PLACE TO HEAR MUSIC:

Adair's Saloon or Sons of Hermann Hall. Adair's Saloon is one of Dallas's grittiest dive bars and defiantly worth a visit. Frequenting by Willie Nelson, its history is one of the pillars of the Deep Ellum music scene. Sons of Hermann Hall also gets some really great shows from time to time. House of Blues and the Bomb Factory do bring in some bigger acts, but you will get a greater feel of Dallas going with the smaller venues.

BEST VANTAGE POINT/SCENIC VIEW:

The NYLO Hotel outside of downtown really offers a great slice of Dallas. It gives a great vantage point right outside of downtown and near the iconic "Ball" while also offering a beautiful rooftop pool and nearby bar. It's a great place to relax and wrap out a job.



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LMGI SHINES AT COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL

Our Most Successful Panel to Date • by Nick Carr



What if it was your job to search for Tatooine, hunt for Gotham or find Jurassic World? This past July, attendees to the 49th Annual Comic-Con International in San Diego, California, were, for the fourth consecutive year, able to hear a panel discussion by the locations professionals who are responsible for finding these and countless other movie and television locations.

While the “Hollywood Location Scouts” panel has been popular amongst Con-goers since its inception in 2013, this time it proved to be particularly notable for two significant milestones: the largest attendance yet—a near-capacity turnout of more than 300 people—and the first time the panel has been hosted in the main San Diego Convention Center building, allowing for greater visibility and ease of access. Additionally, this year’s event was sandwiched between panels by the Art Directors Guild and Costume Designers Guild, creating a solid three-hour block that appealed to a shared demographic.

Moderated by Scott Trimble, LMGI (*Transformers: The Last Knight*, *War for the Planet of the Apes*), this year’s panel featured an international assortment of location managers and scouts: William Doyle, LMGI (*Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, *Green Lantern*), Douglas Dresser, LMGI (*The Revenant*, *Kill Bill: Vols. 1 & 2*), Leann Emmert, LMGI (*Kong: Skull Island*, *Transformers: Age of Extinction*), John Rakich, LMGI (*American Gods*, *The Thing*) and Alison A. Taylor, LMGI (*Straight Outta Compton*, *The Purge: Election Year*).

Following an electrifying sizzle reel by filmmaker Jacob Voelzke and featuring before-and-after location scouting examples, the panel kicked off with a series of questions by Trimble to introduce the audience to the fundamentals of location scouting and management. “It’s the only job that starts out with ... creatively crafting the look of the film, and ends with a dust broom and cleaning toilets,” joked Dresser to audience laughter. The job in sum? “We throw a wedding every day, five days a week.”

Emmert described the typical career path of a locations professional, from starting as a “little helper” on one’s first job as a production assistant, to bumping up to assistant, to joining a union, working as a key assistant, and finally, location manager.

Of course, not all location scouting involves upscale Fifth Avenue penthouses and sprawling Malibu estates. Discussing her work on movies like *Training Day* and *Straight Outta Compton* in neighborhoods historically known for gang activity, Taylor explained that the process is the same as everywhere else: “It’s really about communication, a mutual respect and being fair.” After identifying a community coordinator, permission can then be sought from the proper representatives. Everybody is

Opposite page, top: LMGI’s Comic-Con panel, from left, Scott Trimble, William Doyle, Douglas Dresser, Leann Emmert, John Rakich and Alison A. Taylor. All photos courtesy of the LMGI





Top photo: Emmert, Trimble, Doyle, Rakich, Taylor and Dresser thanking sponsors

made aware of the shoot requests and the ways it will benefit the area. “We go in [these] neighborhoods because we want to play them for some kind of scary element, and the logic is, if you want to show [them] like this, at least try to help get some people in the neighborhood to make some money.”

After Doyle amused the crowd with tales from his record-setting, four-year stint on *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, Rakich discussed the process of cheating American cities in his home base of Toronto, Canada. “We try to match cities [such as in the] northeastern United States, but I’ve [also] done Antarctica, I’ve been asked to look for Cuba, the strangest things ever ... [The filmmakers] give me a sense of what they’re looking for, I have my experience of what the city has to offer ... and we try to make it work.”

When Trimble turned the panel over to the audience for questions, there was no shortage of interest as dozens of attendees lined up at the microphone. Topics included the level of reliance on locals for researching locations, thoughts on normally off-limits locales that each speaker would love to gain access to (“Chernobyl ... That’s a cool location that we probably won’t ever use for safety reasons,” mused Emmert), and favorite locations from classic film and TV series.

Later that evening, the LMGI joined the Costume Designers Guild, the Art Directors Guild and the Motion Picture Costumers in throwing a film industry mixer at the San Diego Marriott Marquis & Marina. Open to all LMGI members, the event allowed an informal opportunity for networking and socializing between the guilds. A number of LMGI members, business



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members and prospective members made the trek to Comic-Con International this year, including Bree Brozey, Nick Carr, Deven Chierighino, Paul Codiga, Stephenson Crossley, Danny Finn, Erick Freitas, Ron Haynes, David Lyons, Kent Matsuoka, Neal Prosansky, Elizabeth Reynolds, Lisa Rothmuller, Sonia Vilellas, Rob Weddle, Chester Wong, Tommy Woodard, Tom Ybarra and many more.

This year's events were generously sponsored by some of the most popular and highly recommended film industry vendors in Southern California: Zio Studio Rentals, Reel Security, Park as Directed, Reel Waste & Recycling, Pacific Production Services, One Stop Leasing, Agua Dulce Movie Ranch, Encore Air and Mat Men. Thank you too, to the following additional people (including LMGI members) not mentioned above for their incredible assistance in making everything possible: Lori Balton, Marc Blackbird, Nickolaus Brown, Jill Carrigan, Michael Cassidy, Suzanne M.B. Chambliss, Mandi Dillin, Michael Gaiser, Tommy Goldbach, Nancy Haecker, Eddie Ibrahim, Laura Jones, Sean Kinney, Melinda Ehrlich Trimble, Christian McGuire, Amelia McKinney, Leonard Morpurgo, John Muto, Adam Neese, Ray Pichette, Amy Ramirez, Patrick J. Rodriguez, Ivy Thaide and Bill Watters.

When asked about plans for the LMGI's fifth anniversary at Comic-Con 2017, Trimble replied, "Funny you brought that up since we are already getting to work on it. Comic-Con is one of the biggest conventions in the world, so it's truly a year-round planning process. We will absolutely try to make it bigger and better than ever, of course." Jokingly, he added, "Although, it'll probably be a very long time before we get scheduled in [legendary 65,000 sq. ft. and 6,200-seat] Hall H."

Back at that Q&A session, one attendee excitedly remarked to the speakers, "You're like the Indiana Joneses of filmmaking," proving that in just 60 short minutes, the LMGI clearly and properly conveyed the life and work of a Hollywood location scout.

The sizzle reel and full panel video can be viewed online at <http://locationmanagers.org/comic-con/>

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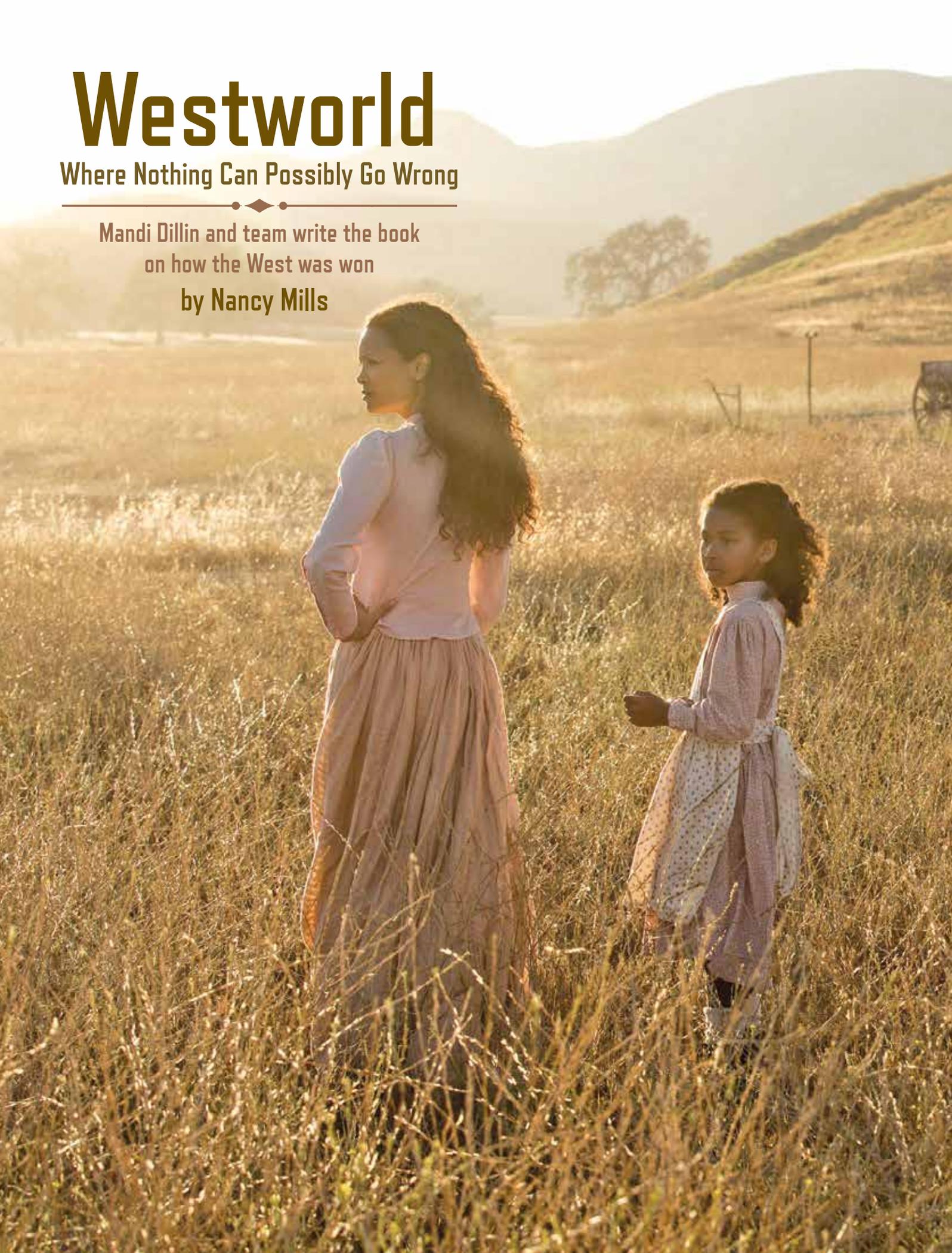
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Westworld

Where Nothing Can Possibly Go Wrong

Mandi Dillin and team write the book
on how the West was won
by Nancy Mills





During her decade as a location manager, Mandi Dillon, LMGI has worked on such demanding productions as *Inception*, *Iron Man 3* and *The Revenant*. But spending the better part of two years finding locations for HBO's 10-hour series *Westworld* was, she says, "the most challenging job I've ever had. It was like *Transformers* meets *The Dark Knight* meets *Django Unchained*—all films that she successfully helped bring to the screen.

What did it take to get this job done? "A good sense of humor, a sense of wonder and a sense of adventure," Dillon says. "If you don't have the ability to see something that's not there or can't imagine how a location can be transformed with a little set dressing, it's really impossible to do a science fiction/Western/fantasy show within the 30-mile zone in L.A."

Big demands seem almost like candy to Dillon. "I don't know many people who think it's fun to spend months in the dust and the heat surrounded by a bunch of background actors and crew members in the middle of nowhere," she says enthusiastically. "The adventure and wonder parts of this job keep you on your toes."

Just how busy was she? "We scouted over 200 locations for season one, and ended up with 30 unique Southern California locations and 12 Utah locations."

Westworld, whose budget reportedly reached nearly \$54 million, stars Anthony Hopkins, Ed Harris, Evan Rachel Wood, Thandie Newton, James Marsden and Jeffrey Wright, among others. It is inspired by the 1973 motion picture of the same name. However, that movie, which was written and directed by Michael Crichton, clocked in at just 88 minutes.

HBO's new version takes the story in many new directions. According to the network, *Westworld* examines such issues as

"the dawn of artificial consciousness and the evolution of sin. It explores a world in which every human appetite, no matter how noble or depraved, can be indulged."

The series shot 95 percent in Southern California, although the 10 days spent in and around Moab, Utah, "definitely helped to set the tone and give scope," Dillon says. "When you're going to a theme park, you want that sense of awe and wonder. You want to feel you're along for the ride."

"HBO had a great success with *Game of Thrones*," *Westworld* creator Jonathan (Jonah) Nolan says. "They understood the advantage of location photography to supplement and enhance—as a garnish rather than the main dish."

"The challenge with *Westworld* is that it's both science fiction and a Western. You're looking for points of connectivity." He gives an example. "There's a scene in the pilot where we needed to shoot architecture on one side of the scene and landscape on the other. We shot the architectural part at the Pacific Design Center (PDC) and the Skirball Center and the landscape at Dead Horse Point State Park in Utah."

"The coverage on both sides is real, and we used green screen to cover the transition shots. It was all beautifully done, and it was all due to Mandi ensuring we could make it work."

All photos by John P. Johnson/HBO, except as noted



Photo courtesy of Mandi Dillon/LMGI

the Valley, I said, 'This looks like Marlboro country,' and then I found out that some Marlboro commercials were actually shot here. John Ford made his last four pictures here because he got bored with Monument Valley.

"It's the most absurdly beautiful version of the West that you can imagine. If you stand in Castle Valley with the Colorado River behind you, looking out over the mesas with the snow-capped mountains in the background, you can point the camera in any direction and you get that sense of pure Western spirit and adventure."

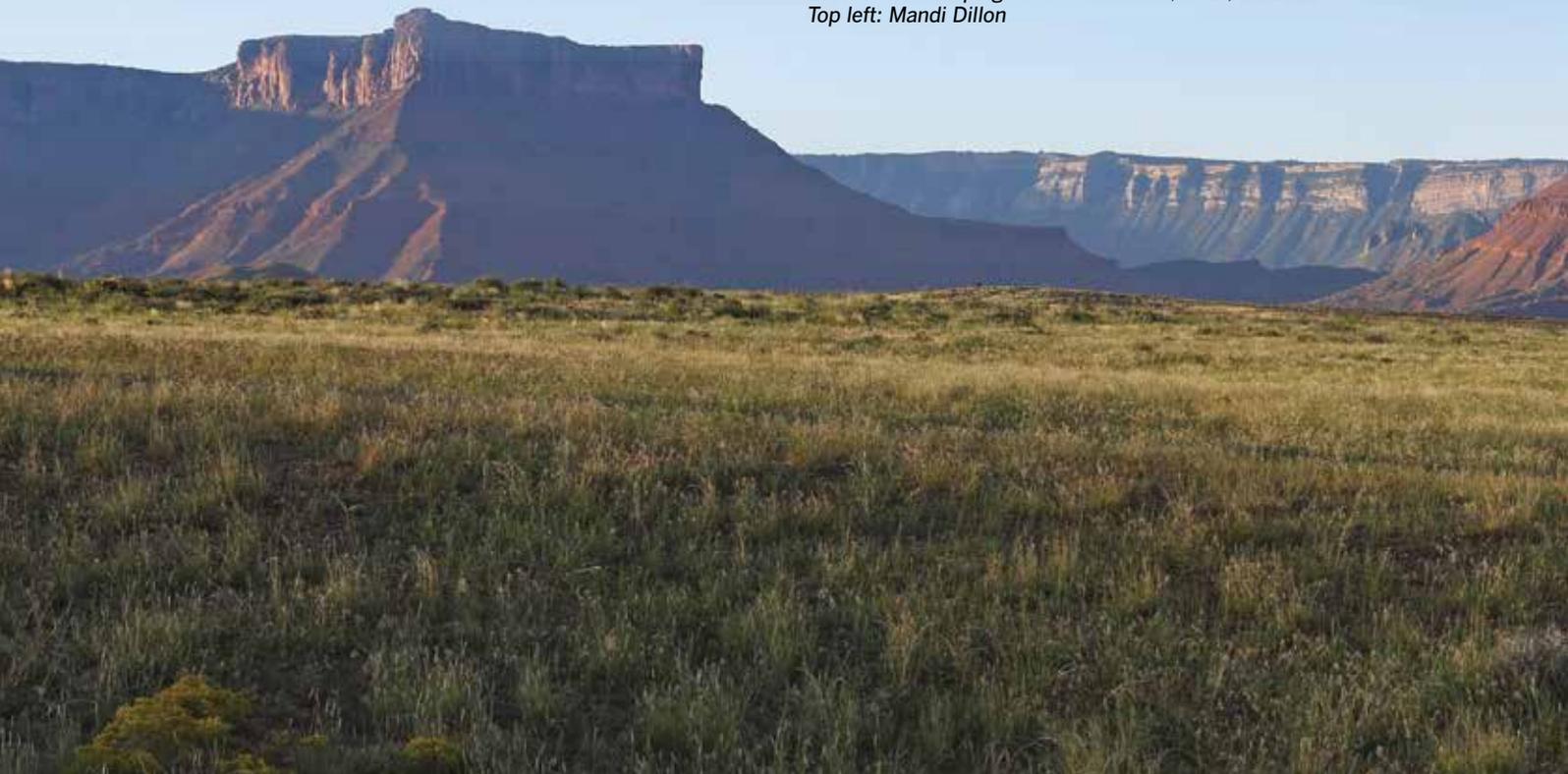
Finding iconic locations was one thing. Making them work in a movie that's partly science fiction is another. "The extra challenge for us was that *Westworld* is not a real place," Nolan says. "It's a constructed reality. Why would you pay all this money to go to *Westworld*? What would it make you feel? We wanted to make it feel as real, overwhelming and vital as possible."

Nolan, who serves as show runner with his wife, Lisa Joy, directed two episodes. He was also involved with writing all 10 episodes. He describes the theme park as "vast. I estimate it being between 300 and 500 square miles and filled with a wide range of terrain—mountains, deserts, rivers and buttes," he says.

To lock down these locations, Dillin worked with state and national parks and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). "We'd need permits to shoot on state land and BLM's approval to land a helicopter but need state approval to refuel," Nolan says. "It was extraordinarily complex, but with Mandi's help, we were able to pack in an enormous amount of great material in a relatively short amount of time."

Westworld started shooting in April 2014 and finished in May 2016. During that time, the production unexpectedly shut down for several months so that the writers could finalize scripts.

Below: The sweeping vista of the Moab, Utah, location.
Top left: Mandi Dillon



Nolan knew Dillin through his older brother, director Chris Nolan, who hired her to do location work on *Interstellar* and *The Dark Knight Rises*. The younger Nolan wrote both films.

"Mandi was part of the family, and that allowed for an immediate shorthand," he says. "It's impossible to imagine making this series without her. She was completely involved with trying to knit together all these places and making it feel like a real park."

"The complexity of what she pulled off is mind-boggling, and she did it all without incident. We had days when four or five directors were shooting. Imagine trying to shoot three summer blockbusters simultaneously in a half-dozen locations. She's an MVP for sure."

Nolan had a strong influence on location choices, especially in Utah. He became familiar with the state during numerous cross-country driving trips. "I thought about that iconic landscape and wanted to start there," he says. "When we got to Cas-

During the hiatus, Dillin worked on *The Revenant*, an experience she found useful when she returned to *Westworld*.

“*The Revenant* had a lot of budgetary problems,” she says. “It exposed me to a lot of interesting secrets and methods of how to make a real wilderness film. “Although I had previous experience with working in the snow, *The Revenant* made *Django Unchained* look like a ride at Disneyland. We were literally in the middle of nowhere in Alberta and sometimes had dozens of period background actors to manage, not to mention all of their horses and other livestock. The film was all on location in the middle of a snowless but still cold Canadian winter.

“*The Revenant* showed me new ways to move people and equipment in the snow and rising river waters. The Canadians used a lot of plastic sleds to cart around camera gear. They were dragged by a small army of production assistants. To avoid slipping on mud and melting ice, we pounded chicken wire and punched steel into the ground to make slip-proof walkways through the forest.

“We had a ‘heat team,’ who was responsible for keeping both the cast and crew warm in the freezing temperatures. That was literally a 24/7 operation. We also had a dedicated group of people who constructed floating plastic bridges across melting rivers and streams, which had to be altered so horses could walk on them without slipping and gear carts could be pushed to location.

“It sounds kind of nerdy to get so excited about all of that, but those little tricks are essential to getting the crew where we need to go in order to make the movie.”

Westworld had more than wilderness on its mind. “We had activity going on in every single corner of Los Angeles County,” Dillin says, “from the South Bay to Simi Valley, from downtown L.A. to Malibu and Ventura County. Sometimes we had multiple

units shooting. Sometimes we had daytime filming. Sometimes we had nighttime filming. It really did become a 24-hour operation at times. I tried to keep the hours humane—within a 12-hour-to-14-hour day—although my schedule was a different story, depending on what was going on.”

How did she keep sane? “I just willed myself to not get overwhelmed or discouraged,” she says. “It was a matter of waking up and that was my life. If I think of things as a challenge, they become a duty and they’re no longer fun.”

She also got out her yoga mat every morning. “I would do at least 30 minutes of yoga before leaving the house,” she says. “That changed my life. It gave me the tools to remain calm. Yoga helps relieve stress. You have to focus on what you’re doing for 10 minutes-20 minutes-30 minutes. I had this dream of converting the lunchroom at Melody Ranch into a yoga studio, but there was never any time.”

Dillin’s steady hand inspired her location crew, which numbered as many as 13 at some stages. “Mandi has a very positive attitude and a positive energy, and she carries that day-to-day,” key assistant location manager David Park, LMGI says. “It trickles down through the whole department. She’s a very hard-working, good person, and she has an infectious laugh.

“*Westworld* was a very difficult shoot in a lot of ways. It had a very large footprint—a feature film-size footprint—that wanted to move at the pace of a TV show. Areas we worked in would be freezing in the morning and extremely hot during the day. But it was still thoroughly enjoyable.”

Adds assistant location manager Tommy Woodard, LMGI, “Mandi takes her job very seriously but knows how to have a fun time. She knows a lot about everything. It’s cool to have someone with that much knowledge around. She’s not a micro-



manager, and she never yelled. She never chewed you out if you made a mistake.”

Production designer Zack Grobler, who joined the *Westworld* team after the pilot was shot, quickly bonded with Dillin. “I’m usually doing TV, which has a very short time frame, so I really need someone I can talk to and who can get into my head,” he says. “Mandi is good at that.”

We had two weeks alone at the beginning of production. We didn’t have a script, but Jonah gave me a brief of what he was planning to do, and we watched the pilot. So we’d go out looking for potential locations.

“Mandi’s really good at brainstorming. While we were driving, we’d keep throwing ideas back-and-forth. I’d say, ‘If we had a guy in an abandoned village, where would that be?’ She’d say, ‘I can show you this and this.’ When we started shooting and had the scripts, we had a whole library we could pull from.”

“Zack worked on *Lost*, which meant that he had a lot of experience creating scope when you had no choice,” Dillin says. “Things would come up at the last moment. Suddenly, *Lost* needed a cave or a jungle. Zack made sets out of Styrofoam and painted them. He had flexibility and vision, so he made things more manageable.”

Adds Grobler, “When you’re on one island and they ask you to do different countries and you only have one week, it’s challenging. But *Westworld* was more complicated and more challenging. “On *Lost*, you eventually caught the rhythm. You knew you had nowhere else to go and you accepted the limits. With *Westworld*, we’d be thinking ‘Maybe we can find something better.’ Then the day before shooting, they’d change the script and want something different.”

Perhaps the biggest challenge was shooting at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood. “It was one of our high-end

modern locations,” Park says. “It involved a lot of sets—the laboratories, design labs and the modern-day world of the innards of *Westworld*, where everything is created and controlled.”

“Jonah really liked the PDC,” Grobler says. “He and (pilot) production designer Nathan Crowley based a lot of the look of the show on that design. We only went for one night, and the shops closed at 6 p.m.

“My construction team needed to cover 600 feet of shop fronts with black anodized set flats (or set walls) and said it would take eight hours, but I said we only had two. We ended up having several teams working in different areas simultaneously, frantically covering up shops as they started closing for the day. It was a very long and challenging night.”

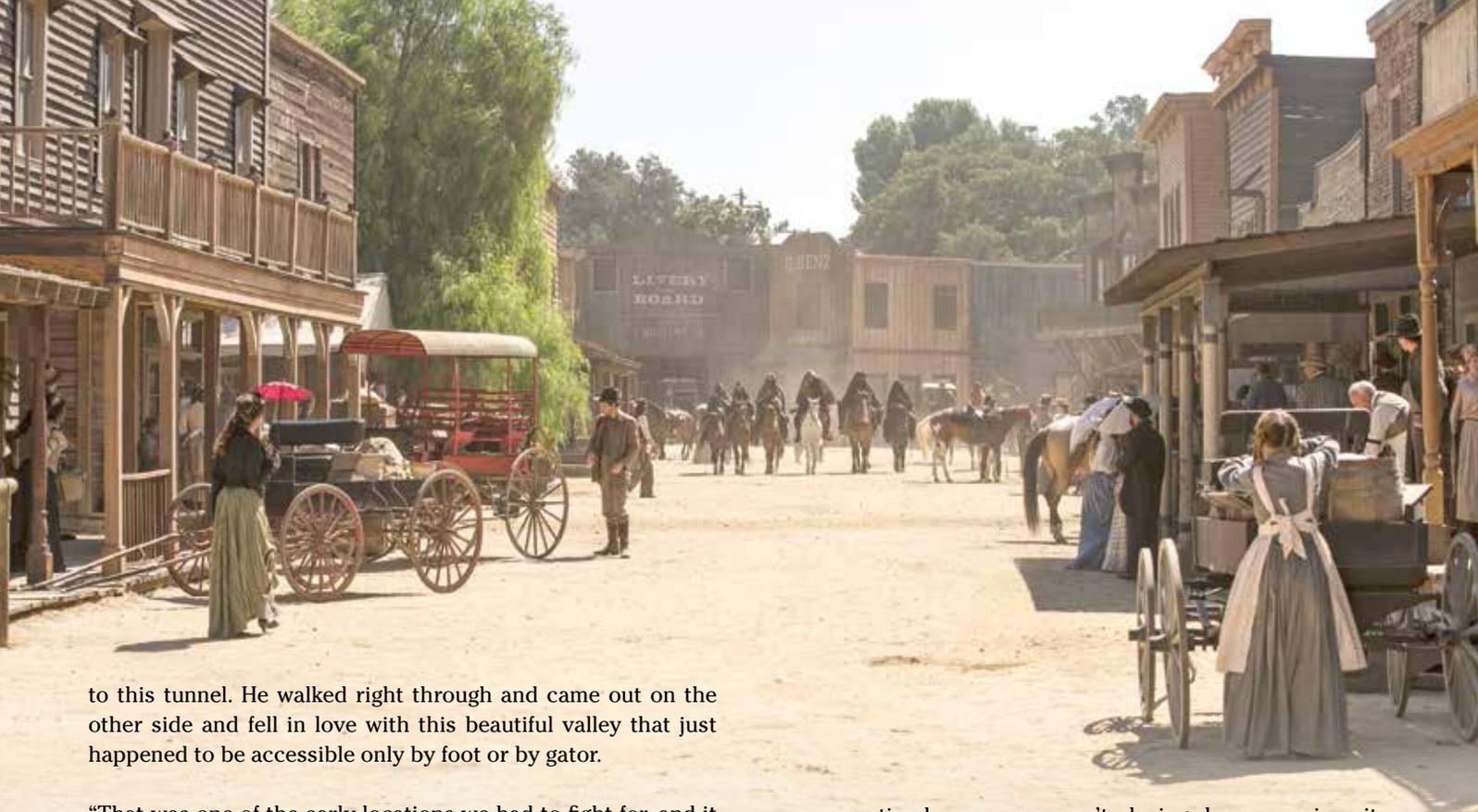
Nolan remembers it well. “J.J. Abrams (one of *Westworld*’s executive producers) stopped by the set to say hello, and we had two full units at work. J.J. asked me, ‘How many trucks do you have?’ He’d just come from the set of *Star Wars*.”

Every day brought Dillin new problems. “When you enter a location you haven’t been in before, you have to ask questions about what’s required to pull this off,” she says. Questions were as varied as: What do we need to feed the horses? How much nudity is allowed in a state park? Where can we find a tunnel or a cave?

“Jonah had this great vision and it’s very cinematic and very thematic,” Dillin says. “He was involved in every episode. We’d have production meetings, and he’d see the location photos. Some things he really wanted, and it made sense because he had access to a lot of changes in the story line.”

One example of how Nolan influenced a location: “We’d done some extensive scouting in the Angeles National Forest,” Dillin says. “We filmed on an old automobile road that used to take people from Pasadena up to the top of Echo Mountain. It was a very narrow pathway. I wanted to show Jonah the entrance





to this tunnel. He walked right through and came out on the other side and fell in love with this beautiful valley that just happened to be accessible only by foot or by gator.

“That was one of the early locations we had to fight for, and it involved a bit of engineering to make the road safe for gators to drive down. But it was definitely worth it. Everybody gasped when they first saw those scenes because they didn’t even look like Southern California.”

Because of the strong Western emphasis, *Westworld* spent a lot of time shooting on just about every Hollywood movie ranch. “Melody Ranch (in Newhall) was our stage,” Dillin says. “Its backlot is a Western town. That’s where everyone coming to *Westworld* got off the train.”

“Being at Melody was a really good idea,” Grobler says. “We worked there the most. It’s the best Western set in Southern California. And within a 20-minute to 30-minute drive, there’s Big Sky Ranch, Rancho Deluxe and Sable Ranch.”

“The only time we had to go downtown was to shoot concrete bunker stuff. Finding a tunnel or cave was hard. Our best option was in Griffith Park, but there was a murder investigation going on so we couldn’t use it. Finally, we went to Vasquez Rocks.”

The location team tried to use as many recognizable Western locations as possible. “We filmed in Simi Valley, where *Fort Apache* was shot, and on Big Sky, where *Bonanza* was shot,” Grobler says. “They were within the 30-mile studio zone.”

Explaining the zone, which is centered at the southeast corner of Beverly and La Cienega, Dillin says, “It has to do with unions and pay. The further outside the studio zone you go, the more expensive it gets because you have to pay for mileage and time.”

Constantly in the back of Dillin’s mind was the need to keep everything in context. “Unlike the *Transformers* movies, which

are very action-heavy, we weren’t closing down massive city streets,” she says. “Nor were we doing huge amounts of pyrotechnics within the city. This was a different challenge.

“*Westworld* is period and science fiction and a future-yet-to-be-defined world. We don’t even know when this story is being told. What do lampposts look like in this future? Is this a real future or an imagined future? You can make yourself crazy talking about it.”

She spent many of her days “in scout vans—scouting locations for future episodes or checking locations for the current episodes—or in meetings,” she says. “Sometimes we’d be prepping five or six separate locations at once.”

There was constant stress. “Sometimes I’d look at my watch, look at the script and look at the week and think, ‘There are not enough hours in the day to get this done,’” she remembers. “I’d walk into the office and look at my team, who were awesome and supportive. I knew they would show up for me, so I would have to show up for them.”

Dillin’s experience on heavy-action films helped prepare her for *Westworld*. “They laid a lot of groundwork for how to do things big, with scope, with a lot of crew and with considerable budget,” she says. “I could distill it down to the essence of what’s required without spending a lot of money.”

She depended heavily on local maps. “I got an allowable footprint from the producers, and then I started looking for a place where we could build a cluster of locations,” she explains. “We didn’t want to be going to a different location every single day. The goal was to move around as little as possible so we could maximize work hours. So I’d find an anchor location and try to fill in what we were missing around it.”

Once she was in the field, Dillin consulted the locals. “In Utah, I asked national parks people and state and local film commissions if they could give me some options and places to explore,” she says. “Often, somebody knows somebody, and they can figure out a way to help you.”

No matter how persuasive Dillin and her team could be, sometimes they were thwarted. The need to film sex scenes prevented the location team from clearing the Mission Inn Hotel & Spa in Riverside. “One of the scenes involved a lot of nudity,” Park says. “Due to the content, we had a harder time shopping it around to locations.”

“Some parks don’t allow nudity,” Dillin added. “This is a Western, and people bathe in water. But even in those benign scenes, we were not allowed to show certain parts of the body.”

Another location that proved difficult was Corriganville Park in Simi Valley. Formerly a movie ranch, the area has now become a local park with new homes close by. “It was where *Fort Apache* was shot,” Grobler says. “I had this beautiful idea of building a prison, and it worked out perfectly. People could hide behind big boulders. But it was hard to shoot there at night because a neighbor complained. We couldn’t go back so we had to find another location.”

Woodard describes what happened. “We were filming overnight, with lots of lights and gunfire. We had permits and we’d notified the community, but one guy was so mad about the noise that he started calling the film permit office at midnight and complaining to the police. He was yelling at the top of his lungs. We had a park ranger there who kept him from coming onto the set.”

Most gunfire scenes were not problematic because they happened on large movie ranches. Still, there were restrictions. “Sometimes where we were filming dictated the load they were allowed to use,” Dillin says, “and that in turn, affected the special effects. The director wanted to use a larger round in the gun, and sometimes the larger round gave a certain amount of flash or smoke.”

“In the Simi Valley location, we couldn’t shoot anything over a quarter-load gunfire, and they wanted to shoot 50-caliber guns. The trade-off was you got this great location, but you had to spend a little bit more money on special effects to amp up the blast of the gun.”

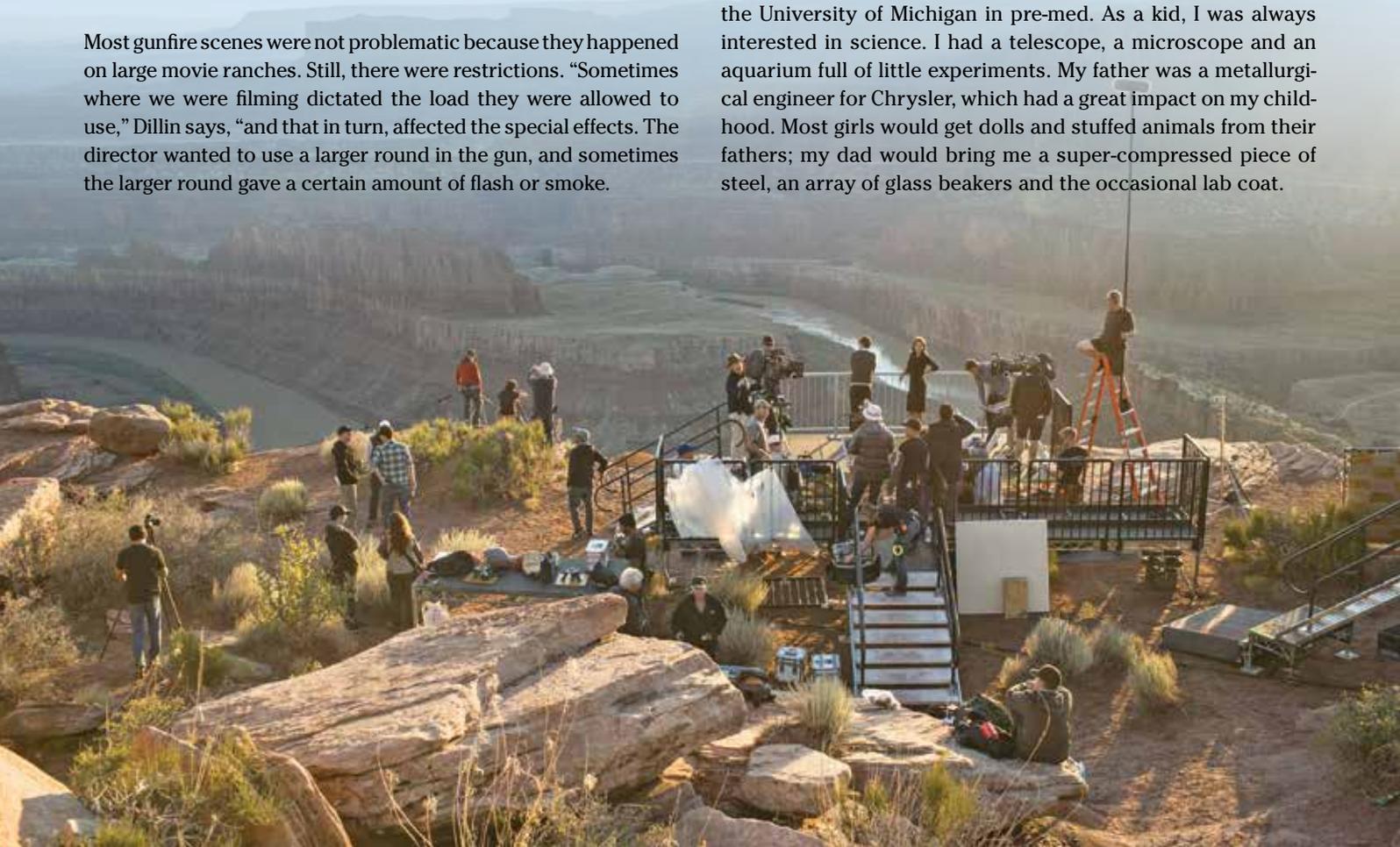
A special case was a Gatling gun, a forerunner of the machine gun. “That is loud and big and lets off a lot of shells,” Dillin says. “That’s not a piece of equipment we can take just anywhere.”

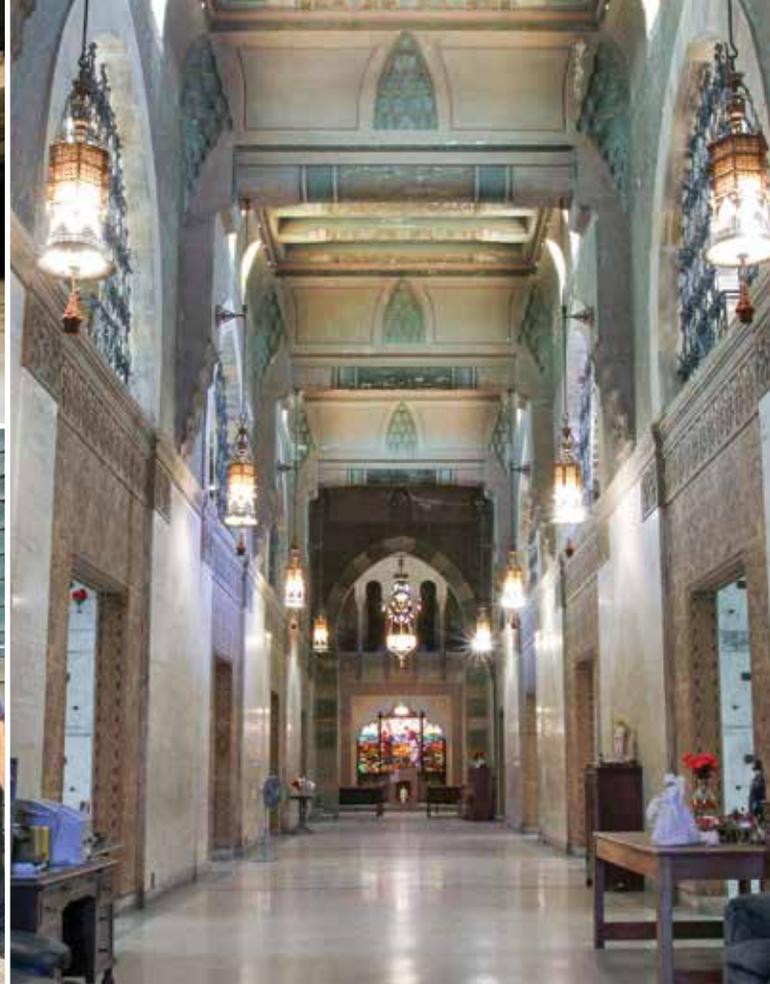
Horses brought other challenges. “For one scene, we had 30 horses on set,” Dillin says. “The wranglers were responsible for their health certificates and permits, but county agencies often like to see that horses are up-to-date with their shots. Sometimes we have to submit names and permits for every single animal, including chickens and donkeys. You have to treat them like a person.”

“When we shot in a lot of national and state parks in Utah, we had to make sure no seeds came out of animals’ waste. Those parks don’t want non-native invasive species introduced. Every truck had to be sprayed to make sure no seeds were picked up along the way to pollinate on government land.”

Another underlying worry was starting a fire. “We had a lot of special effects and activities that were in high fire-restrictive areas and were high fire dangers,” Park says. “And we were moving at such a pace with so many units filming at once. I had to establish a relationship with the L.A. County Fire Department early on because so much work involved their oversight.”

All these concerns never crossed Dillin’s mind when she was a teenager. “I had a very urban upbringing in Toledo, Ohio,” she says. “I planned to be a cardiovascular surgeon and went to the University of Michigan in pre-med. As a kid, I was always interested in science. I had a telescope, a microscope and an aquarium full of little experiments. My father was a metallurgical engineer for Chrysler, which had a great impact on my childhood. Most girls would get dolls and stuffed animals from their fathers; my dad would bring me a super-compressed piece of steel, an array of glass beakers and the occasional lab coat.”





Clockwise from top left: On location at the Hawthorne Plaza in Hawthorne, CA; the Angeles Abbey in Compton, CA; the crew on location; Dillin capturing a shot. Photos courtesy of Mandi Dillin/LMGI

“Since there are no doctors in my family, my interest in cardiology probably came from television shows. *ER* was popular when I was in high school and the Discovery Channel had just started airing documentaries about surgery. I wasn’t interested in engineering so becoming a surgeon seemed like a good alternative. It seemed like something I could absolutely do. I had steady hands from years of piano playing, I wasn’t squeamish, and surgery seemed very logical to me—cut here, stitch here and you’re done.

“It wasn’t until I started taking pre-med classes in college when I realized everything you need to do before you become a surgeon, like calculus and chemistry. My college calculus classes really kicked my butt!” Needing an elective, she signed up for a film class and ended up deciding to change her goals.

“I wanted to be a DP,” she says, “and then I heard about ADs and thought that fit my personality better. I really wanted to be in the DGA Training Program. I was a finalist and got to the interview phase. I was listed as an alternate in 2001, and that brought me to Los Angeles. I did odd jobs until I could apply again.”

One of those jobs was working as assistant to a CAA agent who represented director Oliver Stone and producer James Skotchdopole. “One day, he introduced me to Jim, who hired me as his assistant on *Alexander* and then later on *The Revenant*,” Dillin says. In 2004, she met location manager Molly Allen, who needed an

office coordinator. “Working for Molly changed my life,” Dillin says. “The job with her was filing and phone calls, but it was so much more. She was an amazing mentor. She showed me the world of locations. She gave me the confidence and encouragement to pursue this career. I was hooked.

“I realized that the work of an AD is incredibly demanding and stressful. As a location manager, I’m involved in scheduling, logistics, planning and the creative process. The best part is that I get to straddle all worlds. I get to talk to people who operate museums, parks, galleries and racetracks. Being exposed to all these really fantastic people is life-affirming.

“I love my job. I like the challenges and the thinking involved to put together the puzzle pieces.”

“I don’t want to work with anyone but Mandi,” Grobler says. “I really tried to get her on the series I’m doing now, *Jack Ryan*, but she’s busy doing something else. Maybe she’ll join me later.”

MANDI’S TEAM:

Key Assistant Location Managers:

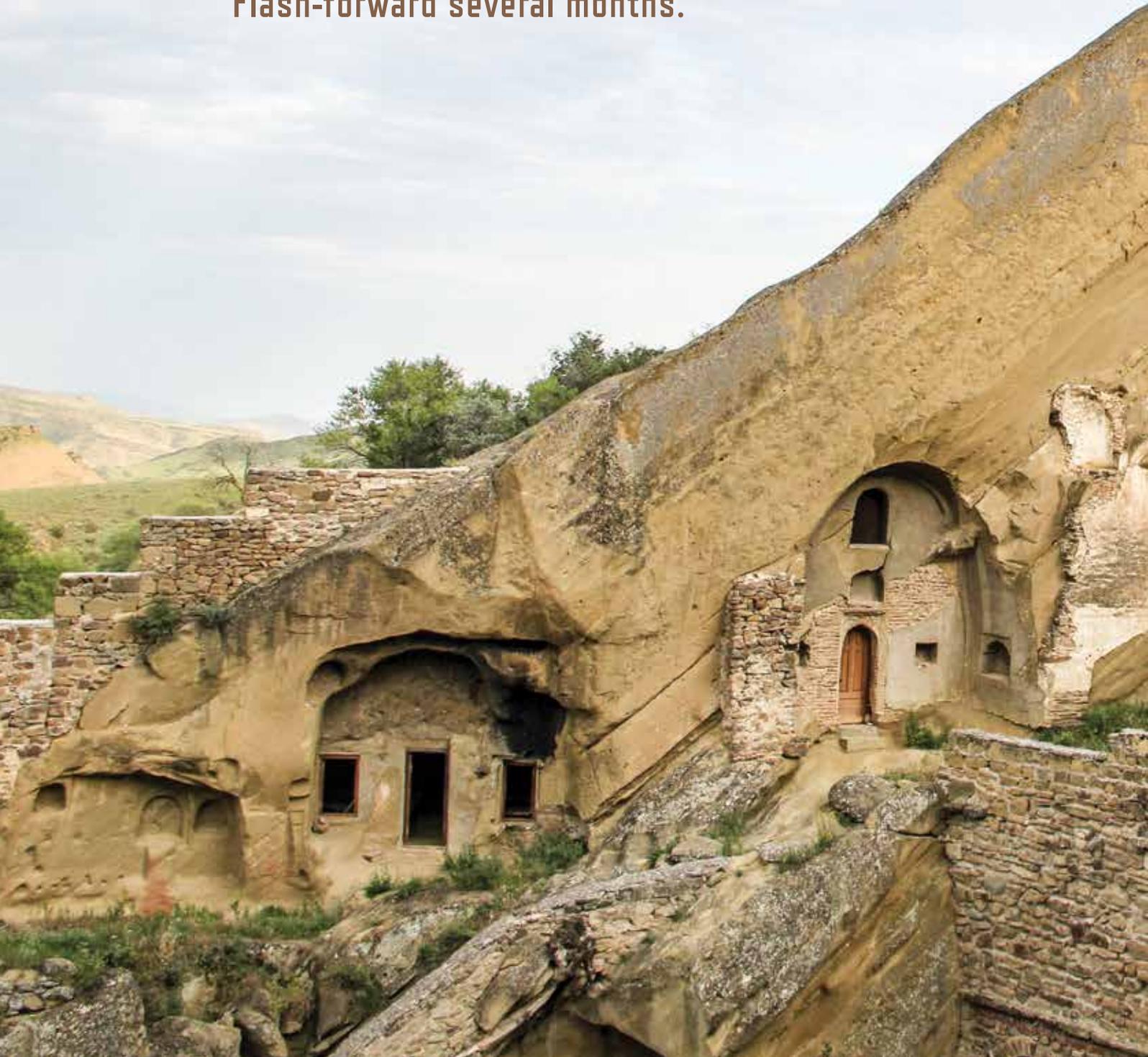
David Park, LMGI, Lori Russell, Diana Lara, Richard Streeter, Tada Chae, Justin Harrold, Ben Holley, Laura Brown (scout)

Assistant Location Managers:

Tommy Woodard, LMGI and Eddie Santillian

Georgia on My Mind

by Patrick Mignano At the 2016 LMGI Awards, there was a misunderstanding about one of our key sponsors. The running line became “It’s Georgia ... the country, not the state.” Flash-forward several months.





All photos by Patrick Mignano/LMGI, except as noted



Top two photos: Courtesy of Patrick Mignano/LMGI

It's a little before 6 a.m. of our third day in Georgia and I have yet to adjust to the time change. Between that and the excitement of seeing what this beautiful country has to offer, sleep is hard to come by. I'm standing on the small deck of my hotel room in the small town of Stepantsminda, looking across the valley's most prominent feature, the mountain of Kazbegi. A massive conical peak in the Caucasus Mountains, Kazbegi tops out at nearly 16,500 feet above sea level.

In the foreground nestled on the shoulder of the great mountain is the medieval Gergeti Trinity Church. The sun has yet to reach the church as the first morning light slowly works its way up the hillside.

I leave my room and head downstairs to the main lobby area of the impressive modern mountain town resort hotel, a converted Soviet era sanatorium. I have the sprawling and beautiful common area to myself, looking through the floor to ceiling windows at the mountain in the distance, keeping an eye on the light. Although it's the middle of June, the high altitude and the crisp mountain air make for rather cool temperatures as I zip up my jacket and make my way out onto the wooden deck running the length of the hotel. I drop into one of the chairs on the deck and settle in waiting for the sun to reach



the church. The combination of biting mountain air, pin-drop silence and the breathtaking vista allow me the opportunity to reflect on this adventure and to consider how fortunate I am for the chance to spend a week in Georgia.

Located in what would best be described as Eurasia, Georgia is bordered by Turkey, Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan. The country is roughly the size of Kentucky and has a population of around 4 million. As is the case with most countries in that region, Georgia was part of the Soviet Union until it gained independence at the end of 1991. Georgia is sandwiched between two formidable mountain ranges, the Greater Caucasus Mountains and the Lower Caucasus Mountains. The geography of the country made it a natural choice for the Silk Road, an early trade route connecting Europe with Asia.

In May, I received an invitation from the Georgia Film Office and Enterprise Georgia to join fellow location managers Becky Brake, LMGI, Shani Orona, LMGI, Scott Trimble, LMGI, and Piers Dunn, along with producers Meryl Emmerton and Jeff Most, to explore the country on its very first a week-long FamTour.

In January of this year, the country launched its incentive program with a 20 percent cash rebate and a potential five

percent increase if the project promotes the country as a destination for travel or business.

This simplest way for me to categorize the many sites and rich experience of the country is to divide it into three distinct historical and geographic regions: Landscape and Historic Georgia; Soviet Era and Contemporary Georgia. These are my personal observations, but for the sake of the article, let's use these categories.

LANDSCAPE AND HISTORIC GEORGIA

As we traveled around the country and in Tbilisi (the nation's capital and largest city of some 2 million people), you get the sense of the timelessness of the land, such as the ancient battlements overlooking the river in Tbilisi. We were taken to an awe-inspiring sixth-century monastery known as David Gareja. The monastery and housing for the monks were hewn out of the native rock, literally turning the hillside into a community of amazing buildings.

Uplistsikhe is another ancient community first inhabited during the Early Iron Age up through the late Middle Ages that is a series of impressive structures and dwellings carved out of





the hillside. The mountain village of Mestia in the Svaneti Region of the country still boasts numerous fortification towers built in the 12th century against an invasion that never came.

The city streets in the old section of Tbilisi have a haphazard quality, enchantingly enhanced with the patina of the early city. Sections of downtown Batumi, located on the Black Sea have another vibe, reminiscent of the French Quarter in New Orleans or colonial Cuba.

Georgia's landscape is equally diverse and fascinating. The rugged and massive Caucasus Mountains are spectacular in their sheer size and formidable presence. The vast mountains with their precipitous, deep-cut green valleys feel hauntingly isolated and inviting at the same time.

Georgia is still a predominately agrarian economy and we passed through large tracts dedicated to various crops. Georgia is known as the birthplace of wine with vineyards and examples of winemaking dating back nearly eight thousand years. Georgians take great pride in their wine and it is quickly becoming world-renowned for its seemingly countless varieties of grapes.

We were taken to a truly impressive cave system known as the Prometheus Caves. The subterranean complex winds its way almost a mile below the earth's surface with numerous halls of impressive limestone formations.

The Black Sea borders Georgia to the west. Its pebbled beaches and relatively calm waters offer refuge against the humid sum-

mer temperatures. It provides recreational opportunities for Georgians as well as numerous tourists from around the region that come to enjoy the beach and sun. During the Soviet regime, Georgia was in effect, the Florida of the Soviet Union.

SOVIET ERA

In the early 1920s, the Soviet Union invaded and absorbed Georgia. Georgia was under Soviet rule for almost 70 years before it gained its independence in 1991.

The effect of the Soviet occupation is still very much in evidence today. The large, stoic brutalistic housing blocks built in the Communist regime are still very much in use today. The Soviets built massive factories throughout Georgia. We were taken to an old steel factory in Rustavi, just outside of Tbilisi and were shown around the plant. The scale of the mostly vacant buildings was hard to comprehend—whole communities were built within the 1,400-acre factory complex to house the workers. The majority of these are now derelict, along with the fascinating industrial architecture of the various mills and plants, makes for the perfect place to film a post-apocalyptic world with true scale that needs no VFX enhancement. It was a visual feast that most location managers can only dream of presenting to a production designer.

We also visited a locomotive factory from this era that was still functioning, but at a seriously reduced capacity. There were many derelict warehouses with massive glass brick walls. Abandoned train cars from the '50s and '60s still stand on the tracks ringing the buildings. Once again, a fully dressed

set that made us all take note of the possibilities of filming in Georgia.

The group stopped off in Chiatura, a Soviet mining town built in a narrow river canyon. They produced Manganese and created a series of aerial trams from one mining operation to another. The tram cars definitely showed their age but the design from 1950s Soviet Georgia was so compelling, we left our apprehension on the valley floor and were treated to a ride we will not soon forget.

Georgia was a vacation spot for the Soviet elite. The temperate climate was very appealing to the Russians and they would flock to Georgia. We were fortunate enough to spend the night in Tskaltubo, a spa town in West Central Georgia. The town was built around its radon-carbonate mineral springs that were sought after for their restorative properties. Impressive hotels, complete with opera houses, were built for the important and influential members of the Soviet Union. The numerous buildings, once grand and opulent, fell into ruin after the collapse of Communism and Georgia's subsequent independence. Gratefully, they are being restored to their former glory for the enjoyment of all visitors.

CONTEMPORARY GEORGIA

Given Georgia's strategic positioning between two imposing mountain ranges and its proximity to both the Black and Caspian Seas, the country has known conflict and has been conquered and subjugated numerous times in the past several thousand years. That being said, Georgia has had to equally





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adapt and reinvent itself. The byproduct of the nearly continuous conquest and rebirth is the resiliency and positive outlook of Georgia's people. There is a saying and tradition in Georgia that an invited guest is a gift from God. It is far more than a saying and we can attest to its practice. We were treated graciously and were taken such good care of. To be greeted with such warmth and sincerity by virtually every person we interacted with was somewhat humbling.

The Georgian people are fiercely proud of their country and rightfully so. The country is very progressive with its approach to integrating into the modern-world economy. They are striving for admission into the European Union as well as cultivating relationships with the United States and Far Eastern countries. The Film Commission as well as Enterprise Georgia have a great product and they are marketing it aggressively and it's paying off. The liberal film-incentive packages are inviting foreign filmmakers to take advantage of the scenic and cultural diversity of the country as well as providing a good tax break in doing so. The film community of Tbilisi has a strong foundation. There are several stage facilities, some brand new and some revamped from the Soviet area, that are in place right now with more anticipated coming online in the near future.

There is truly a can-do spirit that is palpable and infectious. Our group itself was compatible. I don't think there could have been a better chemistry for a group of filmmakers that spent upward of 10 hours a day in a scout van. Our hosts were determined to show us as much as possible. They kept us comfortable, despite the grueling pace, spirits remained high and I personally haven't laughed as much and enjoyed myself in a very long time. I speak for the rest of the group when I say that our trip to Georgia and the care and attention given to us by Sopho Bendiashvili, Tatia Bidzinashvili with Enterprise Georgia and David Vashadze, the Georgian Film Commissioner as well as our guide and spiritual leader, Tamara Natenadze, will remain with all of us for the rest of our lives. I'd also like to thank both Ketu Bochorishvili, the Vice Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, and Ani Kvaratskhelia, the CEO of Enterprise Georgia, for their gracious hospitality and seeing that we were well taken care of.



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Georgia is a magical place. The landscape and architecture, the food and wine and most importantly, the people will stay with me always. Thank you, Georgia. Hope to see you again soon.

Patrick Mignano is a location manager and director/actor.

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Bridget Healy & Marie Healy in St. Augustine, Florida. Photo courtesy of Marie Healy/LMGI

will never forget the phone call that changed my life. “Mom has cancer and we need you here.” *Here* was Vero Beach, Florida.

After flying back-and-forth across the country and six months of surgeries, chemotherapy and a near-death experience, I realized I needed to put my location career on hold to focus on my family. I packed up my life in Santa Monica, California, and moved to this small, seaside town on the Treasure Coast of Florida. This was last November. While caring for my parents, I answered a call for volunteers to help with the inaugural Vero Beach Wine + Film Festival, scheduled for four days in June.

Outside of California wine country, there wasn’t another like it featuring indie filmmakers plus winemakers. It also happened to be the 40th anniversary of the infamous Judgment of Paris, on which the movie *Bottle Shock* is loosely based. Author George Taber agreed to be the honorary festival chairman and share his experience as the only reporter who witnessed this incredible California versus French wine blind taste test.

It sounded like a perfect opportunity to meet residents of my new community and apply my industry skill set to something familiar. I’ve been to Sundance, Palm Springs, Newport Beach and various Los Angeles film festivals, and I’m a wine enthusiast, so I forwarded my résumé.

The festival founders contacted me and proposed the producer position based on my 20 years of location scouting, managing and years of LMGI Board participation as events chairperson, award show co-producer and co-editor of this magazine. All my experience came into play when I said “yes” and hit the ground running.

This new ‘off season’ event was already sold to the mayor and other city officials but it was evident that the greatest challenge would be to educate the owners of our venues, an army of volunteers and the community at large, on ‘how to fest’ for this to be a success.

I thought of my experiences working on films shooting in rural Massachusetts and Tennessee and applied that way of explaining film production to this novice festival community. We designed maps, schedules and diagrams describing the event for the local papers. Radio interviews, posters, rack cards, street banners, venue feather signs, real estate road signs, booths at local events, kickoff parties, all helped promote the festival.

At each meeting with our community partners, I kept copious notes and took photos as if on a tech scout. Instinctively, I knew this could be far bigger than they expected; we had no idea how many would attend this four-day extravaganza.

Engaging our volunteers and assigning specific responsibilities was critical. I learned the program “Track It Forward” which made managing 100-plus volunteers easy. We had weekly meetings to keep them excited. We were taking a leap of faith that people would buy tickets. We committed to deliver the top-notch event the executive director envisioned.

Sip See Savor the Unexpected

Healy’s Creative Reapplication of a Location Pro’s Skill Set

by Marie Healy



L-R: Jerusha Stewart (Executive Director), Gail Shepherd (Director of Partner Relations), Susan Keller Horn (Co-founder), Marie Healy (Producer)

All photos by Lane Solomon, except as noted



Left: Marie presenting trophy to writer/director Manolo Cruz, whose *Between Sea and Land* was the Feature Film Audience Choice winner at the festival.

Organizational systems and communication techniques similar to producing films were established and I treated the process like a 10-location, four-day shoot. It didn't matter that this was my first festival production; managing people and logistics is our "location management process."

Film and documentary submissions from all over the world poured in while local talent came out of the woodwork. Winemakers from New Zealand, Italy, California and Florida agreed to attend, share their wines and participate on panels. The energy was building and a lot of talent was descending on Vero Beach.

At times it was organized chaos, not unlike many film shoots when the director has a new thought on how to shoot the scene and we scramble to make it happen. I found myself scrambling with my team and chuckling at how similar this festival experience was to the production world.

We were honored that local papers reported rave reviews from attendees and *The Huffington Post* blog named it one of the "Five Reasons Vero Beach Is Your New Favorite Florida Destination." Many wished for a 2017 festival encore ... which is planned for June 8-11.

Reflecting on that whirlwind of festival activity, I realize that the skills and experience I've garnered over the past 20 years in Hollywood has prepared me for more than I know! I'm excited to see where this new journey takes me next!

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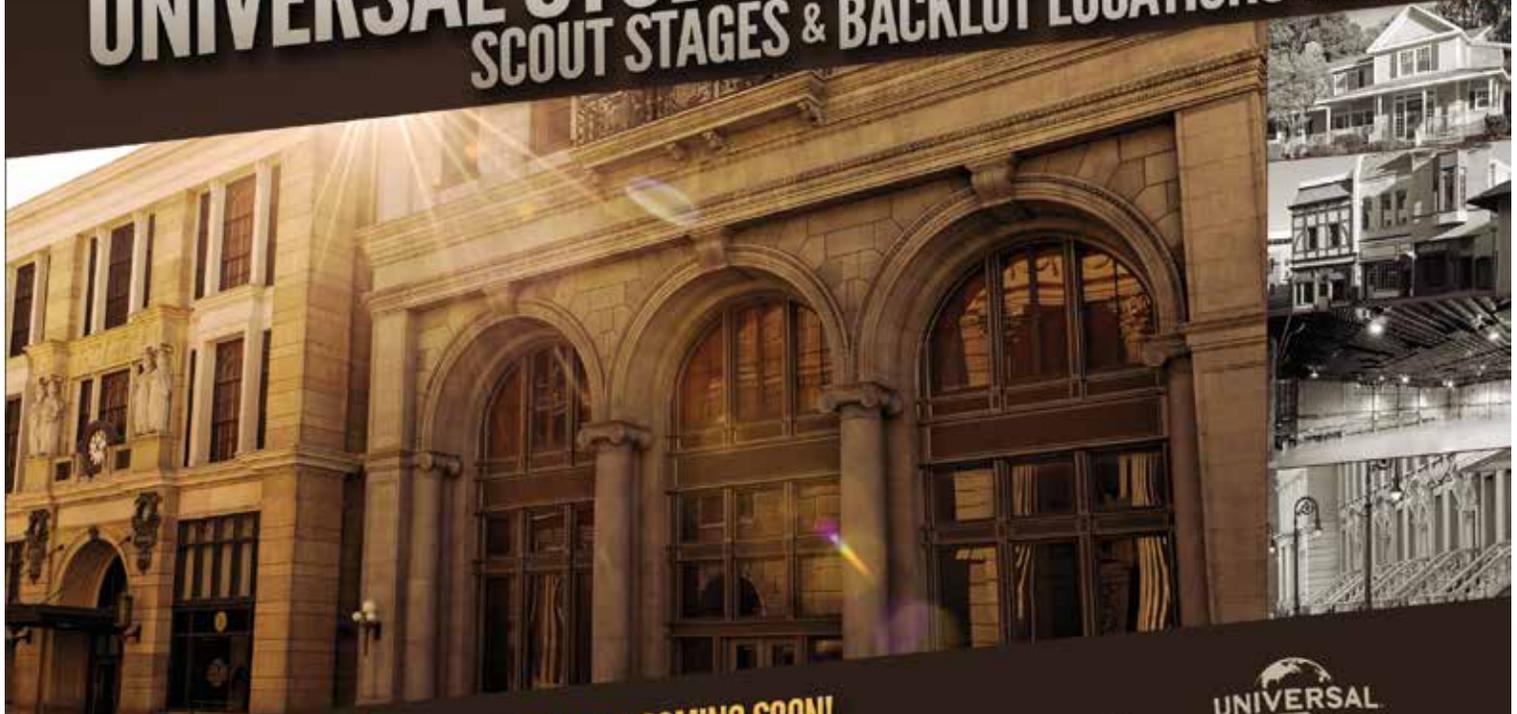


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