

# COMPASS



FALL 2015

The Official Magazine of the Location Managers Guild of America



***NCIS:  
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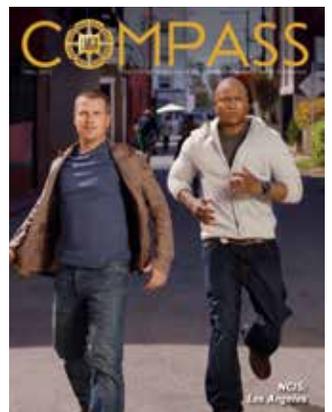
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Photo by Joseph Cultise/  
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# FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

*"Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there."*

—WILL ROGERS

*"We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths."*

—WALT DISNEY

Ah! The comfort of inertia. Our work is physically demanding and mentally draining. Sometimes it's downright pleasant to rest on our achievements once we reach the top of a particular career peak. Yet eventually, we wake from our reverie and continue our climb toward advancing personally and professionally. Coming out of the summer doldrums, this issue propels us into autumn, taking a look at members on the move, advancing our course.

"Mr. Quemore Goes to Hollywood" provides a key assistant location manager's view up the ladder of success. Zach Quemore considers the path of his career and the many people who helped him along the way. Taking chances, accepting guidance, learning how to recognize and seize opportunities. It's refreshing to hear the tale from someone just beginning his professional journey.

Moving forward, location scout Nick Carr illustrates how skepticism over the existence of a location can often prove to be the greatest obstacle to finding it. Fortunately, he has lots of experience in moving beyond "No." Join him on his scouting adventures in pursuit of medieval castles in New York City in "King for a Day."

And then there are our personal pursuits. Russ Fega gets lost in the Montana hinterlands, armed with his trusty camera and indefatigable sense of curiosity. We love how we tend to spend time off from scouting by going out in the world and ... scouting! This piece is a glimpse of a true location professional on his own time, observing the world.

In the *LMGA Compass* cover story on *NCIS: Los Angeles*, reporter Nancy Mills shines a light on the location team that brings you the high-octane, location-driven CBS mainstay. Location managers Tony Salome and Jason Savage talk about the pressure of budgets and time and the alchemy of good teamwork.

Our regularly appearing departments include "Career Focus," "In My City," "In the News" and the "Martini Shot." In this issue, we introduce "LOC PRO TOP TEN," an occasional column that features a top ten list of location ephemera. With this, and all other aspects of the *LMGA Compass*, we welcome your input and suggestions.

As the heat wains, and autumn colors the landscape, we hope you keep climbing toward your goals, whatever they may be. Keep in mind that even if you fall, you are still moving forward.

Always a pleasure, never too busy,  
Marie, Stevie, Ken and Lori



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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



DEAR MEMBERS,

During my years of being President of the LMGA, I have come to know a great many of you. I've come to appreciate the fact that it is not just the job that creates our bond. The true connection stems from our relationships with each other. As we approach Thanksgiving, I realize how grateful I am for these connections.

Family is defined as a group of people affiliated by consanguinity, co-residence or shared consumption. Our Guild meets those criteria and more. The people that make up the LMGA have created a modern, extended family, generous with their friendships, shared interests, mentoring, 'there when you need them' assistance, healthy competition, advice and time.

I attended three weddings this year. Last Saturday, I celebrated a friend's birthday. On Wednesday night, I had a heart-to-heart talk with a friend while driving home from work. On Sunday, I had a two-hour meeting with the LMGA Board. I made plans to meet with a few of those 14 in New York and a few in Atlanta to plan a membership drive. Today, I'll hike with one of my favorite people on the planet. Each and every one of the above are LMGA members.

If you think that the LMGA is just a corporate organization, think again. When you start sending out your Thanksgiving invitations or emailing the Sunday football pool notice, how many of the people that you care about and want to share your life with are Guild members?

So, to our LMGA family, I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving and holiday season.

Thank you,  
Nancy Haecker  
President

## COMPASS

Official Magazine of  
Location Professionals  
Promoting Excellence  
on Location Worldwide

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# CONTRIBUTORS



## Thom Anable

Thom Anable grew up in Southern California, attended Culver City High School and UCLA. He is a member of the Directors Guild of America, Teamsters Local 399 and a founding member of the Location Managers Guild of America. He has worked in the film business since 1972. Now retired, he lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife, Linda Segall Anable, and dog Jasper.



## 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.



## J Matthew Cobb

J Matthew Cobb has more than 15 years of experience as a music journalist and critic. He is a contributing writer for SoulTracks.com and has written a host of liner-note essays for Big Break Records, a UK music company specializing in catalog albums. Cobb is the managing editor of *HiFi Magazine* and also serves as the chief editor of *Equinox Birmingham*, a LGBT lifestyle magazine based in Birmingham, Alabama.



## Russ Fega

Russ Fega. That's me. I picked up a used Canon AT-1 in high school and have never put one camera or another down. In fact, it seems like I've been involved with cameras my whole life. I've been in front of the camera, which I prefer. And I've been behind the camera ... way behind the camera in a parking lot somewhere. Working as a scout and a location manager, my most enjoyable experiences were when I was truly involved in discussing locations with the director, production designer and DP. I get a lot of pride, still, from seeing a really good movie or TV show that my team and I worked on. I started my own business, Home Shoot Home, 12 years ago and it's been great working with friends in a different capacity. Photography is my passion.



## 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 Magazine*, *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.



## Zachary Quemore

Key assistant location manager Zachary Quemore is a proud member of the LMGA, Teamsters Local 399 and The Caucus for Producers, Writers & Directors. A graduate of Temple University, he made the cross-country trek to Los Angeles in 2012. Zachary is currently out of town on a great adventure, filming in Hawaii & Vietnam until the spring of 2016. Zachary has worked on such features as *Transformers*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *Iron Man 3*, *The Revenant*, as well as the television series *Rake*, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, *Cold Case* and *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*.

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# IN THE NEWS

Below: "Pico Rivera" by Mark Indig/LMGA



## Indig Sees Red

LMGA member Mark Indig's photography is currently featured in the exhibition "Red alert!" at the PH21 Gallery, Budapest, Hungary.

"Red alert!" is an international juried exhibition featuring all interpretations of the color red as explained in the gallery statement: September 24–October 14, 2015.

The meaning of photographic images is shaped by the unique interplay of depictive and conceptual content as well as compositional features. Colours often play a significant role in photographic meaning construction; they may have symbolic meanings, conceptual significance, and

they can also contribute to or even determine the internal structure and the composition of images. Red is one of those characteristic colours that are often used for such purposes. Its potential for symbolic significance and its strong, vivid presence make it an excellent candidate for creative photographic endeavors. Photographers have been relying on the potentials of red throughout the history of colour photography, and it is always a rewarding experience to survey contemporary photographic works with an eye for the many uses of the colour red.

Two of Indig's images were selected, one of which was "Lady in Red," given



"Show Photo" courtesy of Mark Indig/LMGA

Honourable Mention. Both are Los Angeles subjects taken in 2013.

A prolific photographer, Indig's other exhibitions in addition to the Budapest show, include:

- "Ode to 6th St. Bridge" — Art Share, Los Angeles, California
- "13th Annual Rural South" — Slow Exposures, Zebulon, Georgia
- "Waterworks II" — Glendale Community College Gallery, Glendale, California
- "Rural Impressions 2015" — NY Center for Photography/Jadite Gallery, New York

## LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION

The Third Annual LMGA Awards takes place on Saturday, April 9, 2016. Hold the date for what already promises to be a sensational show.

Call for submissions is early December 2015. Start thinking about the commercials, television programs and movies that feature evocative locations in a pivotal role, relying on them to enhance the story. So far, *Straight Outta Compton*, *Mr.*



Photo by Craig Mathew

Contemporary Film winner Nancy Haecker for *Wild*

*Holmes and Sicario* look like early contenders.

The LMGA Board of Directors voted on potential Honorary Awards. We will announce the recipients of the Humanitarian, Eva Monley, Lifetime Achievement and Trailblazer Awards as soon as schedules are confirmed.

For more information about tickets and sponsorship, contact Michael Cassidy, Michael@IngleDodd.com 818 703-8415



Photo by Craig Mathew

Humanitarian Award recipient Caroline Baron with Alfre Woodard



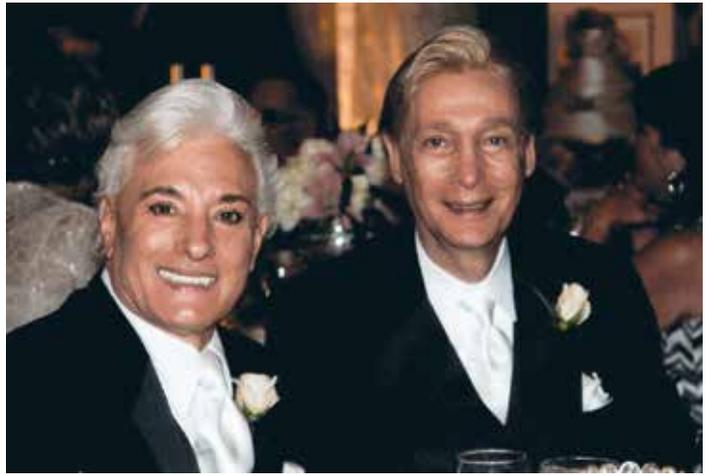
Photo by Craig Mathew

Full house at the Second Annual LMGA Awards

## ABOUT SCHMIDT: Following a Dream

Key assistant location manager Jordan Schmidt, LMGA has realized a dream in beginning production on the one-hour spec TV pilot *Anokijig*. Co-written, produced and helmed by Schmidt, *Anokijig* is based on his childhood summer camp experiences in northern Wisconsin. Schmidt says, "As a kid, I spent every summer at Camp Anokijig. I always thought the place had so many great stories to tell. When I reached out to the camp, they loved the idea but were too busy being a summer camp to allow a film shoot over the summer. After scouting camps and movie ranches around Los Angeles,

I realized the only way to make this both believable and affordable was to shoot establishing shots in Wisconsin and the rest of it in Los Angeles. I hired a drone company out of Chicago called Robo Aerial to take footage of the real camp and the camp's lake. With proper editing, this footage would help me sell Los Angeles for Wisconsin. For the first time, I realized how important my knowledge of locations is to the creative aspect of filmmaking. This is what I do every day—scouting locations that must frequently double for other parts of the world." Juggling a full-time job as a key assistant location manager has limited Schmidt to filming *Anokijig* on weekends and after work hours. Using red cam, canon rebel, go pro and dji inspire drones, Schmidt has shot about 35 minutes of footage so far.



An Ordinary Couple's Bernardo Puccio (left) and Orin Kennedy (right). Photo courtesy of J Matthew Cobb/Equinox Birmingham

## An Ordinary Couple's Return Engagement

by J Matthew Cobb

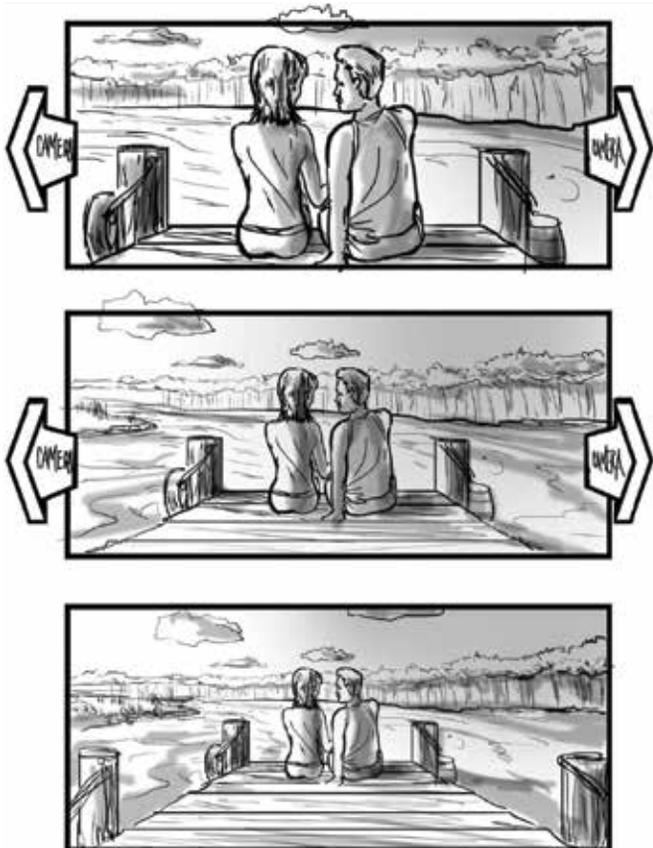
A special screening of the award-winning film *An Ordinary Couple* fell on its fifth anniversary. Gays know how to turn up the volume on extravagance, and that's probably why Brooklyn-born LMGA Chairman Emeritus Orin Kennedy and Birmingham native Bernardo Puccio are not your typical couple. *An Ordinary Couple*, the Jay Gianukos-directed, comedy-laced documentary based on the LA power couple, may have vexed audiences at first with its misleading film title, but they are far from being ordinary. They are affluent, stylish jet-setters, strikingly handsome in their middle age. But it's their love for another and their 30-plus-year relationship that really steals the show. *The Austin Chronicle* claimed it is their story that "packs the punch, and this couple's story can't help but be extraordinary." Audiences at Outfest, Austin Film Festival, Fort

Lauderdale International Film Festival lauded the film. And at Birmingham's Sidewalk Film Festival, when it was originally screened with Birmingham Shout back in 2010, the film nabbed an award for Best Documentary.

The film walks through their frustrations with California's Prop 8 law and their apparent decision to host a garden party in front of a newly erected 12-foot living memorial made just for them. Now with marriage equality being extended to all 50 states after the most recent Supreme Court ruling, *An Ordinary Couple*—now five years old—has new meaning. It's also getting new life, landing in the 2015 lineup for Birmingham Shout Festival, held August 30 in downtown Birmingham's historic theatre district.

We spoke with Orin Kennedy about the excitement building around the film's return to the 'Ham. Yes, it's been updated and comes with a new, happy ending.

**You have such an impressive résumé of working behind the scenes on film and television, working on L.A.**



Storyboard from *Anokijig*, location pro Jordan Schmidt's TV pilot.

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Law, Ally McBeal and so much more. Did you ever think you would have been on the other side of the lens?

Not in a million years! Never entered my mind. If it wasn't for our decision to build a monument as our final resting place at Hollywood Forever Cemetery, this film would never have been conceived. In lieu of not being able to legally marry, we decided to have a celebration of life and unveil the monument and show a home video of our lives. The media picked up on this "event" and from there we were approached to have our story filmed and thus, *An Ordinary Couple* was born.

From the film, it's obvious that you both have a very extraordinary relationship. What do you think is the secret ingredient to its success?

I've thought about that question many times: love, respect, commitment, patience, fidelity and forgiveness. Hard to name just one!

Did you ever envision the two of you being activists on gay marriage?

I don't think of ourselves as activists in the true sense. By our behavior, we seem to have become trailblazers and role models. We just lived our lives in truth. The closet was always open!

Birmingham is Bernardo's hometown. What do you most anticipate about returning here for this anniversary screening?

Seeing all our Birmingham fans, friends and family, some of whom we have never met in person and sharing our story, in light of the recent SCOTUS marriage equality ruling.

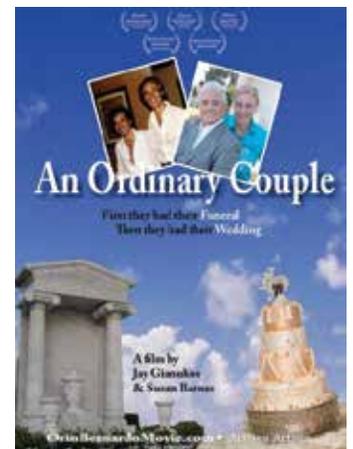
Since the completion of the film, how often do you visit the living memorial of you and your husband at Hollywood Forever Cemetery?

We stop by every few months, thankful that we are visitors and not residents.

Since marriage equality is now the law of the land and Prop 8 is a thing of the past, do you feel the film deserves a post update?

Done! Birmingham film-goers will be seeing the new revised, updated and remastered *An Ordinary Couple*.

<https://vimeo.com/71621219>





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# CAREER FOCUS

## How I Got Here Thom Anable

GROWING UP IN CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA, IN THE SHADOW OF MGM STUDIOS, MANY OF THE FOLKS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD WORKED AT THE STUDIO—SO I GOT TO KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT “THE INDUSTRY.”



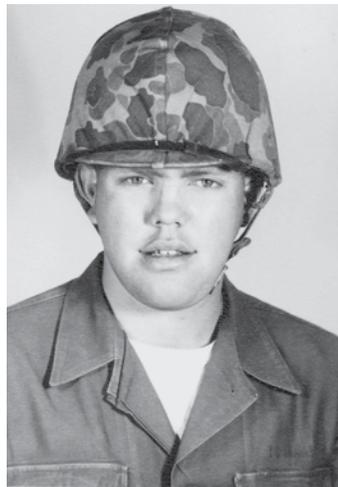
Thom Anable. All photos courtesy of Thom Anable

On weekends, the local kids, being kids, liked to try to sneak into the old backlot where the studio had built the sets for Robin Hood's lake and forest. The studio guards were not too pleased about this. But we never got caught.

Like any youngster, I was fascinated with movies. During high school, I got a job as an usher at the Culver Theater, guiding patrons to their seats with my trusty flashlight. Yes! Things like this actually used to happen. The early '60s saw some great films: *Elmer Gantry*, *The Apartment*, *Butterfield 8* and *Inherit the Wind* to name just a few. It was a wonderful time for moviegoers.

My first real job after college and service in the Marines

was as a “traffic man” at Y&R Los Angeles, a large advertising agency. I had been a marketing major at UCLA and was headed for a management position—or so I thought. The traffic department was responsible for making sure all of the various ads and commercials moved through the agency's approval process. That brought with it visibility of the other agency departments: creative, media, account management and legal. It didn't take long for me to be attracted to the creative side of Y&R—especially the TV production department. I became friends with one of the producers and asked him for advice on how I might get into production. He suggested that I start taking photographs of what interested me, and create



Thom when he was a Marine.

a modest portfolio. I took his advice. And then the door started to slowly swing open.

After a few months, an entry-level job opened up in TV production at Y&R and I got my first big break. I was hired as an assistant producer to work on Chrysler and Goodyear tires. Since Goodyear was a major sponsor of the Indy 500, we filmed every driver using their tires. Then, when the race was over, it was another race to get the exposed film flown to the lab and processed so we could edit and get the winning driver on the air as fast as possible. It's still the same today, but digital has made the process almost instantaneous and not nearly as stressful.

Later on, I was recommended for a job as a producer at Grey Advertising. I worked on Honda, Bank of America and Granny Goose Potato Chips, a local brand. But I soon discovered that the constant erosion of compromise diluted a lot of terrific ideas. And the lengthy time from creative to production was tedious. So, I moved to a production company that I had been working with. That first summer, I went across the country shooting Pepsi-Cola commercials—snow in the Sierras, frog jumping at Calaveras, hiking in Aspen

and city kids in Boston. The shoot was BVA (before video assist) and we traveled light. We had a director/cameraman and two other cameras. The rookie on the “C” camera was a young fellow named Caleb Deschanel. My job was to advance the shoot, set up casting and clear the locations I had scouted. It was not unusual for me to turn in a rental car with the back seat filled with the resultant pile of used Polaroid film packs.

One of my earliest lessons in location management happened in Taos, New Mexico, during the Pepsi-Cola shoot. We wanted to film at the Pueblo and I had cleared this with the governor on the phone (The Pueblo calls their chiefs governors). He said he would be out of town for a few days but the lieutenant governor knew the situation and would be my contact. I set a meeting for a few days later to discuss our schedule. In the meantime, I hired a local woman who knew the area and could speak Tiwa—the language of the Taos Pueblo. During that meeting, we discovered the tribe was having a rabbit hunt on the day we wanted to shoot and I asked if the hunt might be rescheduled. When we tried to translate the word reschedule into their language, we ran into trouble. The tribe had

been having that rabbit hunt on that same day for the last 800 years and I had the temerity to ask them to “reschedule.” I quickly realized my mistake and said we will shoot when it was convenient for them.

Distant location work became my calling. The following spring, I scouted locations for McDonalds’ Summer Olympic Games commercials. We had scouted California and Colorado but decided on Oregon. The commercial showed a 14-year-old boy jogging cross country and dreaming of becoming an Olympic decathlon champion. The Oregon footage was to be intercut with that of the boy, years later, fulfilling his dream. It was my first introduction to what was to become my favorite state as well as my future home.

My most unusual challenge was Pocatello, Idaho. The 90-second commercial for a TV special event called for Eddie Albert of *Green Acres* fame, standing at the main street of a small town. As he steps into frame he says, “The Institute of Life Insurance represents the largest pool of investment capital in the free world and has helped breathe life into small towns like this.” And then the town comes to life. A newspaper boy delivers the news, a milkman goes on his route and culminates with the town’s annual 4th of July parade. We had scouted everywhere for the town—eight western states—all because the agency just couldn’t make up their mind. (Sound familiar?) I was called in to manage the shoot. Off to Pocatello I went.

I requested a meeting of the downtown business merchants, which also just happened to be most of the city council members. I told them what

the commercial entailed, that we’d have to change all the store names and close down Main Street. And there wasn’t nearly enough money in the budget to do what we wanted, but there was just enough for us to buy the Pocatello High School marching band some badly needed new uniforms. The merchants were intrigued, but unsure, until one asked, “why Pocatello?” What could I say to make this happen? “In the judgment of the world’s largest advertising agency, which has just canvassed eight western states, Pocatello most represents the true spirit of America.” It was a great shoot. We even planted a commemorative tree at city hall.

The directors I had been working with as a producer began to ask that I AD their jobs as well. They felt that since I had prepped the job and scouted all the locations, it made sense.

After a while, I joined the DGA as a 1st assistant director and worked freelance for various production companies. This opened up new opportunities in episodic TV. In 10 years, I went from *CHiPs* to *Melrose Place*. But, the fun was over



*Washington’s Olympic National Park.*

for me. The business had changed and so had I. The work was not as rewarding as it had been. It was time to find something new.

I got a real estate license and then an appraisal license and worked for a few months as an appraiser. It wasn’t a good fit. Then I attended a seminar at the DGA for guys in their fifties who were considering a career change. The first suggestion made by the instructor was to look within your industry for

ideas. It’s the business you know best. At about the same time, a friend called to say he was having trouble finding a location scout. Did I happen to know anyone? Did I!

When I first started in commercials, I was able to scout the job and then produce the shoot. But that initial creative spark faded as I climbed the ladder as an AD. The part I loved had been swallowed up by schedules and call sheets. I wanted to return to the beginning—to be one of the first to read the script and consult with the producer and director about the story and how they are affected by locations. I missed the discovery of finding places that told the characters’ story. And I missed the photography that got this whole thing started.

So, I’ve returned to my roots. You can say that my career has come full circle. And, you’d be right.



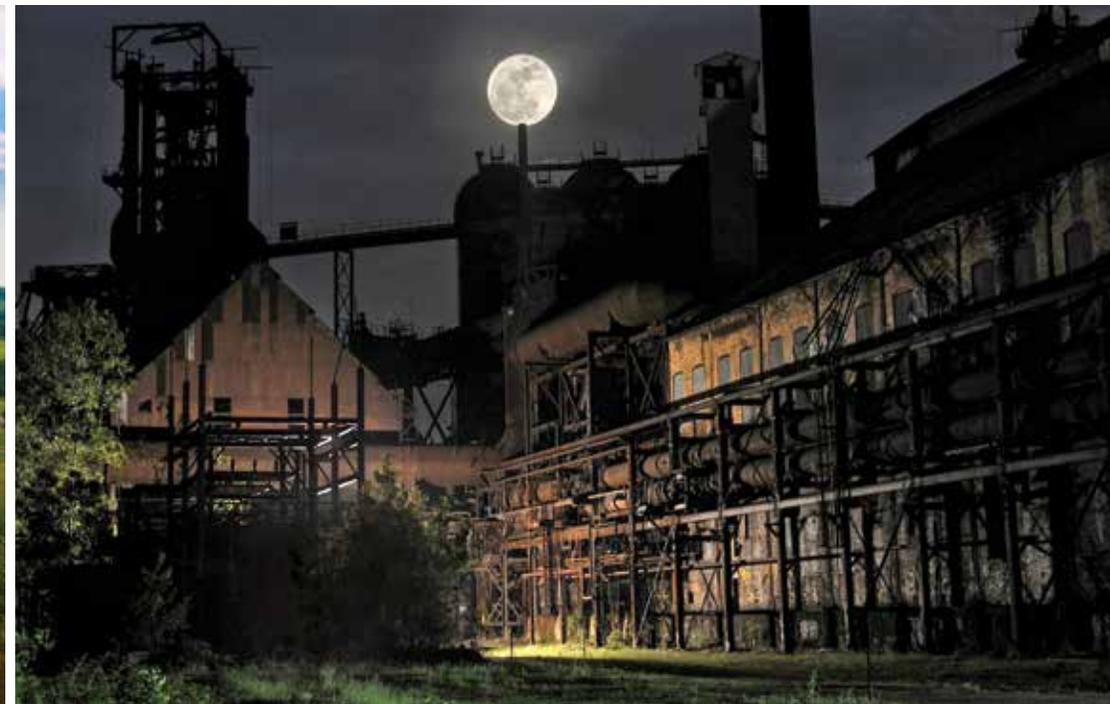
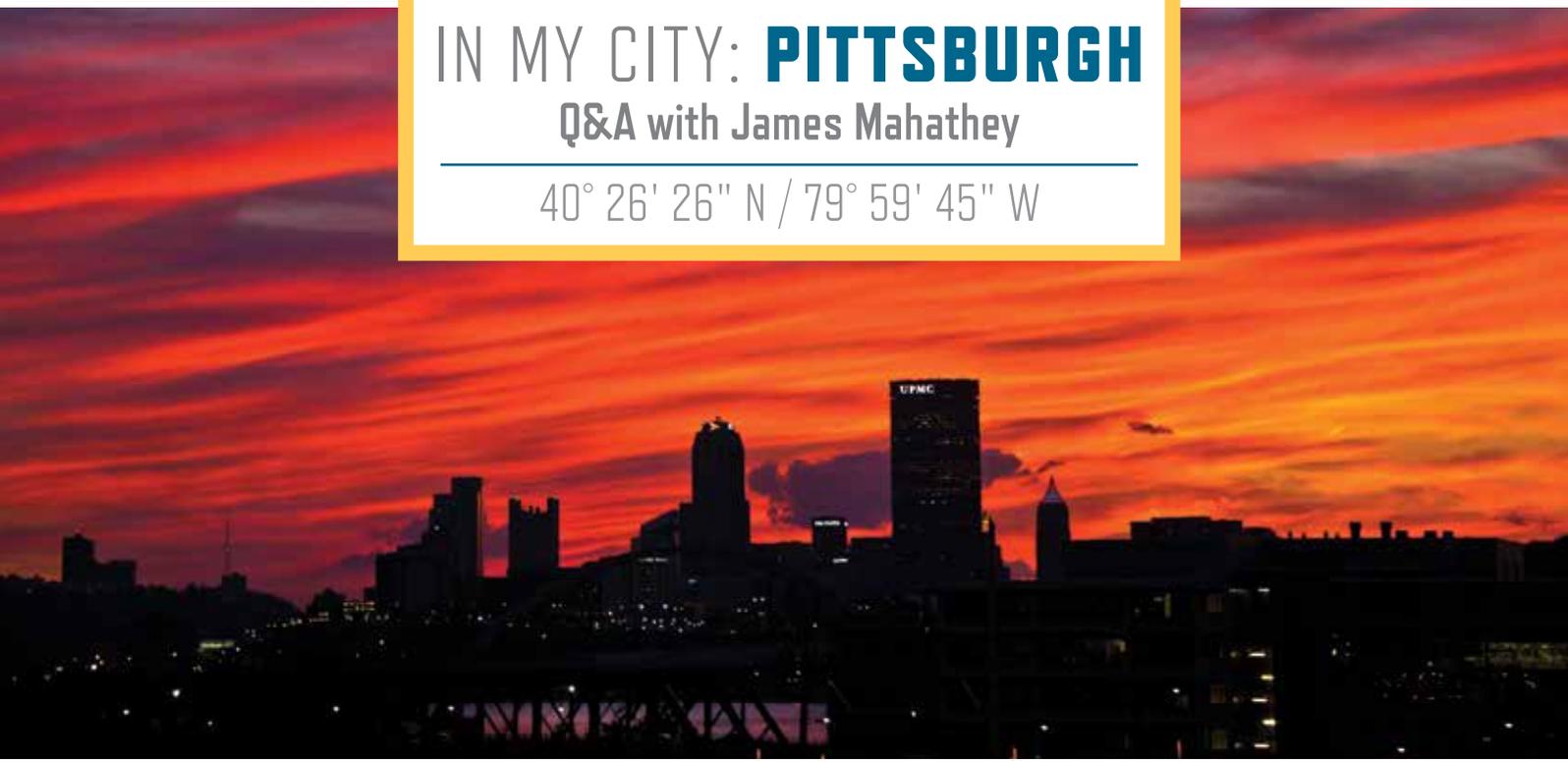
*California’s Benton Crossing.*



# IN MY CITY: **PITTSBURGH**

Q&A with James Mahathey

40° 26' 26" N / 79° 59' 45" W



Co-editor **Stevie Nelson** talks to member **James Mahathey** about filming in Pittsburgh.

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

**Jim Mahathey:** I have been scouting and managing locations for 19 years. I got my start by interning at the Pittsburgh Film Office while going to school at Point Park University & Pittsburgh Filmmakers studying directing. I still have the passion and drive to direct and I'm still striving to achieve that goal. While interning at the Film Office, my first job was putting together location photos from previous scouts. One day, a scout came into the office from shooting a mill at night and I sat down to help him put the pans together. As he opened each pack of prints, he would flip through them and then toss them into the trash. I asked what had happened and he explained he had to reshoot everything, as nothing had come out. I started asking him how he shot it, and he said he was shooting with a point-and-shoot camera. Dawn Keezer, the Director of the Film Office walked in and asked what the problem was. I told her that one needed a tripod and a SLR to shoot long exposures. Dawn's response was, "You think you can do a better job?" I'm not sure why but I said "yes." That night, she had me reshoot the mill. I shot it from every possible angle with my old Nikon FE and a tripod. It was a sleepless night waiting to get the film processed and printed in the morning. My first job and I didn't want to blow it. Next day, I got everything back and I was so happy that the pictures turned out great. I'm not sure if I would have ever thought to get into locations were it not for this experience. Now after all these years, I work on anything and everything, features of all size budgets, TV series and commercials.

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

**JM:** The primary draw to Pittsburgh is incentive money, but once the producers, production designer and directors get here, they see how much Pittsburgh has to offer visually. Most people still think of Pittsburgh as a smoky steel town. That isn't the case anymore. Yes, we have the urban decay of these former mill towns like Braddock (recently featured in the Christian Bale indie film *Out of the Furnace*), but we also have a clean bright city that has many looks. There are big-city looks, rivers & bridges, great neighborhoods of all economic levels, government buildings and large college campuses. Two films that featured Pittsburgh's rivers heavily in their storylines were the Tom Cruise film *Jack Reacher* and *Striking Distance*, starring Bruce Willis. Then you drive 30 minutes outside of town and there are farms. One recent location that became



Photo courtesy of James Mahathey/LMGA

available for filming this past summer is a closed state prison. Besides being privately owned and easily accessible, it has four styles of prisons in one. You have the classic two-level cellblocks, you have a maximum security block and then you have two different styles of the more modern pod-style block. It is a great location to have in your backyard.

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

**JM:** We have everything from low-budget independent features like *Amazing Racer* and *Out of the Black*, to \$100 million-plus blockbusters like *The Dark Knight Rises* and *Unstoppable*, to television series like *Banshee*, *Those Who Kill*, *The Guardian* and *Supah Ninjas*. Pittsburgh offers many options for any level of production.

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

**JM:** A big challenge is response time from places you are scouting. We all know how crazy things can get and how things change in a tenth of second and an answer is needed right away. The general public works on the "I will get to that tomorrow" attitude, where in the movie business, everything is "this needs to happen five minutes ago."

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

**JM:** There are so many great looks in Pittsburgh. From city shots & bridges to farms to gritty urban decay to upscale mansions, Pittsburgh has it all. And all these areas are within 10-40 minutes from downtown.

For *The Dark Knight Rises*, a good deal of the Pittsburgh work was in two areas. The fight between Batman and Bane was filmed in the Oakland section of town at the Mellon Institute. The Mellon Institute is a great old government-looking build-

# IN MY CITY: PITTSBURGH

ing that is owned by Carnegie Mellon University. It matched well with the reverse shots filmed in New York. The scenes with Batman in the Batwing chasing after the tumblers were filmed along Smithfield Street, 3rd Avenue, 4th Avenue, Wood Street and Cherry Way in downtown Pittsburgh.

I have shot in the merchant Strip District a few times. On the feature *10th and Wolf*, I shut down Penn Avenue, which is the main road through the Strip District, for three days so the art department could turn it into an Italian street market with carts and vendors filling the street. It was not easy and took a lot of time to get all the shop and restaurant owners onboard but it was great experience.

I also love the gritty, urban decay that can be found in old steel neighborhoods like Braddock. *Out of the Furnace* showcased the urban decay of Braddock very well. Scott Cooper wrote and directed this story to be shot there. He fought to get it made there and, he brought out everything that is visually beautiful about the town.

Then on the other side of the coin, you have a wide range of different levels of neighborhoods and a city that sparkles and glows with an amazing energy day or night. Films like *She's Out of My League*, *Abduction*, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and *Wonder Boys* as well as TV shows like *Banshee* and *Those Who Kill* spotlight how versatile Pittsburgh can be.

I have a few personal "go-to" locations that I always have in my back pocket. We have an old mansion called Hartwood Acres.



The county runs the mansion as a museum, which makes it much easier to film than a private home. Hartwood Acres is a great old stone mansion on a few hundred acres of land. It also features a stable with attached servant cottages. Whenever there is a need for a classic old mansion, this is my first thought. I have used the mansion for several shows that include *Banshee*, *10th and Wolf* and the pilot for Fox's *Locke & Key*.

Another "go-to" location is the gritty old steel mill, the Carrie Furnace. The Carrie Furnace is also a museum and is run by the Rivers of Steel organization. This is a great "go-to" spot for that urban decay as well as the rusting history of what Pittsburgh was. I have used the Carrie Furnace for many shows that include *Banshee*, *Out of the Furnace*, *Those Who Kill* and *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh*.

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

**JM:** Some of my favorite experiences have come on a job I just wrapped. I was managing the last season of *Banshee* for HBO/Cinemax. It all started when producer Bob Phillips and executive producers/writers Jonathan Tropper & Adam Targum came to Pittsburgh for their final season of the show and brought me on to get them what they needed. On my first day, they opened the door and said, "find us *Banshee*." They gave me the freedom to find the best locations that fit the tone of the show. Then each script would come in and they



From top: *The Mellon Institute*; *Liberty Avenue*

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would up the ante. It was a challenge every week and an experience that was truly perfect.

**Stevie:** DOES PENNSYLVANIA OFFER ANY INCENTIVES TO HOLLYWOOD FILMMAKERS?

**JM:** Pennsylvania offers a 25% tax credit to film and television projects that spend at least 60% of their total production budget in the Commonwealth. The program has been very successful and we look for it to continue for a long time.

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

**JM:** First, is my camera. I shoot with a Nikon D800. It's big and bulky but the images I get are fantastic. Second, would be a notebook and pen. I always have a small moleskin notebook or a 3x5 card carrier that I bring with me everywhere to take my notes and reminders. A good system for taking notes is a must.

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

**JM:** I love the creative side of the job, the beginning days of the project, alone in your car running up and down every street and dirt road looking for the perfect location to fit the story. I love when you come to a road that gives no clue what is past the tree line and you find gold. There is nothing more satisfying then shooting a location and knowing from first sight that it is perfect for the project.

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

**JM:** I heard about the LMGA just this past year. I was working



with Michael Burmeister on *The Last Witch Hunter*. I came on the project to help scout for a few days and ended up working the entire show. I knew he was a member so at the end of the show, I spoke to him about it. I joined at the beginning of the year and I am very happy I did. The LMGA provides a sense of extended community. I appreciate the Guild's efforts to raise the profile of location managers.

# FILM AT FAIRPLEX



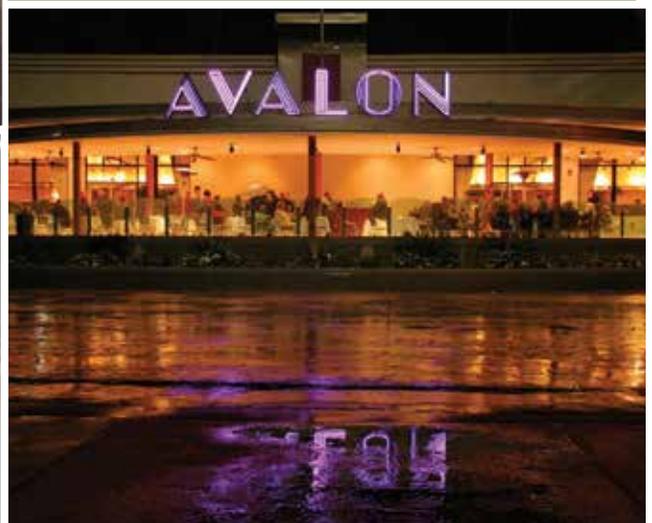
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# James' Private Tour



**PLACE TO SEE BY NIGHT:**  
The skyline of Pittsburgh from Mount Washington is always a good first stop. East Carson Street on the south side is always a good place to get drinks, listen to local bands and grab a good bite.

outside of the city. This neighborhood features not one but two small shopping districts. They both have great little shops and restaurants.

**FAVORITE SHOP:**  
Not one shop in particular but I love the Strip District. This is the area of town with about five blocks of small mom-and-pop stores, restaurants and street vendors. A little of everything is there.

**BEST DAY TRIP:**  
Fallingwater, Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece for the Kaufmann family. It is about an hour and a half from downtown Pittsburgh. Then just up the road is Kentuck Knob, another Frank Lloyd Wright home.

**FAVORITE LOCAL ARTIST:**  
Tom Mosser. I love his work. He has an ambidextrous drawing and painting technique that he uses. He calls it "Ambidextrous Impressionism." He paints with both hands at the same time as he is working on the piece.

**FAVORITE RESTAURANT:**  
Alla Famiglia. It is a wonderful Italian restaurant in the Allentown section of the city. If you are in Pittsburgh, this is the place to go.

**FAVORITE NEIGHBORHOOD:**  
Pittsburgh has some really great neighborhoods. Mount Lebanon is one of my favorites. Mount Lebanon sits just

**BEST BAR/CLUB:**  
Independent Brewing Company in Squirrel Hill. There is a wide variety of beers and no televisions in sight. I love that. You go there to have a drink, you eat, you talk.

**BEST PLACE TO HEAR MUSIC:**  
Mr. Smalls in Millvale. Mr. Smalls is an old church and rectory and it is a great place to hear the best local and national acts.

**BEST VANTAGE POINT/SCENIC VIEW:**  
There are many great views of Pittsburgh. You have the standard places of Grandview Avenue on Mount Washington and the West End Overlook (The picture postcard shots of Pittsburgh). But if you head to the north side of town and hit Fountain Street or over to Spring Garden on Goehring Street or to Troy Hill on Goettman Street, you get amazing views of the city. The way the city sits surrounded by hills makes for some great views of the skyline from all sides.

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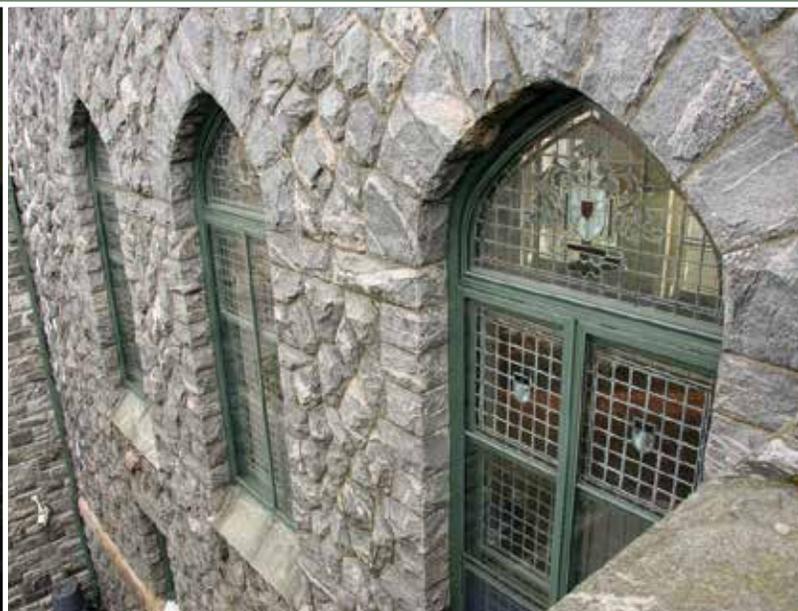


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# King for a Day: Scouting Castles in New York City

by Nick Carr



## “ Find me a medieval castle within 30 miles of New York City. ”

When I first received these marching orders from my location manager, Jason Farrar, I honestly thought he was joking. The movie was *The Smurfs*, Raja Gosnell's live-action feature based on the diminutive blue cartoon troupe. I'd read the script, and was looking forward to a breeze of a summer, scouting a mostly manageable list of standard New York City locations: an East Village apartment; the headquarters of an upscale beauty corporation; a rooftop with a view. The usual.

There was one location that had me slightly concerned—a scene set at what was described as a “European medieval castle.” But then, I'd heard rumors about an overseas component of the movie, and assumed it would simply get lumped in with that. Or, perhaps the scene would simply be written out altogether. After all, where were we going to find a medieval castle anywhere near New York City?

My location manager wasn't willing to give up so easily. “There must be something,” Jason said. “Find it.”

At the time, the only castle I knew of was Central Park's Belvedere Castle. Built in 1869 out of Manhattan schist quarried right from the park, the castle is technically known as a folly—a building built mainly for decoration.

Unfortunately, Belvedere Castle was already set to play a pivotal role in our movie. Gargamel, the Smurf's arch-nemesis, takes



Nick Carr

Photo courtesy of Nick Carr/LMGA

up residence in the castle upon his arrival in Manhattan, and an epic battle at the film's climax had required the construction of a gargantuan scale replica of Belvedere on our stage at Kaufman Astoria Studios, Queens. Needless to say, the easy option was out.

So I began investigating the unlikely existence of castles around New York City. And it wasn't long before I learned a very interesting fact. It seems that in the late 1800s and early 1900s, castle-building had become something of a trend amongst New York's industrialists and entrepreneurs. After all, what better way to show your power and wealth than a medieval fortress? And as it happened, a few of these were still standing.

## CASTLE ON HUDSON



All photos by Nick Carr/LMGA except where noted.

My first destination was Lyndhurst Castle, a Gothic Revival mansion located along the Hudson River in Tarrytown. Built in 1838, the turreted structure is most closely associated with railroad tycoon Jay Gould, who purchased it for use as a country home in 1880 and added a number of amenities, including a natatorium (an indoor pool in a separate building) and one of the first privately owned, two-lane bowling alleys in the country. Today, Lyndhurst operates as a nonprofit museum, and has become a very popular period filming location.

From there, it was just a short jaunt over to Carrollcliffe, a hill-top castle built for turn-of-the-century newspaperman, playwright and businessman General Howard Carroll. A massive 45-room structure based on the Norman architecture of medieval Europe, Carrollcliffe today operates as the Castle Hotel & Spa.

I uncovered a third castle in nearby Rye disguised as a golf club: Whitby Castle, which earned its name for having been built from stones taken from Whitby Abbey, a ruined Benedictine Abbey in North Yorkshire, England. Set on 126 acres, the castle overlooks Milton Harbor and the Long Island Sound and has become a popular wedding destination.

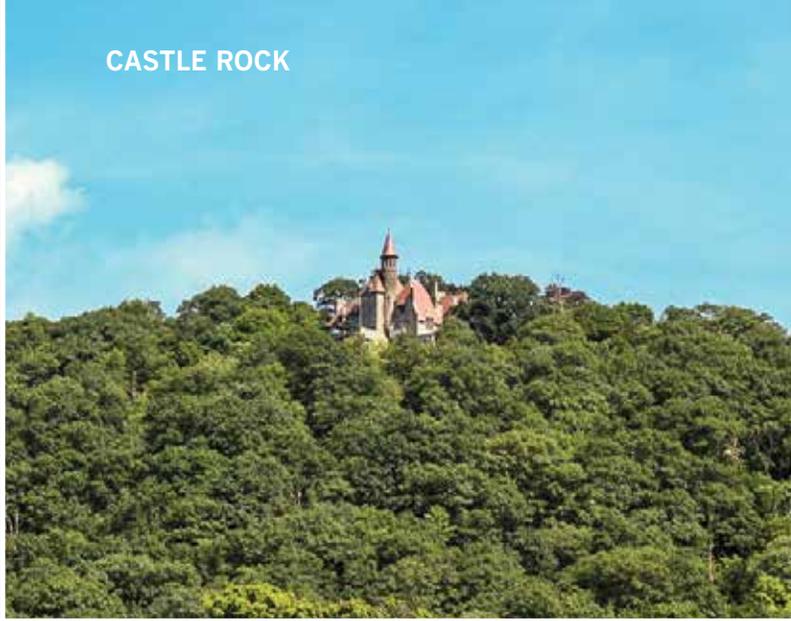
What about an abandoned castle? A drive north brought me to Castle Rock, built in 1881 for Illinois Central Railroad President William Osborn. Sadly, Castle Rock has been vacant for years and the interior has fallen into disrepair, though recent restoration work will hopefully save the national landmark. According to legend, Castle Rock was Frank Baum's inspiration for *The Wizard of Oz's* castle (Castle Osborn).



WHITBY CASTLE

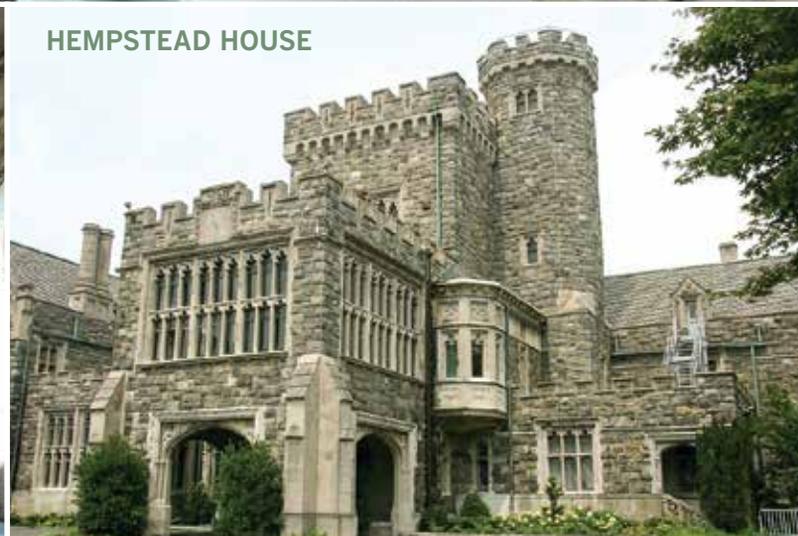
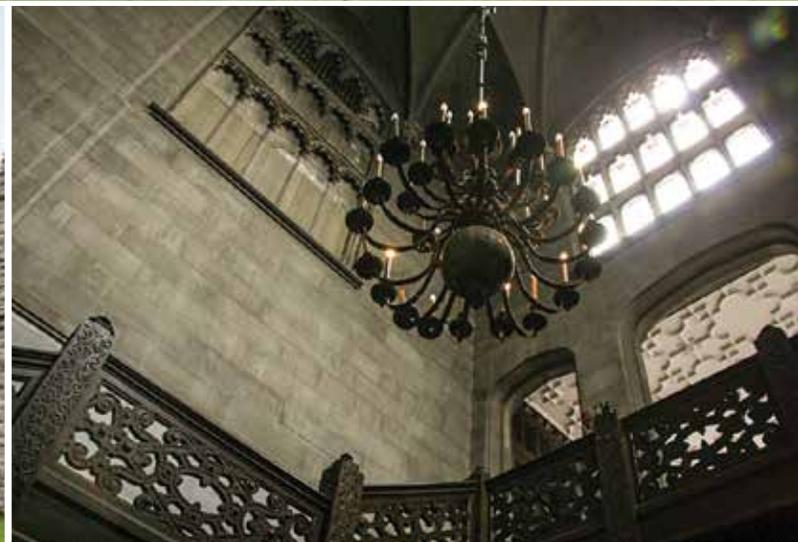


CASTLE ROCK





CASTLE GOULD



HEMPSTEAD HOUSE

“ It seems that in the late 1800s and early 1900s, castle-building had become something of a trend amongst New York’s industrialists and entrepreneurs. ”  
After all, what better way to show your power and wealth than a medieval fortress? And as it happened, a few of these were still standing.

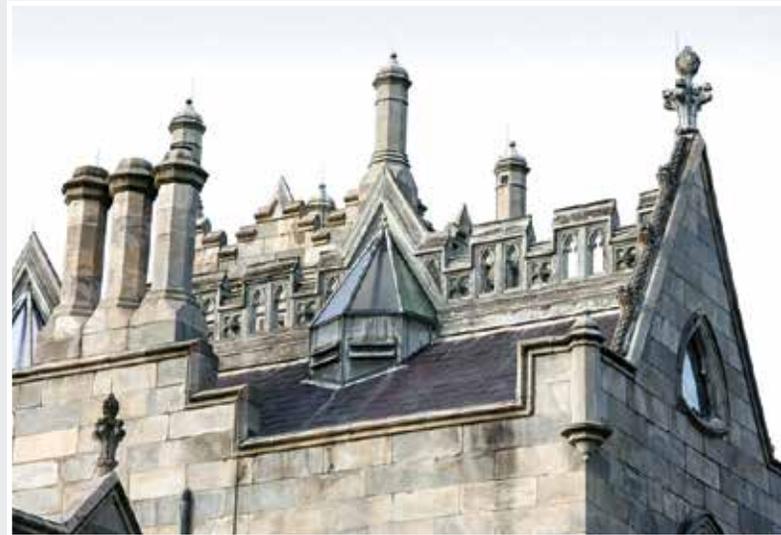
My final stop was in Nassau County, Long Island, where I found two castles occupying a single property: Castle Gould and Hempstead House. In 1900, Howard Gould (son of Jay) purchased 216 acres of land in Sands Point, NY, and constructed Castle Gould, based on Kilkenny Castle in Ireland, to be his home. However, after construction was complete, Gould’s wife, Katherine, decided it did not suit her tastes, so Gould repurposed it as a home for his servants and horses. Hempstead House was built shortly after as his residence, later to be occupied by mining magnate Daniel Guggenheim. I was delighted to find that both Castle Gould and Hempstead House welcome filming.

I couldn’t believe it: six castles, all within a reasonable distance of New York City. Unfortunately, my initial prediction ultimately turned out to be correct: the scene was written out of the screenplay.

I was reminded of this search a few months ago when an advertising client asked me to find the ruins of a European castle for a menswear print ad campaign. Rather than a standing castle in decent shape, they were hoping for the sort of crumbling, dilapidated wreck you might find on the coast in Ireland or Scotland, worn down to its foundation through centuries of exposure and neglect. My first reaction was that it didn’t exist, and I wouldn’t be able to help.

But then I remembered my initial skepticism on *The Smurfs* castle search all those years ago, and how wrong I’d been. I began researching, and lo and behold, a gorgeous wreck of a castle in Oklahoma, and another in Missouri, and a third in Connecticut ...

If there’s one thing I’ve learned in a decade of scouting, it’s that skepticism over the existence of an unlikely location can often prove to be the greatest obstacle to finding it.



LYNDHURST CASTLE



# ON LOCATION WITH NCIS: Los Angeles

by Nancy Mills

**B**eing the location manager on *NCIS: Los Angeles*, part of the high-octane *NCIS* franchise, “is like planning a wedding every single day,” Jason Savage, LMGA says. “On features, you have months to prep four or five locations. We have two days on each episode to find everything. There’s less time but you don’t have to hit the same level of perfection.”

Starting this season, the highly rated drama’s seventh, there will be even less time for Savage and his team of four to find and lock down each week’s six to 12 locations. “Traditionally, we’ve had eight days to prepare for an episode,” Savage says. “This year, we’re doing 17 seven-day episodes and five eight-day episodes. It’s to save money. It’s tough to lose a day, but so far the writers and producers are giving us a bit of a head start on the scripts.”



LMGA members Dorion Thomas, Jason Savage, Jen Prince, Zachary Quemore. Photo courtesy of Zachary Quemore. (Not pictured: Key assistant location manager Roger Fath)







Photo by Sonja Flemming/CBS

*NCIS: Los Angeles* has also dropped from two location managers to one. Tony Salome, LMGA who came onboard when the show launched in 2009, retired at the end of last season. Now, Savage oversees everything. Dorion Thomas, LMGA and Jen Price, LMGA share location work for the even-numbered shows, while Zachary Quemore, LMGA and Roger Fath take on the odd numbers.

It's a well-oiled machine, according to series creator/show-runner Shane Brennan. "From the first episode, the locations team has been a key element," he says. "When you have the name of the city in the title of the show, it's important to shoot the city. L.A. is a character."

Brennan, who was a producer on *NCIS* before creating *NCIS: Los Angeles*, first thought the series would shoot in Valencia (north of Los Angeles), where *NCIS* is based. "But I couldn't make Valencia look like L.A.," he says. "We were worried about the budget and thinking about what we could and couldn't achieve. When CBS decided we would shoot out of the Paramount lot in Hollywood, they took a bit of a risk because there's a cost involved. Everyone turned to Tony and our wonderful locations department and said, 'Hey guys, we need to deliver and deliver on budget. It's got to work for us.'"

Salome remembers the pressure. "The first season was an uncomfortable, brutal fight every single day between me, the producer and the production manager," he says. "The budget was just not adequate for what we were doing. After the first season, into the second season, they began to realize that we were budgeted for three days on location, and we were out five and six days.

"Stunts and special effects are expensive. On location, everything costs you more because it's a bigger deal. Actors aren't just sitting around a table. The first season, they weren't willing to accept that. We found a way to make it work, but it was very difficult."

Life got easier the second season when Savage came onboard to share the workload. And it is a workload, especially when compared to the locations work on a studio feature. Thomas, who spent a recent *NCIS: Los Angeles* hiatus working on *Straight Outta Compton*, says, "We would scout multiple locations for



one location. We found a bunch of motels, convention centers and older buildings. I worked on the same locations for one to two weeks.

“We don’t have that luxury on *NCIS: Los Angeles*. When our producers and directors see something they think will work, they don’t mess around and ask for five more options. (*Compton* director) F. Gary Gray would ask for many, many options.”

On average, *NCIS: Los Angeles* shoots four days out of seven away from Paramount. The locations team starts preparing one week before shooting. “There’s lots of running and figuring things out in those first two days,” Savage says. “Then we have five to six days to put it together and make it viable. We revisit the locations and figure out how we’re going to do it safely. It’s a lot of pressure, but we tend to have a good time doing it.”

Production designer Tom Fichter, who works closely with Savage, says, “So much of the show involves iconic locations, which are what people expect to see. The locations team jokes, ‘We’re blowing up one icon at a time.’ We search everywhere to find new looks and revisit old ones.”

“*NCIS: Los Angeles* is really a love letter to Los Angeles,” Salome adds. “Before shooting started, I came up with a list of about 100 things I thought were iconic to L.A., and we pretty much covered them in the first three years. Actions based in those kinds of locations make the show very exciting. By the end of last year, we’d shot close to 1,000 locations.”

The one that drove Salome the most nuts was the Hollywood Sign. “In addition to the cost, it’s very difficult to film there,” he says. “The scene starts. Someone is running and gets shot. We pull back, and we’re at the base of the Hollywood Sign. Everyone on the film crew wanted to be there, and we could only take 15 people total, and that included the actors.”

One of Salome’s favorite places to shoot is the freeway. “I always pushed for more freeway work,” he says. “Coming from Pennsylvania, I’d never seen a freeway until I got here. I was amazed at the number of freeways and the cars.”

“In season one, we closed the Hollywood Freeway to film a car chase with helicopters. It takes a lot of time because you’re dealing with so many government agencies, and they all have their own input. We had to do it on a Sunday. Bringing in helicopters for camera and to be seen on camera complicates the issue.”



Bottom left & right: Photos by Cliff Lipson/CBS; top right: Photo by Sonja Flemming/CBS

But when the guns are holstered, it's not a problem to film on freeways, according to Savage. "You just go with the flow of traffic, camera in the car, at normal hours, and we don't have any issues."

"However, whenever you want to do any stunt work, it has to be on a closed road. Closing roads, particularly in downtown L.A., is not easy to do. A lot of shows work on weekends, but that's not an avenue we want to take. We find roads that are controllable, that aren't in the city center but bring a bit of downtown L.A. We'll go just east of downtown where we can still see the high-rises and you can actually close some streets. Or we'll go a block or two south."

Brennan is fond of shooting in Beverly Hills. "Those long, sweeping boulevards lined with palm trees are so iconic to Los Angeles," he says. "I love when we can glimpse a little bit of the Hollywood Sign or Griffith Observatory. On other shows I've worked on in L.A., it was all about making L.A. look like somewhere else. We would try to find streets without palm trees. Now, we need those palm trees."

A big challenge of filming in Los Angeles is driving. On many location days, the cast and crew are not shooting in just one spot. "Our show does a number of things well," Savage says. "Moving isn't one of them because we're so large, so I really try to limit how much is going to have to move."

He gives an example. "We might have three different street scenes. One is heavy action with gunfire. Maybe we're blowing up a pickup truck. The other two scenes are equally important story-wise but not as visual, so the first thing we do is find the visual piece. Then we'll pair locations—find locations in close proximity—so we have a chance of making our 12-hour day."

"The salesmanship of the job is figuring out which scene is the most important and then bringing whatever else you have to the table in such a way that they see the benefits of it, even if it's not entirely matching the director's vision."



Left: Photo by Michael Yarish/CBS. Top right: Photo by Sonja Flemming/CBS; middle and bottom right: Photos by Monty Brinton/CBS

For an upcoming episode, Savage sent Quemore out to Montrose to scout for paired locations. “The main scene, which is location-specific, is a chase through a business district,” Quemore says. “We cut through a store to the back alley. That’s our main action scene but it’s only a half-day’s work, so we’re pairing it with a scene at a house of one of our characters. The house is nondescript and could be anywhere. We found one close by where we can move our crew over without a large company move.”

When explosions and gunfire are on the menu, locations can be tougher to lock down. “Right after 9/11, I was working on *24* in Los Angeles,” Salome remembers. “We had guns and helicopters, and a lot of locations just wouldn’t participate. Things have loosened up, but some people don’t want that action in their neighborhood.”

“This past season, we did an episode downtown with multiple snipers on multiple rooftops with a helicopter. When you’re shooting in a densely populated area, the FAA and the city are very concerned.”

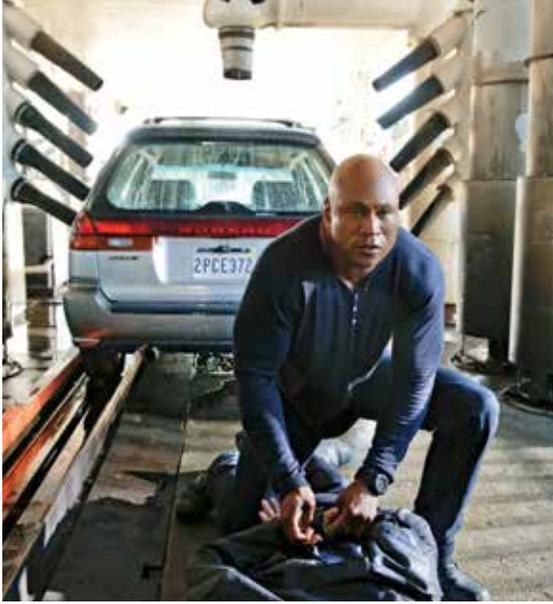
Brennan remembers a foot-chase scene that had potential for disaster. “We wanted the chase to take us across Hollywood Boulevard and into the complex, and the police said, ‘You’ve got two minutes to shoot the sequence. We’ll stop traffic, and by the way, we don’t think you can do it.’ We completed the shot in one minute and 56 seconds, and then the director asked, ‘Do you think maybe we could do a second take?’ They said, ‘Sure. No problem.’ We hadn’t disrupted them any more than we said we would.”

Brennan credits Savage and his team with accomplishing the impossible. “A few years ago, we filmed alongside one of the runways at Burbank Airport,” he says. “It was the first time since 9/11 that a film crew was allowed to shoot at any airport in the L.A. area. Our locations people got us there. The police and multiple agencies trusted them. It added amazing production values to our show.”

“I tell the writers, ‘Come up with the concept and write the locations into the episodes.’ The locations people probably have a heart attack every time they open a new script, but nine times out of 10 they’ll deliver it, and sometimes they come up with better ideas.”

However, they are not magicians. For instance, locations in Malibu can be tricky, Prince notes. “A lot of the people who live there are industry people,” she says. “They can be some of the most challenging people to work with.”





Top row from left: Photo by Cliff Lipson/CBS; photo by Richard Cartwright/CBS; NCIS: Los Angeles cast members from left: Linda Hunt, Chris O'Donnell, Daniela Ruah and LL Cool J. Photo by Monty Brinton/CBS.

Thomas ran into problems when he recommended a location on the Westside. “About a year ago, we were looking for a house to have an explosion in,” he says. “I found somebody who was flipping a house in Westwood, and I thought it was a potential winner. I had the go-ahead from the company that bought it. They were going to demolish it anyway, but Tony thought the neighborhood would be a little too sensitive and they would not approve.”

He recalls his introduction to difficult locations. “On our first episode ever, we were going to film at a house near Elysian Park and do a little gun battle there. We planned to continue the gun battle into the park. One neighbor, who was extremely connected, put pressure on the Council office to have our park permit pulled because she didn’t want gunfire in her neighborhood.

“The irony is the neighborhood right next door is where the police gun range is, so they have gunfire all day anyway. We ended up filming the house and doing the gunfire, but we weren’t able to film in the park.”

One of the show’s most popular venues—Venice—is also one of the more challenging. “Nothing says L.A. to people outside of California better than the ocean, so we tend to work there at least every other episode,” Savage says. “We shoot Venice Boardwalk quite a bit, even though it’s a zoo. We just accept the performers, the ranting and the tourists and everything else that goes along with it.”

Although *NCIS: Los Angeles* deals with military issues, the locations team does not work with the military, Savage says, “Because of the time-sensitive nature of the show and how long it would take to get approval. When the script says ‘Camp Pendleton’ or ‘Afghanistan,’ we normally find ourselves out in Santa Clarita. We take ourselves to the desert and manufacture it. We’ve traveled as far north as Lancaster and as far east as Irwindale, but we never leave the county. There’s always some place new to go that’s still L.A.”

Even so, it’s getting more difficult to find locations. “The city

is torn between progress and filming,” Salome observes. “In the downtown area there used to be filming everywhere, and there were no issues, day or night. It was mostly businesses.

“Now, so many people are living downtown that there’s a lot of pressure on the city not to interfere with the quality of life. Some of our best locations were in the old Arts District, which is now heavily residential.”

*NCIS: Los Angeles* isn’t the only series in town looking for locations. “With the tax credits, a lot of shows are back here now,” Savage says. “In the last two weeks, we’ve realized we’re starting to jockey for position with parking lots. We haven’t had that problem too much in the last few years. It’s going to add another aspect to getting the job done.”

Smooth as the locations team’s work is, unexpected crises do occur. Savage remembers one location that fell through the day before shooting because someone double-booked the site. “L.A. is a huge bureaucracy,” he says. “There was a Dawn of the Dead Festival occurring at the exact same time, supposedly with thousands of people. Calls were made to the City Council office, and Dawn of the Dead won out.

“We had to scramble and come up with something else. I believe we went onto the stage and moved that location to another day. To do that is a major, major thing.”

The other memorable glitch happened in Burbank. “We were going to be filming at the Burbank Airport,” Savage remembers. “Two days before, I got a call from a friend, who said, ‘Sorry but we just found out that the President will be landing at that time. You’ll have to stop all work and go into the hangar until the President has come and gone.’ We scrambled and found another scene to shoot.”

Savage, 44, brings his well-honed people and political skills to the art of managing locations. “I used to work in Sacramento for a pharmaceuticals lobbyist,” he says. “I realized, ‘This isn’t what I want to do with my life. What else do I like?’ Movies were about it, so I moved to L.A.



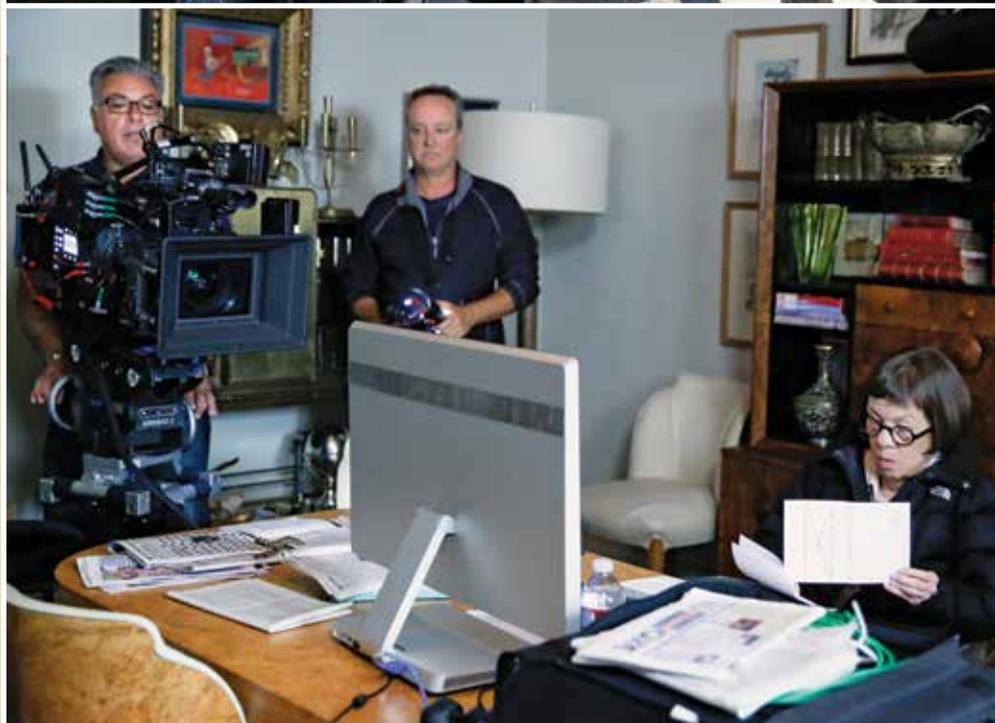
“At the time, *The Hollywood Reporter* listed jobs. I faxed out my résumé, which had no skills for this business, and I got ‘hired’ to work for no money as an intern. The woman who hired me said, ‘You can work as a PA or we need help in the locations department.’ She was the same age as me—28—and she said, ‘Do locations.’ I did. Every job since then has been two degrees of separation from that job.”

Savage worked as an assistant location manager for three years on *24* and rose to location manager on *Women’s Murder Club* and then *Heroes*. When he got the call to join *NCIS: Los Angeles*, to alternate episodes with Salome, he was working on *Terriers* in San Diego.

“Jason worked as my assistant on three or four shows, and then he went off to start managing,” Salome says. “I suggested him, and it worked out.”

“Location work is the hardest job on *NCIS: Los Angeles*,” production designer Fichter sums up. “There’s not a lot of time to finessé locations. It takes a lot of experience and knowledge to know where to go first time around.

“They have to choose places that not only fit a schedule but also fit a look. They have to deal with the public while we just deal internally with each other. They’ll go out on cold scouts, as opposed to going to a service that represents houses or different businesses, and knock on doors. ‘Hey, we’re looking for a house like yours. Would you be willing to let us film here? We have to shoot out all your windows.’”



Far right from top: Photo by Sonja Flemming/CBS; photo by Cliff Lipson/CBS

# The Art of Getting Lost

## Destinations Based on Spontaneous Moments

by Russ Fega

**T**here are few things in life that give me more pleasure than going somewhere completely new. My destinations tend to be based on spontaneous moments that propel me. Hearing a story about Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, on NPR one morning was all I needed to set me on my path. My recent trip to Montana was like that, too. I had a guy at my house servicing my printer and, somehow, he started talking about this little town in Montana called Havre. It sounded interesting so I decided to visit. The trip was pretty typical of how my other road trips in the US have tended to go. Fly into a city. Rent a car. Go to my hotel. Try to get my bearings and consult my maps. I love maps. Real ones. Folding them up the wrong way sometimes, spilling coffee on them, the trace of a blue highlighter reminding me of where I've been. I have a really terrible sense of direction; admittedly, not the best quality for a location scout. But getting lost has become part of my adventures. In fact, it was the central theme of a video I did about my trip to Estonia.



One of the advantages of getting turned around and having to backtrack is that I see a lot of interesting things that I missed before. Watch it here: <http://vimeo.com/77586974>



For the most part, I travel alone. I am not a budget traveler. I prefer to eat as well as possible and stay at a decent hotel/motel. Although, when I'm by myself, the room is less important. As long as it doesn't smell of cigarettes, has clean sheets and towels that don't feel like sandpaper and a heating or air-conditioning system that doesn't blow stale mildew at me, I'm good. I line up a place to stay on my first night but then after that, I just roll the dice and see what I can find along the way.

I arrived in Billings, Montana, in the early evening. As I usually do, I asked the front-desk clerk where to eat dinner. She was a young woman named Jennifer who'd just moved to Billings

to spend time with people and get to hear some of their stories.

There was only one person who wasn't friendly and definitely didn't like to see my camera. I was in the small town of Big Sandy. I never take a photo with someone in it without asking first. When I asked this guy, he very emphatically replied, "No." He was in the middle of butchering a freshly slaughtered steer and didn't want anyone from PETA coming around. I told him that I wasn't from PETA and put my camera down so he wouldn't be uncomfortable. There was another steer hanging by its hooves from a crane-like device mounted on the back of

*One of the other memorable interactions I had was going to the town of Virgelle. Well, the word "town" is a stretch. It's basically two homes, a couple of really small cabins, a general store and an abandoned silo.*

from a smaller town and she embodied "Montana." Authentic, nice and straightforward. Being new in town, she wasn't too sure which restaurants to recommend. So she called her best friend to ask her what she thought and as soon as I heard "Applebee's" from the other end of the phone, I figured I'd just walk around and find something myself. As I was walking out of the lobby, I realized that I'd better get something with the address of the motel on it, otherwise, chances were high that I'd get lost. Jennifer, living up to the Midwest reputation of being helpful, drew me a map. I felt like Guy Pearce in *Memento* but at least I'd find my way back.

When I'm home, I don't eat breakfast. But when I'm on a trip, that's how I start my day. And I find the place that's most popular. Keep in mind that in some of these towns, there's only one place to eat. Those are the places I like most. To be able to get a glimpse of a lifestyle that seems foreign to me, while still being in the same country, is really enlightening. There are farmers talking about the weather and sharing equipment stories. Old couples making their way in and being greeted by just about everyone who inquire about their health. And I've found that the simple act of pulling out a map will often result in someone saying, "Where you headed?" So I get to engage with others. And I have to say, the people up in Montana are really nice. When they say "Have a good day," it's not just an empty platitude. They mean it.

Generally when I'm traveling, I don't like to spend too much time at the same place because there's so much I want to see. But I took a different approach on this trip and tried

his pickup truck. He said he had just killed that one about 45 minutes ago. He shot it for the rancher that owned it and he was about to butcher it for him.

The two young guys that were actually doing the initial "prepping" were nonchalantly skinning the steer. I stop watching nature shows when I see any animal suffering. I'm not too big on hyenas ripping apart a live zebra. So witnessing this process was pretty difficult for me. But the worst part was when the guy severed the head and threw it into a bucket that, I hadn't realized until then, already contained several heads. That was, well, unsettling. There was a lot of blood everywhere. Not my favorite footprint to leave. And even though all of it was tough to look at, I realized that this was his culture. This was how he made his living. I expressed interest in where the various cuts of meat came from and he proceeded to give me the rundown. Pretty interesting, and a little disconcerting, to see the actual animal connected to that area of its body that you'll soon be eating. Needless to say, I opted for vegetables that night.

One of the other memorable interactions I had was going to the town of Virgelle. Well, the word "town" is a stretch. It's basically two homes, a couple of really small cabins, a general store and an abandoned silo. I had taken this detour because while I was filling up my gas tank that morning, I was talking to the clerk and he told me I should check it out. They have a ferry in Virgelle that has shuttled people back and forth across a narrow section of the Missouri River for years. This is not the Staten Island ferry. It is a very small platform that can accomo-



Center: Photo by Russ Fega/LMGA. Insets: The town of Virgelle from a short video showing what it's like. (<https://vimeo.com/45030586>)

*To be able to get a glimpse of a lifestyle that seems foreign to me, while still being in the same country, is really enlightening.*



date one vehicle. When a car or truck needs to cross, the motorist presses a call button to alert the ferry operator. So, naturally, I headed off the beaten path and wound my way down.

The general store, or mercantile, was fantastic. I could have stayed there all day rifling through the antiques and listening to the owner as he told me the history of the place. And I think the owner would have liked me to stay, too. They don't get too many visitors so I got the feeling that he was thrilled to be talking to someone new. Especially someone from "Hollywood." Here's a link to a short video about the place that will give you a real good idea of what it's like. <https://vimeo.com/45030586>

Besides the fascinating human interactions I had, my exploration of the land itself was equally fulfilling. Central Montana is a vast plain and it's certainly more desolate than the rest of the state. But desolation, to me, has its own unique beauty. And, for whatever reason, I feel most inspired when finding places that have been deserted. Homes that, although long ago abandoned, still contain remnants from the lives of former inhabitants. A child's shoe, an old magazine or a broken coffee maker. These are the kinds of objects that help me connect with my photography.

People ask me what kind of photos I take. Landscapes? Portraits? And though I can't

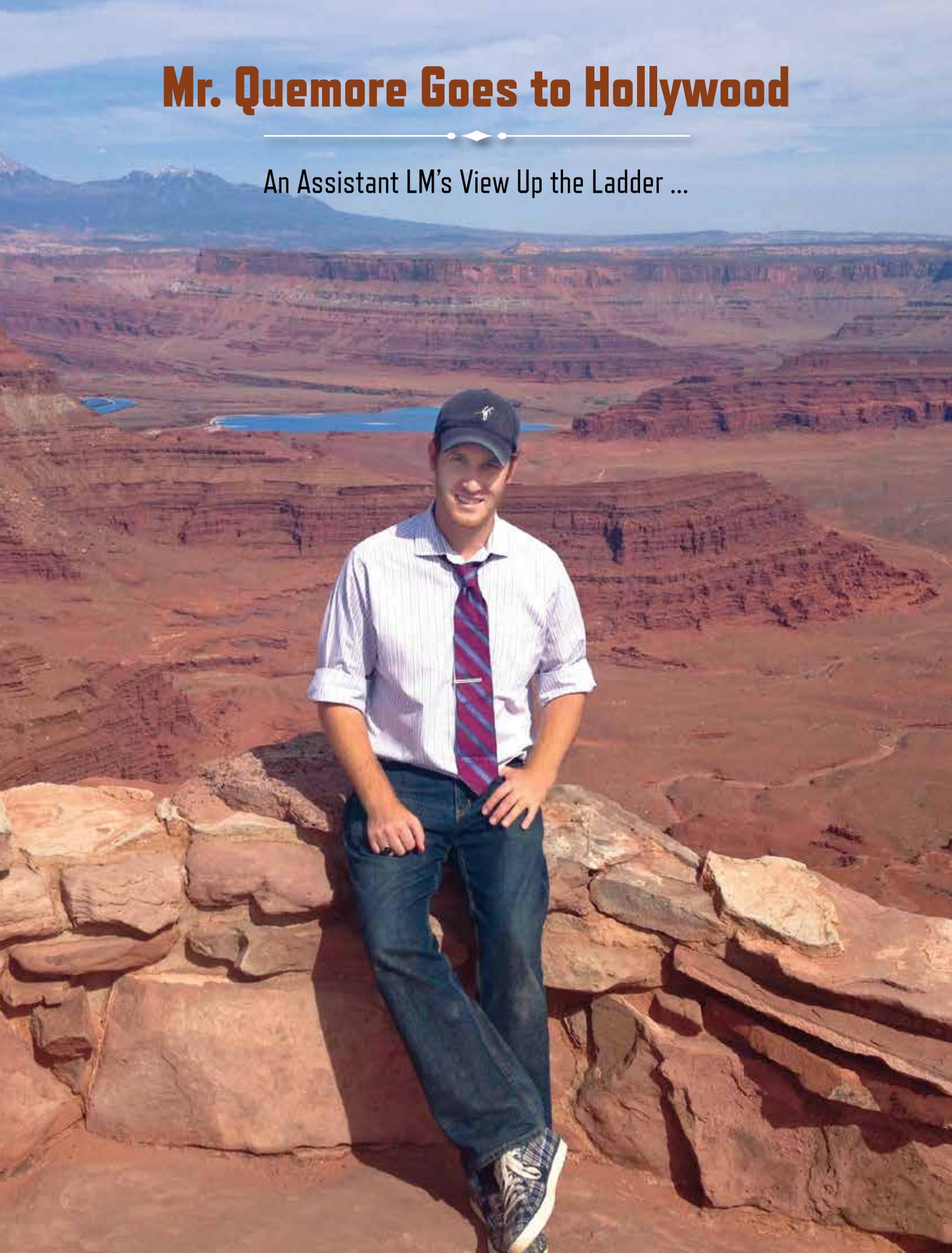
resist photographing beautiful scenery, I've come to realize that what I really focus on are "cultural landscapes." A cultural landscape, as defined by the World Heritage Committee, is the "cultural properties [that] represent the combined works of nature and of man." You can't find these things zipping along a freeway at 60 mph. You have to search the back roads, the dirt roads that take you into unknown territory. Sometimes that means getting lost. But finding your way back often leads to destinations you never intended to see. These are the places where the inspiration to share your visual interpretations can thrive. So next time someone tells you to "get lost," just smile and think of the possibilities that can unfold.





# Mr. Quemore Goes to Hollywood

An Assistant LM's View Up the Ladder ...



## by Zach Quemore

**A**t a recent LMGA event, LMGA President Nancy Haecker asked me to share my tale of struggling to get into the union, with an aspiring location assistant. I recounted my journey from Philadelphia, up and down the East Coast, and eventually across the country to Los Angeles. In doing so, I realized I made it because of three things: hard work, determination and remarkable kindness and guidance from the people I was lucky enough to work with. Each and every person took the time to mentor me, something that I will always be grateful for.

From the get-go, I was not interested in the film industry; I loved movies but never thought of them as a career. Through high school, I was set on a career in electrical engineering. I loved disassembling things to see how they operated. However, to my mother's dismay, I had little talent for putting them back together. My junior year, I discovered broadcasting class. My interest waned as I realized I wasn't meant to be in front of the camera. Then I learned there were other pieces to the puzzle of production work—all the equipment, planning, research that went into making the show. This logistics love affair eventually lead me to a life in the movie business.

While at Temple University, I got my first job in the industry, working overnights watching traffic cones for truck parking. I never learned about the locations department in school. Our work was often glossed over and lumped in with "producers' responsibilities." Location professionals Staci Hagenbaugh, John Galloway and Rudi Fischer took me under their collective wing and taught me the responsibilities of our department. The more I learned about our craft, the more I loved it. In addition to the art of finding the perfect location or the art of finding a good lunch spot, we are the logistic backbone of the film. No other department interacts as closely with every other department; we solve countless problems so the day can run as smooth as possible.

After working as a parking coordinator in Philadelphia, I interviewed for location assistant with Ed Eberwine. I showed up to the interview dressed for success in a full suit. Ed hired me on the spot but gently said, "You can't wear a suit to work. Part of your job is heaving trash." Looking back on how many broken catering bags have showered me with trash juice, it was one of my better early warnings. That warning also lead to the creation of my now signature look: button-down shirt, tie, jeans and a baseball cap. I look professional and am prepared for anything.

Working as a parking PA on *Transformers 2* opened my eyes to how massive an exploit it is to make a movie. Manny Padilla/LMGA was a key assistant and the set opener from LA working in Princeton, NJ. He would come in the morning, well before all the other crew, and I would report the night's status to him. Watching Manny work, I noticed he had a different level of professionalism and kindness. The crews I had worked with were top notch in my book, but this level of civility seems to come from experience working across the country. Manny let me stay a few hours after my nightshift to shadow him and learn the responsibilities of an opener. These lessons were invaluable: set etiquette, walkie protocol, opener versus closer duties, etc. I shadowed Manny at Princeton and followed him to Philadelphia. Our work relationship turned into a close friendship. Following *Transformers 2*, I continued to work in Philadelphia with the Hagenbaugh team. Under John Galloway's guidance, I took what I learned from Manny to the next level, becoming their unit PA, in charge of extras holding, makeup stations and changing flats, chairs and



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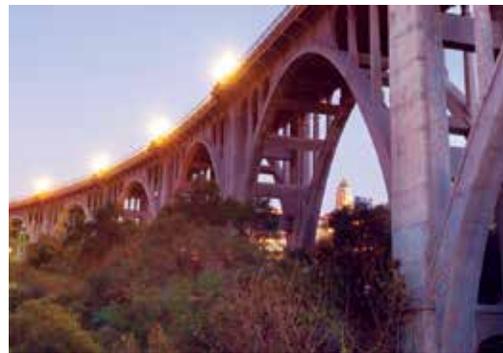


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tables for lunch and trash collection from craft service and catering. Glitz and glamour! I was happy to do it. Humility is as important a trait as confidence, and not always easily learned. After two shows, I was promoted to location assistant, working more closely with Staci Hagenbaugh. She helped me stay on my feet when work was slow by having me fix her kit and create whatever crazy contraption I could think up to make our lives easier. One of the kindest things Staci did for me was add me to her list of recommendations when location legend Ilt Jones/LMGA came to Pennsylvania for *The Dark Knight Rises*. He agreed to give me a chance if I could work as a local.

Without a thought, I packed two suitcases into my jeep, drove to Pittsburgh and hoped for the best. I followed Ilt as closely as he would allow, learning as much as I could. Ilt has been

Mandi borrowed this idea, molding it into a system we could use. We generated a color-coded system, placing directional arrows around the stadium. Poster-size maps of the field made it impossible to get lost.

Returning to Philly, I reunited with team Hagenbaugh on *Silver Linings Playbook*. It's great to have a shorthand with people you work with, and after a time, colleagues become family. Work became scarce after *Playbook*. I worked all the contacts I made along the way and was rewarded with the offer of a job as a confidentiality PA. Once again I loaded the Jeep, and this time drove across the country. The job fell through, but support did not. Manny Padilla offered me guidance and a roof over my head—a coveted spot on his warehouse floor to set up camp. As luck would have it, Ilt Jones wandered in to borrow some furniture dollies. He was renovating his house prior to leaving



Crew of *The Dark Knight Rises* does a walk-through with Pittsburgh police. Photo by Bob Donaldson

the most influential manager in my career and I am eternally grateful. Ilt Jones crawls through the trenches with his team, inspiring confidence. He would do anything he demands of his assistants, including meeting in an empty parking lot at 4 a.m. to hand out marching orders. He trusted me to coordinate downtown road closures. *The Dark Knight* was the largest film in Pittsburgh at that time, so there was a bit of a learning curve and the police were not used to production timelines. I learned a lot about candor and diplomacy while working with them. Ilt was a great resource of advice and information along the way.

*The Dark Knight Rises* brought another mentor into my life. At that time, Mandi Dillin/LMGA was an LA-based key assistant managing the Pittsburgh portion of the film. She made location managing an art form. Her professionalism is hard to match. While prepping the football stadium, Mandi tackled the issue of directing thousands of people, many who had never been on a film set, to different prep and shoot areas. Our standard paper signs just would not hold up to that many people. Mandi noticed that the Bon Jovi crew that performed the night before, taped arrows on the floor in one section of the stadium to direct the background dancers from wardrobe to the stage.



Quemore on the set of *Iron Man 3* in Miami. Photo by Ilt Jones/LMGA

for a show in North Carolina. I offered my assistance, and he offered me the opportunity of housesitting for him.

I continued to look for location work, but ran into my next dilemma—how to get into the union. I thought that I could come to LA, get a job, then join the union, but oh boy, was I wrong. I ran into job after job telling me that I had to be in the union first, and then I could work. Ilt and Manny explained the roster system and how low the list has to be before they take new people and also about getting in on a show that flips, or goes union. It's not easy. After months of day playing on nonunion jobs, Ilt mentioned that he was compiling his team in North Carolina for *Iron Man 3* and he would like to bring me on. He gave me a start date and I packed my bags again, this time flying out to North Carolina.

The first couple weeks, I learned about maps. Ilt patiently instilled in me the importance of maps and how they are the physical representation of all the hard work our department puts into a location. From the initial scout, to the assistants who prep the location, and the coordinator who keeps all the POs and checks in order. I still treat each map as our depart-

“Zach is proof of the importance of mentoring quality individuals. He initially demonstrated ‘the right stuff’ and continued to do so. I enthusiastically encourage his zest to learn the craft of location management. He has paid close attention to my ethos and rationale and has attended all the classes that 399 offers. I’m proud to witness his personal and professional growth over the years.”

—Ilt Jones/LMGA

ment’s calling card. Once the filming started, I was the set closer, happy to be working with Ilt and Mandi again.

One of the more interesting experiences came when I was prepping a little town called Rose Hill. A gentleman rode through town on horseback every day and we would chat. As filming got closer, I needed to hand out residence notification letters to the small but spread-out community. This gentleman offered me his horse to get around. Since it was a scorching 92 degrees, I accepted his offer, tacked up the horse and rode off to pass out my letters. I don’t know how many locations people work via horseback, but I have a feeling I may be part of a small band. It was entertaining to see the looks on people’s faces when I trotted up to their houses bringing news of a Hollywood film coming to their little town. On my way back, I stopped off to purchase a six pack to say thank-you for Jim’s generosity. Once we untacked the horse, he cracked open three beers, handed one to me, took a swig out of one and poured the third in a bucket for Sue, the horse. The three of us sat there in his backyard talking about the old times, a perfect way to end a hard day.

On returning to LA, my luck held and Mandi offered me a spare bedroom. Manny then offered me a nonunion position on *Django Unchained*. I became the bathroom attendant, staying overnight to make sure the toilets didn’t freeze. I took the job seeing it as another opportunity to make new contacts and if it was anything like *Transformers 2*, learn a thing or two while I was there. I met location manager Kei Rowan-Young/LMGA in Lone Pine, where she fought for production to house me with a small per diem. The nights were freezing, but the experience was incredible. Kei let me stay a few hours into call and shadow them so I could keep learning. Kei is an extremely generous, well-organized manager.

Returning to LA, I worked a slew of nonunion jobs, before finally working on a show that was supposed to flip. It didn’t. Once again, I found myself nonunion and out of work. Later that year, pilot season began and LA dipped into permits for about

a week. I was able to work as a set sitter on the pilot *Bloodline*, with Nancy Haecker. I was hired to set sit and after prep finished, Nancy took a chance on me and kept me to scout. She asked to see my camera. I placed my little point and shoot on her desk. She laughed and said I needed to get a real camera. Mike Wesley/LMGA, a comrade on the show, informed me what Nancy meant by a “real camera” and let me borrow his. Nancy called me into her office again later that day, this time I surely thought I was fired. She looked directly at me and stated, “You and I are going scouting this weekend.” Sigh of relief. The next day, on her own time, we did just that. She taught me about panoramas, perspective and so forth. I will never forget the valuable education I received that day.

All this and still, I was not in the union. By this time, Ilt and JJ Hook/LMGA began prepping *Transformers 4*. Ilt started a discussion of bringing me along, having me travel with the crew to most of the states, as the closer. Knowing that in order to do that job and have housing and enough money to survive, I would have to get into the union. I called everyone in my contact list trying to get any union work on anything, to no avail. Then Ilt and JJ gave me the biggest gift of my life and hired me on for my last 10 days I needed working in Los Angeles so I could join the union and travel with them. I will forever be in their debt, not only did it change my life because my struggle for money and healthcare was over, but they brought me along with them on what was the greatest adventure of my career.

Meanwhile, back at the LMGA event ... I told the aspiring location assistant that this is a remarkable group of people, always willing to help each other. I am so very grateful to be a part of the location community. My journey to become a union assistant location manager took hard work and determination. But more than that, it took the generosity of many willing to mentor me along the way. I hope I will always be able to pay it forward as I advance in my career. I believe Dan Zadra said it best: “You gave me your time, the most thoughtful gift of all.”

“Every day is different; every situation uses a unique part of their arsenal of skills, which may not yet be fully stocked. Mentoring helps assistants learn to adapt to ever-changing conditions. Explaining the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the job provides an understanding of the broad scope of locations so there is a greater comprehension of the big picture.”

—Mandi Dillin/LMGA



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 Power and Communication  
     Services Inc.  
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 Reel Locations  
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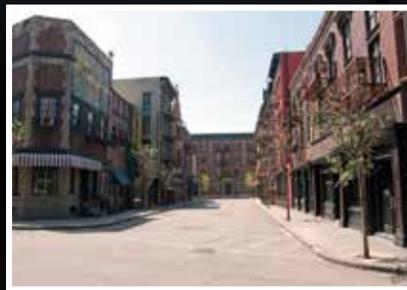
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## LOC PRO TOP TEN

Top Ten Iconic Location Movies:

1. Lawrence of Arabia
2. Se7en
3. Doctor Zhivago
4. Heat
5. The Bourne Identity
6. Slumdog Millionaire
7. Chinatown
8. The Third Man
9. L.A. Confidential
10. Memoirs of a Geisha

Our heavily debated top ten of the moment for films featuring locations so compelling that they become characters in the film.



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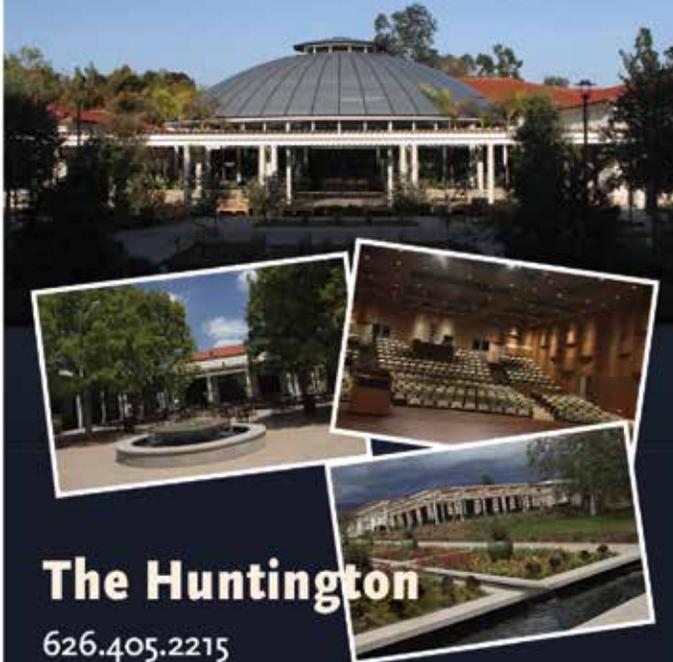
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Photo by Bill Bowling



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