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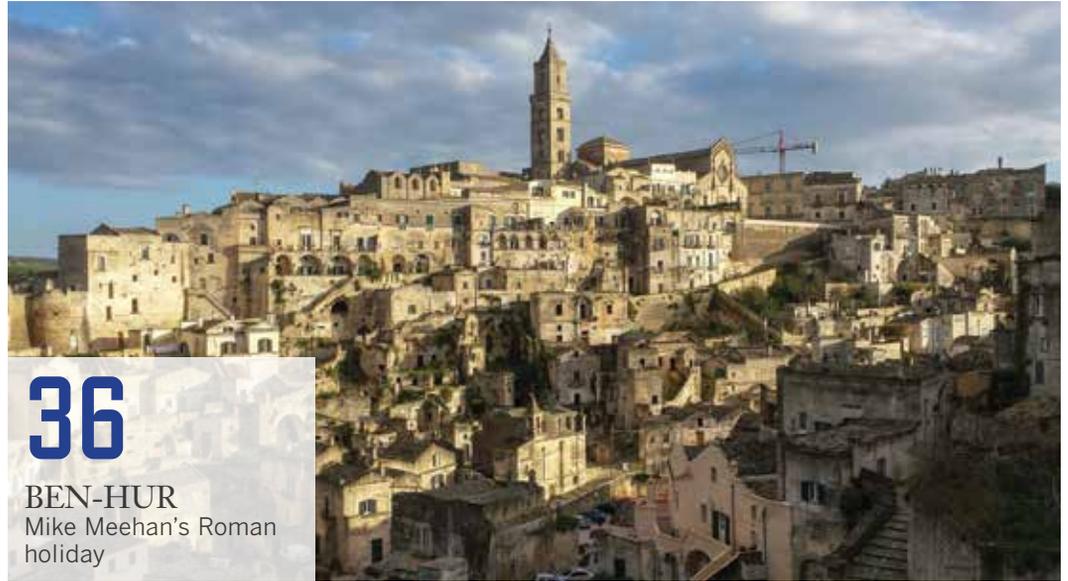
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Photo courtesy of Mike Meehan/LMGI



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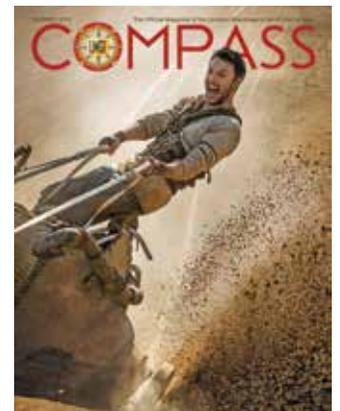
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Jack Huston plays Judah Ben-Hur in Ben-Hur from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures and Paramount Pictures  
Photo by Philippe Antonello

# FROM THE EDITORS' DESK



*"Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it."*

—MUHAMMAD ALI

The power to affect change. That's what strength in numbers—the formation of the Guild has granted us. We have elevated location management from a job to a respected creative career. Since our last publication, our ceaseless lobbying of IMDb finally came to fruition with its creation of a separate "Location Management" category—the migration of all location professionals' credits from the "Miscellaneous" category to one of our own is happening as we go to press. This long-overdue recognition illustrates the ongoing efforts of the Guild to raise the profile of location professionals everywhere.

At the 3rd Annual LMGI Awards, industry directors Wes Anderson, Michael Mann, Christopher Guest, Brad Silberling, Melanie Mayron and Jillian Armenante paid homage to the work of location professionals. Read all about the show in "Location Location Location."

Our cover story, from location manager Mike Meehan, takes us behind the scenes of *Ben-Hur* for the job of a lifetime "In bocca al lupo ... Epic Italy." 'Impossible' is not in Meehan's vocabulary. Nor is it a familiar word to location pro Sean O'Brien. In "Location Manager in a War Zone," Diane Friedman examines O'Brien's tour of duty embedded with combat troops in Afghanistan ... oh, the places you'll go!

To accompany all this travel, Nick Jamison offers sage advice on how to fly like a location scout. And in "A Moving Experience," business member Laura McHolm from NorthStar Moving Company offers advice on how to pack things up on the job, and put them back without leaving a trace.

We also follow up with Mark London Williams on the second part of our continuing series on safety. With so many moving parts to this topic, part three is already in the works.

Our columns include a personal tour of Sydney, Australia, from location pro Colin McDougall, "In the News," "Martini Shot" and "Career Focus," spotlighting NY commercial scout and LMGI Board member Jimmy Ayoub. As always, we encourage your ideas for articles and photography submissions.

This issue marks the last issue with *LMGI Compass* editors on the LMGI Board—on which all of us are happy to have served. Also stepping down is three-term LMGI President Nancy Haecker. This is an open invitation for new volunteers to step up—and continue to achieve the impossible.

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

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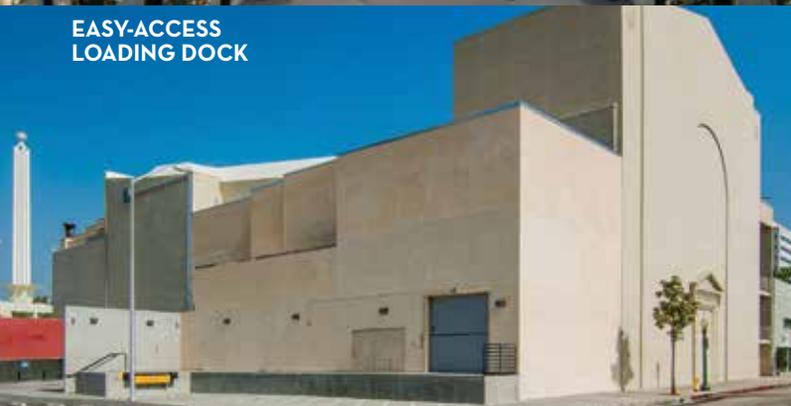
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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



DEAR MEMBERS,

After three years of having the extraordinary privilege of serving as LMGI President, this is my final letter in that capacity. These years have been exhilarating. Having the opportunity to represent our profession and to work alongside this exemplary group of dedicated, hard-working, forward-thinking members of the Guild has been an honor.

I am exceedingly proud of what we have accomplished over the past few years. Together, we created a world-class awards show, took our organization international and made every entertainment news service aware of our contributions to production. We saw our members featured in *Variety*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*, on local and national news shows, NPR, foreign publications and in every industry trade magazine. We greatly increased our membership, rebuilt our infrastructure, saw our members showcased on panel discussions and were invited to teach across the country and around the world. After years of lobbying, we now have our own IMDb category, Location Management, and one member in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Respected director Michael Mann stood up for us by honoring Janice Polley, this year's LMGI Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, by presenting her with the award. We have achieved our mission of elevating our industry peers' respect and recognition for our craft. However, none of this could have been accomplished without the Guild members who came before me. I would like to thank them all for building the solid foundation from which we continue to expand.

We are a Guild worthy and deserving of recognition, appreciation and support. I hope that our members continue to build on our accomplishments with the confidence that you can break glass ceilings. It is my hope that our members continue to get involved, accept leadership positions, work on committees and establish new goals for the next decade and beyond. My personal hope is that our members lead by example by treating themselves and each other with the same respect that we are demanding from our peers.

What's next? A membership category in both the Motion Picture and Television academies, better screen credit placement, an interview by the location manager or scout on every 'behind the scenes' segment and inclusion as guest speakers at film festivals and creative team panel discussions.

I'd like to thank the members who contributed in so many ways to the Guild's success and my tenure as president. To the past and present members of the Board, I have benefited from your passion, wisdom and tenacity. To our volunteers and committees who work behind the scenes to make it all happen, to our business members who work alongside us, as well as sponsoring us monetarily and with unwavering support, to our outstanding group of location professionals who give me a reason to care and to Stevie Nelson, for teaching me to say 'yes.'

Sincerely,  
Nancy Haecker  
President

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Official Magazine of  
Location Professionals  
Promoting Excellence  
on Location Worldwide

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KEN HABER

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The *LMGI Compass* is published quarterly by  
the Location Managers Guild International.

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Comments, editorial and photo submissions  
can be sent to:

[compass@locationmanagers.org](mailto:compass@locationmanagers.org)

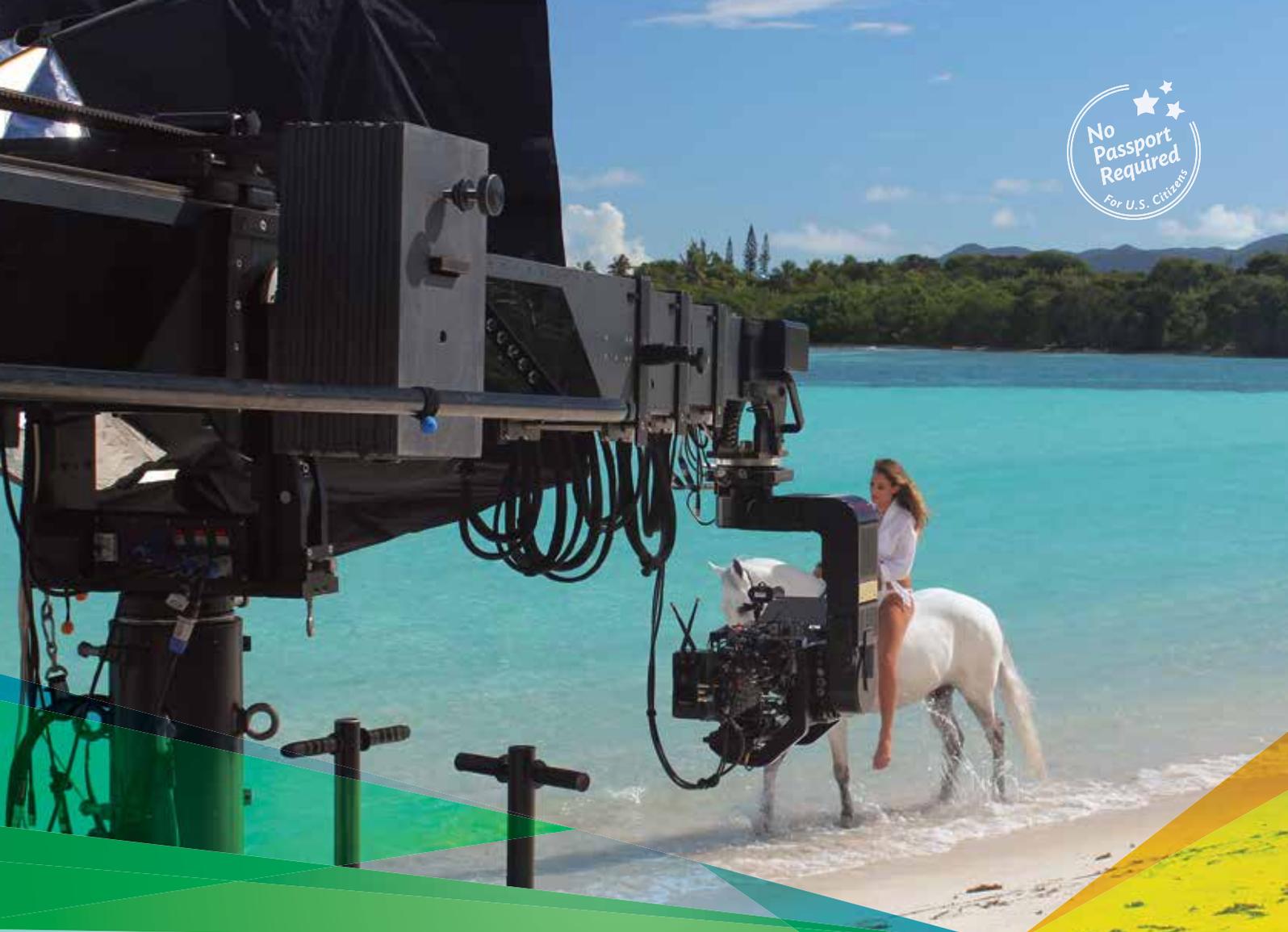
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# CONTRIBUTORS



## Lori Balton

The first location professional accepted into the Academy, Lori is grateful to have a challenging job that lets her explore the world. She is lucky to work with some of the best location managers, designers and directors in the business. A founding member, Board member and past president of the LMGI, she is thrilled with the Guild's progress in garnering recognition for its craft. Recipient of four COLAs, Lori counts *Heat*, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, *Argo* and *Inception* among her credits.



## Diane Friedman

With a background in art, photography and video art, Diane grew up in New York, and began her career in San Francisco working as a producer, director and editor for cable, PBS and broadcast television. She has been a scout and location manager in Los Angeles for over 20 years. Her credits include *Star Trek: Generations*, *Pleasantville*, *Ari\$*, *Entourage*, and both the original and reboot of the iconic television series *90210*. A recipient of a 1998 COLA, Diane is proud to be a founding member of the LMGI.



## Nick Jamison

When not trying to take over the world, you'll find Nick neck deep on set as a key assistant location manager, taking photographs of interesting people and places, traveling internationally or haphazardly throwing words on paper for the poor *LMGI Compass* editors to salvage into an article. With a slew of films under his belt, he fondly remembers the gratifying opportunities the film business has provided and how it has shaped his career and life experiences today. He pushes the boundaries and loves the challenge of finding the right location, be it touching the clouds with the Red Bull Air Force 13,000 feet in the air, driving in a presidential motorcade in torrential rains or standing on the edge of the tallest building in North America. You can find more info on Nick's adventures at [www.nickjamison.com](http://www.nickjamison.com)



## Laura McHolm

One of a few women at the helm of a moving company, McHolm had an unlikely start—teaching basic programming on Apple computers, then working in marketing for Atari while the company was still in its infancy, and after law school, working as a corporate intellectual property lawyer. In the mid-1990s, she moved away from the Fortune 500 to fulfill her more creative, entrepreneurial spirit and partnered with Ram Katalan to launch NorthStar Moving Company in Los Angeles. Laura has broken the long-held notion of moving and storage as burly men doing one job—lifting heavy things.

As a child, Laura drove her mother crazy when asked to clean her room, she'd start by completely emptying out her closet and drawers. This quirk turned into a passion for organization, developing systems, solving logistical problems and basically streamlining life. She even has a special method for folding a bath towel. Laura lives in Santa Monica, California, with her husband and spunky rescue dog Lee-Loo. She practices yoga, travels frequently to Paris, drinks way too much champagne, does community work, refers to herself as a bleeding-heart liberal and, of course, takes walks by the ocean.



## Mike Meehan

It's said that God lifted the United States from the East Coast and everything loose rolled into California—Mike Meehan was one of them. After establishing residency in California, he graduated from UCLA and worked on two master's degrees at San Francisco State University. He then moved back to Los Angeles and decided a PhD was not as much fun as show business. After starting as one of the industry's oldest (30) and most over-qualified gofers, he became a location manager on a few TV series (*Knots Landing*) and quickly moved to features. As one of the earliest members of the location branch of Teamsters Local 399, he has watched the industry change as well as the location professional's place in it. After 35 years, he still manages to love his work and the sense of adventure it affords. His credits include *Witness*, *Dead Poets Society*, *Spaceballs*, *Arachnophobia*, *The Perfect Storm*, two *Pirates* movies, *Master and Commander*, *Oblivion*, *Outbreak* and, of course, *Ben-Hur*. He is a specialist on water movies (seven to date) and helped design tanks both in the US and Spain. His full list of credits and scouting photos can be found at [www.michaeljohnmeehan.com](http://www.michaeljohnmeehan.com). Even if not asked, he will tell you "it is better to be lucky than good."



## Mark London Williams

Mark London Williams has reported on moviemaking, both analog and digital, for publications like *Variety* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and is currently a senior correspondent for *Below the Line*, and a contributor to *British Cinematographer*, covering post-production and Hollywood's awards season and its discontents. He's also the author of the time travel book series *Danger Boy*, but hasn't been able to personally go backward, chronologically, yet.



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# IN THE NEWS

## 2016 AFCI Trade Show

The LMGI had another successful presence at the AFCI Locations & Global Finance Show held at the Burbank Marriott.

This year's topics and panel discussions ranged from global incentives to the use of drones and caring for animals on set.

The work of our 2016 LMGI Award nominees was showcased in a discussion coordinated by LMGI Awards Co-chair Robin Citrin. The panel featured *Straight Outta Compton* location manager Alison Taylor, *Bridge of Spies* location manager Klaus Darrelmann, Shani Orona from *Sicario* and Christiane Raab of the Berlin Brandenburg Film Commission and was moderated by Elliot Kotek, editor of *Beyond Cinema* magazine. The artistic



contributions of these location professionals was duly noted in their evocative depictions of 1980s Compton, Mexican drug war turf, and Cold War Europe and America.

The conference is a great place to make friends, meet industry professionals and catch up with colleagues. Our friends from Thailand had a booth adjacent to ours. Youhee Choi from South Korea kept circling back to our section to visit and discuss the upcoming LMGI awards show. New friend and future business member Stanislav Solovkin from Kyrgyzstan was directly across from us. Stanislav attended the awards show for the first time and was extremely impressed with the show and the work of the Guild.

*Left to right: Jill Naumann, Angela Fogg, Ken Haber and Eric Klosterman. Photo courtesy of Jill Naumann/LMGI*

Treasurer Eric Klosterman, President Nancy Haecker, Vice Presidents Ken Haber and Lori Balton, Angela Fogg, Melissa DeMonaco, Jeff Morris, Kenny Brandt, Janet Harold, Rebecca "Puck" Stair and the inimitable Jill Naumann worked the LMGI booth and attended the conference.



*Veteran location manager Robin Citrin, organizer of "Meet the Nominees." Photo by W. Cline*

We appreciate their efforts of managing the booth and for meeting producers, independent filmmakers and film commissions from around the world on behalf of the Guild. They also sold tickets to the awards show and solicited submissions for next year's show. Thank you for your continued support Guild members!

## Breaking News: Miscellaneous No More!

# IMDb

After years of tireless campaigning by countless LMGI members, IMDb has finally agreed to separate location professionals into a new LOCATION MANAGEMENT category. Current credits are being migrated from the "catch all" miscellaneous category where location professionals have been languishing for years into the new category over the next couple weeks.

We are grateful to our many members who have emailed, snail mailed, called, met with, and stalked various IMDb executives and influencers over the past decade.

Kudos to Scott Trimble, LMGI who led the latest push, working with the LMGI Marketing Committee. We couldn't have done it without the LMGI's continual PR push for location professionals. The LMGI Awards, our website, *LMGI Compass*, Comic-Con, our Academy presence, our ongoing contribution of articles and interviews to the trades and social media, and our 3,000+ followers on Facebook and Twitter, who have helped convince IMDb that we were a viable peer group worthy of distinction.

Go team!!!!



*Left to right: Elliot Kotek, Shani Orona, Alison Taylor, Christiane Raab, Klaus Darrelmann. Photo courtesy of LMGI*



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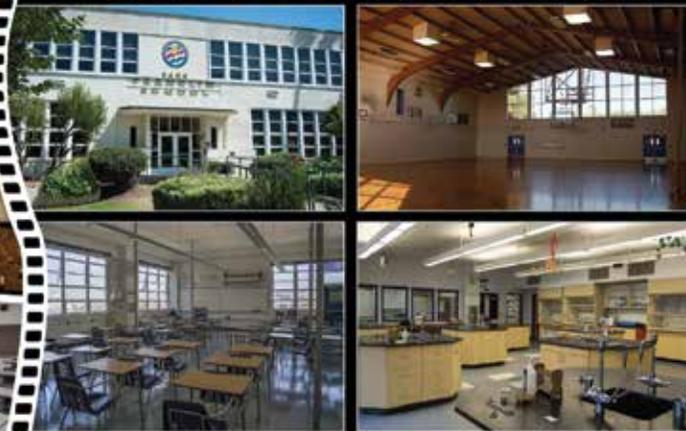
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## FLICS Board Elects New Officers



Cassandra Hesseltine

LMGI business member Film Liaisons in California Statewide (FLICS) held its quarterly meeting in San Mateo County on February 26, which included the election of its 2016 Board Officers. The new leadership team is as follows.

- President: Cassandra Hesseltine, Humboldt-Del Norte Film Commissioner, LMGI
- Vice President: Geoff Alexander, Santa Barbara County Film Commissioner
- Secretary: Alicia Vennos, Mono County Film Commissioner
- Treasurer: Tasha Day, Long Beach Film Commissioner
- Immediate Past President: Janice Arrington, Orange County Film Commissioner



Additional Board members include Film Commissioners Paul Audley, FilmLA; Gigi Gibbs, Fresno County; and LMGI business members Doug Lueck, Ridgecrest; Eddie Robinson, West Hollywood; and Amy Lemisch, California Film Commission.

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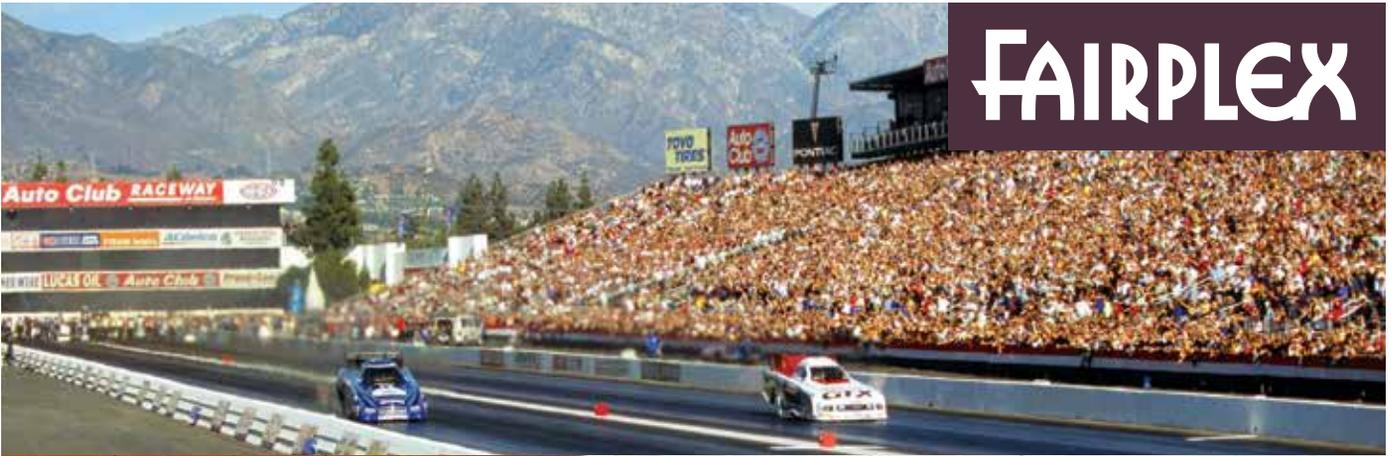


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Left to right: Geoff Alexander, Veronique Vowell, Arturo Pina, Caleb Duffy, Guy Langman, David Doumeng. Photo courtesy of FLICS/Beth Dubber

## LMGI at California Conference

More than 500 film, TV, commercial and new media production professionals gathered May 21 at CBS Studio Center (Radford) for the 9th Annual Film in California Conference. The event was expanded this year to include a presentation of the first California Golden Slate Award to director Ryan Murphy. LMGI members participated in several panel discussions as well as promoting the LMGI message at our booth. Conference speakers included Dax Shepard, Garry Marshall, Jamie Lee Curtis, Jason George and LA Mayor Eric Garcetti.

The daylong conference was produced by the California Film Commission and FLICS (Film Liaisons in California Statewide)—a network of 40-plus film commissions from across the state. The conference has become the signature event for producers, directors, location managers, production designers, UPMs, studio

executives, and others to network and discover the benefits California offers the entertainment industry.

Saturday's conference kicked off with a keynote address from Garry Marshall, followed by a lively panel discussion featuring Dax Shepard focused on what happened behind the scenes during production of the upcoming *CHiPs* feature film (based on the iconic 1970s TV series). Director, writer and star (Shepard), location manager Rick Schuler, LMGI and other members of the production

team discussed shooting on location across Greater Los Angeles.

The well-attended Best Practices for On-Location Community Relations panel featuring LMGI location managers Veronique Vowell and Caleb Duffy was moderated by our own David Doumeng. They were joined by Santa Barbara Film Commissioner Geoff Alexander and FilmLA (permit office) Community Outreach Liaisons Arturo Pina and Guy Langman.

Other panels focused on a

range of topics including the evolution of commercial and branded-content production, "insanely low-budget" film-making (with the creative team behind the film *Tangerine*), and a diversity/inclusion discussion featuring actor Jason George (*Grey's Anatomy*) and Chair of SAG-AFTRA's Diversity Advisory Committee).

The LMGI booth was manned by Treasurer Eric Klosterman, Kenny Brant, President Nancy Haecker, Rick Schuler, Jonathan Ramos and Jill Naumann. Thanks to all of our volunteers and participants for making the conference a success for the LMGI!

Left to right: *CHiPs* panel host Alex Cohen, co-host of KPCC's *Take Two*, producers Andrew Panay, Dax Shepard and Ravi Mehta, location manager Rick Schuler, Sgt. Manuel Gill, CHP technical advisor. Photo courtesy of FLICS/Beth Dubber



# CAREER FOCUS

My Location Scouting Journey: Still Crazy After All These Years

## Jimmy Ayoub

I GREW UP IN NEW YORK CITY, BUT AT 19, ANSWERED THE SIREN'S CALL AND MOVED TO THE CITY OF ANGELS, THE PLACE TO BE DURING THE HIPPIE WOODSTOCK ERA OF THE EARLY '70S. WE WANTED TO GET OUT OF NYC. ONE OF OUR SONGS HAD A LINE, "GOING OUT WEST WHERE THE LIVING IS BEST."



Jimmy Ayoub. All photos courtesy of Jimmy Ayoub

I started out as a rock-and-roller, living in the Hollywood Hills writing songs, playing guitar along with my acoustic band "Fox." We pitched original songs and played the Troubadour, Bitter End West, McCabe's, the old Topanga Corral and we had a great time. Did we make a lot of money? No, but it was fun and we believed we could be the next Crosby, Stills & Nash. Who could blame us for trying? You can actually find us on iTunes ... at "Fox Simple Songs."

As much as I loved being a musician, and the nightlife, I eventually realized that I needed to make a steady

living by seeking a more stable career. I started thinking about what else I could do in the "music business," and fell back on my other passion—photography. I made a connection with Emerson-Loew, a photography studio that photographed musicians and singers for album covers, publicity, *Billboard* magazine, etc. I worked as a photo assistant, shooting Sinatra, Ringo, the Osmonds, Elton John and countless others. It was a great gig, a real learning experience and I was getting paid!

I always loved photography, even as a kid with my first Kodak Brownie camera. In later years, I was rarely seen without my Nikkormat

35mm. Always ready to photo document our crazy lifestyle from up in the Hills and down to Point Dume and Zuma. After a few years, on a visit back to New York, I met my first wife, and the band was splitting up. I've been in the city (NYC) ever since.

I kept up with my music, playing clubs like the Bitter End and Kenny's Castaways. However, I was again in need of making a real living. I studied at the renowned ICP School in Manhattan and began working in film production as a production assistant in the advertising industry after a gaffer friend of mine passed along a few names of producers and production companies. After

about six months of knocking on doors, I was finally given a chance by Lipson Films to work on a fashion commercial for *Cover Girl*, with the biggest models of that time: Cheryl Tiegs, Christie Brinkley, Beverly Johnson and Kelly Emberg. Never one to be shy, I gave Christie Brinkley one of my cassettes! I fell in love with all of them, and fell in love with the film business too. I was in!

Over the next couple of years, I worked almost exclusively for Lipson Films as a PA. One day, Len Lipson sent me out to take some photos of a location for a Levi's commercial. I passed muster with Len, scouting abandoned buildings in Alphabet City (today's East Village). I still





*New York Mayor Bloomberg with Ayoub*

remember how the squatters threw bottles out windows at me, trying to scare me away from their turf. They feared the inevitable gentrification of the lower east side.

At that time, all scouting was done with SX-70 Polaroid cameras, I never loved this format. When the one-hour photo processing came to fruition, it opened up new avenues for location scouting. It became a more skilled category. You actually had to know how to take pictures. Since I loved taking pictures with a 35mm camera, this really drew me deeper into the profession of location scouting.

My first real on-location shoot was again for Lipson Films. They sent me to Block Island, Rhode Island, to photograph beaches, cliffs, lighthouses, all beautiful locations, for an Arpège perfume commercial. My first all-expenses-paid location gig. I thought I could get used to this! I tooted around the island on a moped, hopping on and off to get the right shots; I was a lot younger then!

The photos were well received and I was able to

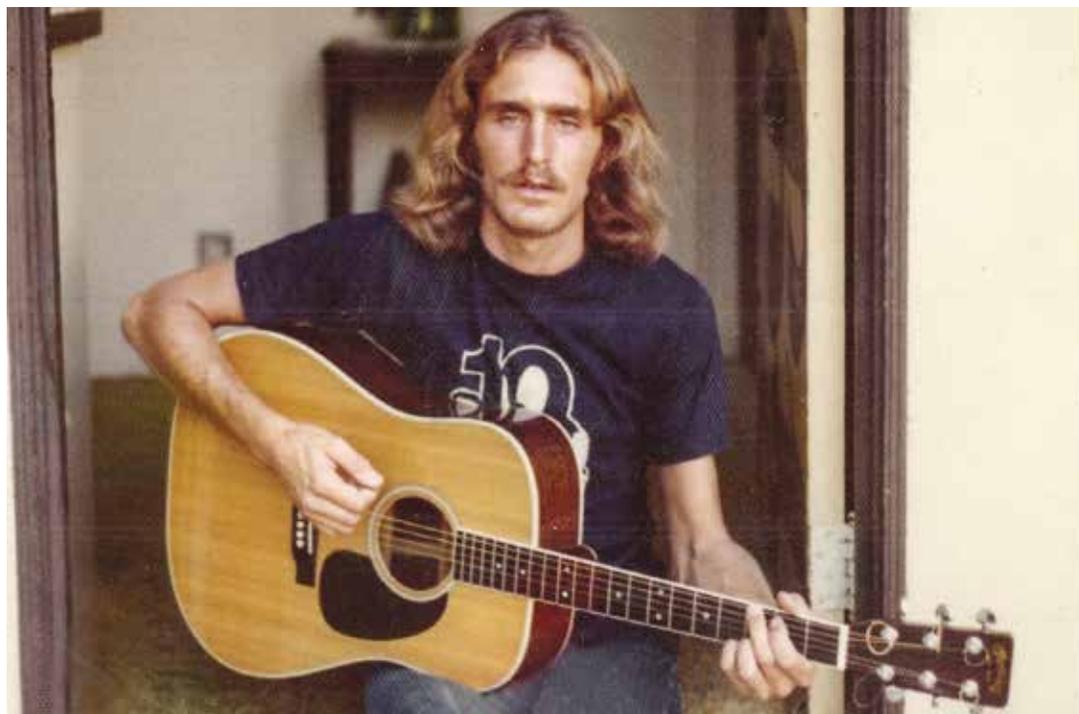
use them as my calling card to sell myself as a location scout to all the other NY production companies. I've been fortunate to have a long career in location scouting and management. Initially, I worked strictly as a location scout, with a strong focus on New York. Producers started to request that I follow the jobs through the shoot. As a result, I expanded into location managing.

It has led to so many diverse and exciting adventures, from island hopping in the Caribbean, to prowling inner-city basketball courts in Harlem, to scaling the stanchions of the Brooklyn Bridge for vantage points. I've had Lincoln Continentals driving under the Concorde on the tarmac at JFK. I've coordinated with Little Italy's Feast of San Gennaro, meeting with the local powers that be. I took over the floor of the NYSE for Harley-Davidson. I never get tired of iconic beauty shots of New York City—from Radio City, to Central Park, from Times Square, to Soho's cobblestone streets, to the theaters of the Great White Way. But for a kid from Brooklyn, the American Express ad at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, with Ernie Banks, Hank Aaron, Brooks Robinson, Al Kaline and "Stan the Man" Musial, was a dream come true.

As the location work continued to grow, New York commercial scouts

got together and founded ALSAM: The Association of Location Scouts and Managers. ALSAM's goal was to help create fair guidelines for working hours, rates and a unified professional criteria for how the work was to be performed. I was one of those founding members and served as the Treasurer for more than 20 years.

Sadly, it was the first day of shooting in the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens on 9/11 when I and the entire crew watched in horror as the World Trade Center nightmare unfolded and the buildings collapsed. That day changed many things here in New York, including the rules for using the NYC skyline in commercials for the next several years. Location scouts were scrutinized and their credentials validated. In response, ALSAM created a member identification system in order to verify and confirm our authenticity to the police and other municipalities so we could continue to do our jobs without interruption.



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In 2002, ALSAM began conversations with Local 817 Teamsters to organize the location scouts into their union. We wanted to protect our category, establish pension and medical benefits and redefine our guidelines with the AICP (Association of Independent Commercial Producers). This was a long, seven-year process. We were finally organized into the New York Theatrical Teamsters Local 817, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and established a contract with AICP in 2009. We created a council which I served on to help merge ALSAM into the union, and then I proudly served on the steering committee of 817 for the first two years after the new merger.

In 2013, I worked on the "America Is Beautiful" spot for Coca-Cola. The commercial shot in Chinatown, layering in NYC and Chinese culture and bringing together American ethnicities. I worked with three location professionals across the country: Cyndy McCrossen, LMGI in New Mexico, Peter Orth, LMGI in Los Angeles and Steve Pherigo in Colorado. The melding of different geographic locations and cultures won us the 2014 LMGA Commercial Award.

I applied to join the Guild as soon as I learned I was nominated. What a great concept—an organization of international colleagues that unites us despite different union affiliations. I currently work in LMGI membership with Stevie Nelson, responding to and vetting applications for other location professionals around the world. It's been great watching our little community expand.

I'm proud of my work as a location scout and manager and continue to work with great production companies from New York to Los Angeles to Europe and beyond. I'm lucky—I love my job and I get to shoot in the greatest city in the world, New York, New York! In my rare downtime, I enjoy hanging out at my country house, fly-fishing and golfing. And yes, I still love playing guitar.





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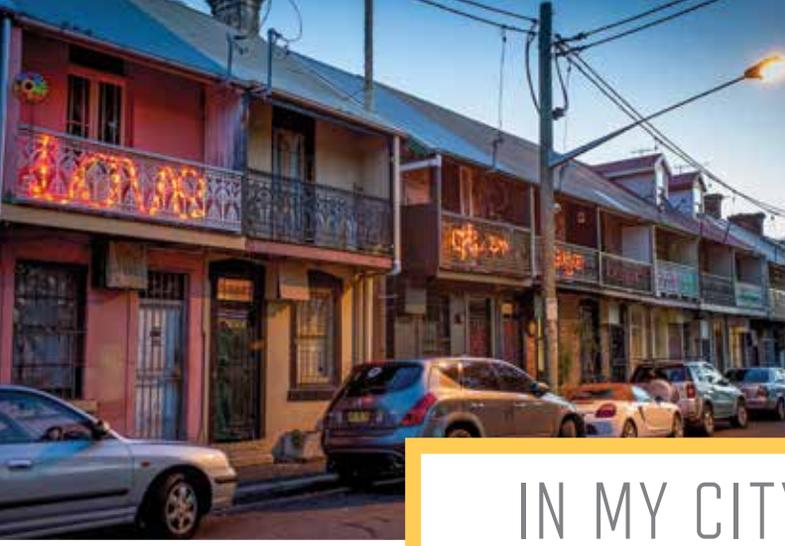
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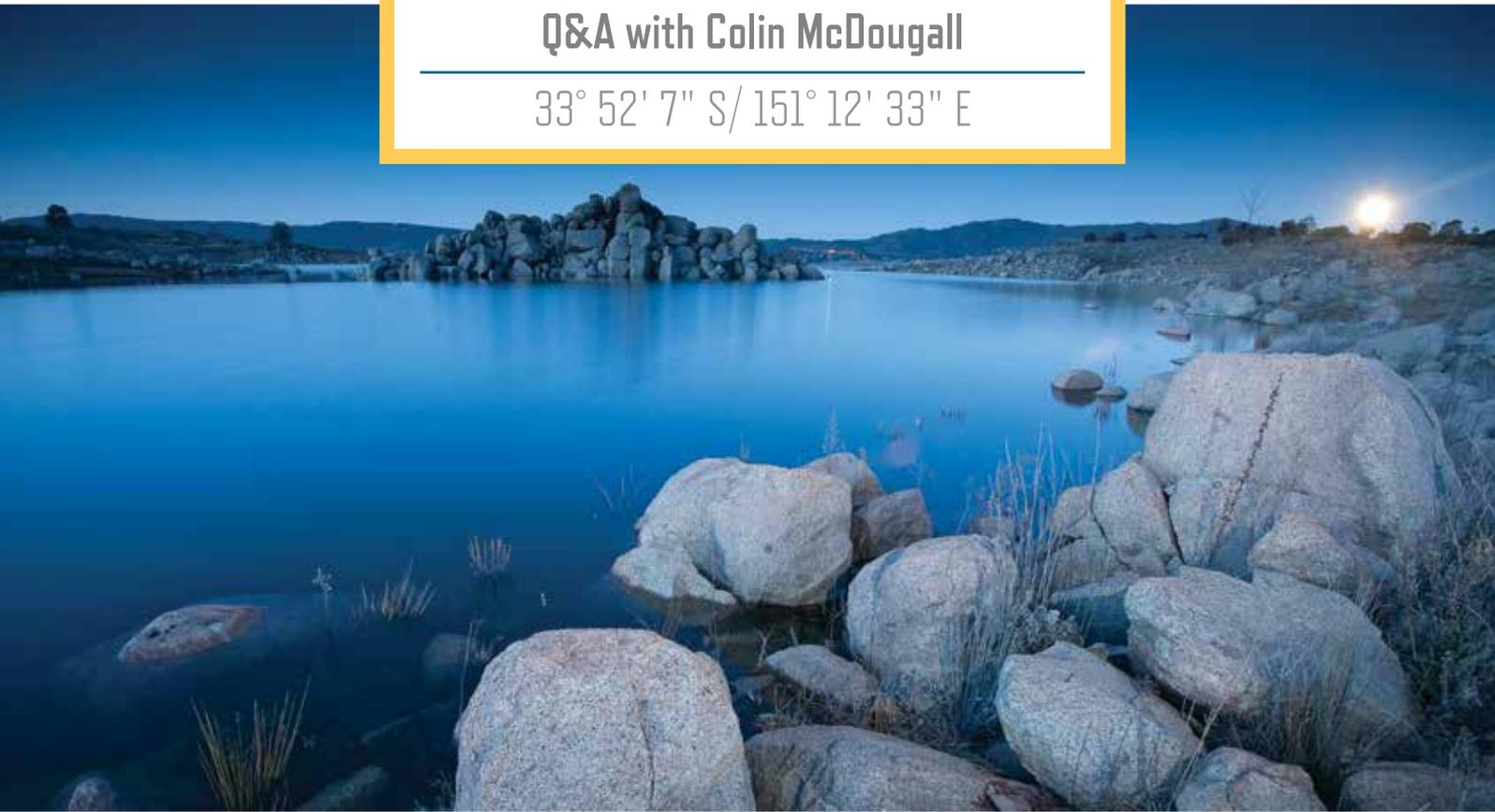
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# IN MY CITY: **SYDNEY**

Q&A with Colin McDougall

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## Co-editor **Stevie Nelson** gets a tour of Sydney from member **Colin McDougall**

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

**Colin McDougall:** Born and raised in Sydney, I completed study in horticulture and then landscape design and worked as a landscape designer for 15 years. This was at the time when drafting moved from hand-drawn to computer-based design and after spending many years with my head in a computer in AutoCAD, I decided this was not the career I had envisaged. I decided to go back to University to study land resource management and while studying, I started working in catchment management with the municipal water authority and lasted around seven years before the politics became too much.

After taking a year off and traveling around the world with my wife, I was looking for a new career move and had always been interested in film. In 1999, I spoke with a friend of mine, location manager Annelies Norland, to find out exactly what she did. She ended up offering me a job scouting on the Australian feature film *Soft Fruit* and I haven't stopped working since. I primarily work on Australian and international feature films, tele-movies and TV series, with the occasional commercial to fill in between longer form projects.

I also regularly work for international productions that are investigating the feasibility of basing their project in Australia. They are often undertaking a dual investigation into the financial/logistical feasibility while also assessing whether the project will be a good fit from a location/creative point of view.

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

**CM:** I think the primary draw for filming in Sydney is the huge diversity of locations combined with an attractive incentive scheme and a wonderful environment to live and work.

Due to our English heritage, Sydney has a strong European look with much of the early architecture. It can also double for many older districts in some North American cities. Sydney's modern architecture is often a good fit for any generic modern cityscape. We also have residential neighborhoods that are a great match for US or European houses and streets. Sydney is also surrounded by waterways, from the amazing harbour to miles of beautiful beaches and rivers.



Photo courtesy of Colin McDougall/LMGI

Having Fox Studios Australia located only 10 minutes from the center of the city is also a very convenient place for a production to be based when it has a combination of soundstage and location sets.

Further out from Sydney, we have a wide variety of landscapes from rainforests, deserts, mountains and, of course, beaches, rivers and grass plains—all of which are used for the setting for many productions.

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

**CM:** Many Hollywood feature films shoot here, including *Star Wars: Episode II and III*, all three *Matrix* films, *Mission: Impossible II*, *Superman Returns*, *The Great Gatsby*, *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, *The Wolverine*. We currently have Ridley Scott's next installment of the *Alien* franchise in production. We also get a number of other international films, including Bollywood and UK features, international commercials, TV series and tele-movies. Australian feature films of various sizes are also regularly in production. Local TV dramas are very strong at the moment and there are usually many projects in various stages of production at any one time.

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

**CM:** Paperwork has definitely become more arduous, from permit applications, location agreements/releases, to contracts for private location owners. Things just keep getting more complex. I now have more team members on each project just to cover the increasing external and production requirements. Managing the issues associated with high-frequency filming locations is always a challenge. It is totally understandable when residents and business owners get upset when they are impacted by our activities on a regular basis. I always find good, clear, regular and honest communication is the key to finding solutions to these issues.

# IN MY CITY: SYDNEY

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

**CM:** Sydney has become a very busy city with more than 4 million people. Filming has all the challenges faced in most modern world cities. Coordination across all the government agencies and authorities required can be quite a challenge, especially for a large production with significant impact. Our local film office, Screen NSW (New South Wales), does a great job helping to coordinate and liaise with various government bodies. Screen NSW in consultation with many government agencies and the film industry, developed a “Filming Protocol” which was enacted into legislation in 2008. Signaling the support of the NSW government to screen productions by establishing a presumption that approvals for location filming should be supported wherever possible, the Protocol is a document that sets out a framework for all the various

councils and other state government agencies (permitting authorities) to classify various film projects (based on impact) and then assess the project/proposed filming activity for permitting. It aims to develop a consistent approach across these various permitting bodies throughout the state. It also sets out a fee structure for permits (based on cost recovery) and sets out concessions for parking of essential production vehicles.

Some areas in the central city are currently experiencing significant disruption to transport and parking due to major infrastructure projects.

Any additional disruptions due to filming activities would be very hard to get approved in these areas. Fortunately, we have a smaller satellite city in the western parts of Sydney called Parramatta, which has some excellent streetscapes and buildings to work for city locations.

Parking, of course, is an ongoing issue in the city area of Sydney that we share with many cities worldwide. Often, we use sites that are vacant and awaiting redevelopment; however, these options come and go. Sometimes there is just no viable option for base camps or even for essential working trucks so we have to base ourselves on the outskirts of the city and “go guerrilla”—ferrying gear into the location via smaller vehicles.

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

**CM:** Cockatoo Island is a decommissioned navy shipyard under management as a heritage precinct. It has a wide variety of industrial warehouses/buildings, from a fort dating back to convict days to massive industrial buildings that were integral to shipbuilding during the first and second world wars. The whole island is now managed as a heritage public space and filming can be arranged here scheduling around other events and users. Cockatoo Island was a key filming location for





*X-Men Origins: Wolverine*. I really love this location as it gives a variety of looks on a large industrial scale, combined with large open spaces.

Another favorite is the suburb of Redfern, located right on the edge of the inner city. It has a long history as a working-class suburb with many of the local residents from families that have lived and worked here for generations. Until recently, it managed to largely avoid the gentrification that has transformed many working-class suburbs around Sydney. It does, however, still have many areas that have great gritty residential houses and streets that work well for different projects.

A sensational, self-contained “go to” location in Sydney is Parramatta jail—a disused prison developed more than 100 years, so there is a range of prison buildings from the original stone cellblocks to more modern administration and holding cell facilities. Production vehicle parking can be contained on the site and of course, it is very secure while filming!

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

**CM:** There are so many, from chasing crocodiles in Kakadu National Park in the tropical north of Australia with a National Geographic crew, to flying in helicopters over the remote southwestern coast of Tasmania, to scout locations for a major US feature film. It’s hard to pin it down to a few.

The Australian feature film *Tracks* was filmed in part in Central Australia at Uluru. This was an amazing and memorable experience, not just working in the very remote desert, but also having the opportunity to work closely with indigenous elders. Uluru is a sacred site and there are strict rules governing the use of its image. It was a great opportunity to get their perspective and insights firsthand and to get to know them in the process.

I also once worked on a Bollywood film called *Heyy Baby*, which was also quite memorable. We had a full Australian



crew as well as a full Indian crew on the production. Of course, we had many singing and dancing sequences to be filmed in various locations around the city. Some required us to shut down city blocks while we had hundreds of dancers of all kinds of nationalities, dressed in their national costumes, dancing to the ever-increasing volume of the playback music.

In December 2010, Oprah Winfrey brought 300 of her biggest fans on an eight-day, all-expenses-paid trip to Australia to film four special episodes of her show, titled "Oprah's Ultimate Australian Adventure." I had a great time flying around

Australia with the producers finding the best holiday experiences we could put together for her guests and the filming of the show. We arranged to take around 150 of them to the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge via the commercial climb operators' "Bridge Climb." That was quite the logistical exercise coordinating to get them to all arrive on top of the bridge at the same time.

In 2013, I worked on an ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) TV political drama series, *The Code*. We wanted to shoot our Federal Parliament House in the nation's capital, Canberra.



This was quite a challenge. While they commonly had news crews reporting inside the House, they had never allowed a drama to film. This took quite a bit of work to negotiate, with many meetings and endless emails and discussions. At the eleventh hour, we finally got the formal permission and access to film. It was quite a logistical exercise to get all the equipment and crew through the security checks each day. However, for me, it was quite an experience getting access to areas of our Parliament House that very few people see, and of course, experiencing firsthand the workings of the Parliament House staff.

**Stevie:** DOES NEW SOUTH WALES OFFER ANY INCENTIVES TO HOLLYWOOD FILMMAKERS?

**CM:** The NSW government is committed to making the state the most attractive destination in Australia for major screen projects. It offers incentives to eligible “footloose” productions to attract them to Sydney and regional NSW.

The attraction program is discretionary and incentives are provided in the form of rebates, which are generally formulated based on the Qualifying NSW Production Expenditure. The incentive is determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account demonstrable benefits, including job creation, NSW production expenditure, skills development and technology transfer.

These incentives can be accessed on top of the Australian federal government’s Location Offset, and the Post/Digital/Visual Effects Offset and Producer Offset.

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

**CM:** My main photographic tools are a Nikon D800 and a D750. My everyday go-to lens is a Nikkor 17mm-35mm



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# IN MY CITY: SYDNEY

f2.8. However, I also use a 24mm-70mm f2.8 and a 70mm-200mm f2.8 for longer shots. Most of my day-to-day computer work is done on a 15-inch MacBook Pro and my archiving and backup of images are done on a bank of hard drives connected to a Mac Pro in my office.

I do all my photo organization and editing in Adobe Lightroom and generally create reports and image documents in InDesign.

Probably the tool I use the most now is my iPhone 6, for everything from navigating and creating GPS tracks while scouting on the road, to getting sun path data or tracking weather on a radar app as it moves toward set, to give the ADs the heads-up of the approaching storm. I am now using the excellent camera in the phone more and more, especially to take image notes for later reference.

And of course, the Toyota Prado 4X4 gets me most places I need to go.

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

CM: I love the way doors are opened to us, to experience worlds we would not usually have access to. I love that we get

to see many hidden places that you would normally never be able to visit.

I really enjoy that we get to meet interesting people from all sorts of professions and get a brief view into their world; from wealthy persons living in mansions, to loners living in the most remote parts of a big country. From meeting politicians to miners, it's such interesting work we do.

I also get satisfaction solving a creative location problem, especially a difficult doubling problem. Maybe it's trying to find a great match for a Malibu house, or it might be a London street. I love the feeling when you creatively crack it and the option also works well from a logistic and production point of view.

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

CM: I joined the LMGI earlier this year. I believe joining the LMGI will help me get a broader perspective on our profession by being more exposed to how other location professionals approach their work, the challenges they face and how they solve them. I am also hoping to get the opportunity to meet more people who do what we do from all over the world.



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## Colin's Private Tour



### MUST-SEE PLACE:

Well, of course, there is the world-famous Sydney Opera House. Another must-see place that not many visitors get to see is the Quadrangle building at the University of Sydney. It is the original building built more than 100 years ago and it looks like something out of *Harry Potter*. As the name implies, the building is in the shape of a rectangle with an open-grassed courtyard on the interior and the detail in the beautiful carved stonework, including gargoyles as stone window frames, are simply amazing. Definitely a must see.

### FAVORITE SHOP:

Paddy Pallin, which sells all sorts of adventure and outdoor gear, is located in the midtown area of St. George. You will find a great range of high-quality clothing as well as backcountry essentials such as boots, backpacks, flashlights, etc.—all the gear you will need when working in a remote location.

### FAVORITE RESTAURANT:

Sydney has a great blend of restaurants. Our cuisine is heav-

ily influenced by our proximity to Asia and our growing Asian population. Thai, Vietnamese and Japanese food are all popular. If you want to try something a little more special, try Toko in Surry Hills. It specializes in modern Japanese, and it has beautiful curving timber architectural details. I have filmed in this restaurant a number of times as it has a great look. Seafood is also sensational in Australia and you can choose from the very casual Aussie staple “fish and chips” to some really outstanding Australian seafood, at Flying Fish on Jones Bay Wharf.

### PLACE TO SEE BY NIGHT:

The Sydney Harbour for sure. There are a few ways to do it. Take a cruise on one of the many different commercial operators on the harbour and see the city lights or hire a water taxi for a private tour. A great cheap alternative is to catch one of the many public commuter ferries that head in many different directions around the harbour. Or even better, get down to the Cruising Yacht Club at Rushcutters Bay and hitch a ride as a crew member on a racing yacht and take part in the summer twilight races on the harbour. Always to be finished off with some good Aussie prawns (shrimp) and a beer or two while the sun sets.

A walk around the harbour front is also a great thing to do at night. You can walk from the restaurant district of Cockle Bay, through the newly redeveloped Barangaroo area, under the harbour bridge and into the historic rocks area. From here, you can continue past Circular Quay, where ferries are coming and going to all parts of the harbour, finishing up at the Sydney Opera House.





#### **BEST DAY TRIP:**

The coast south of Sydney where I live is beautiful. Take a drive through the Royal National Park on the southern outskirts of the metro area and see beautiful wild beaches, following winding roads that take you through the rainforest, then come out to a spectacular view down the cliffs, headlands and beaches of the Illawarra coast at Bald Hill. Continue onto Sea Cliff Bridge, a suspended curving bridge built beside the cliffs and over the ocean.

If you have time, take the two-hour drive further south of Sydney to the crystal clear water and beautiful beaches of the Jervis Bay Marine Park, which are reported to have some of the whitest sand in the world. I once sent a sample of this sand to another LA-based LMGI member for a project we were working on. I think it caused a bit of a stir in the production office when a bag of white powder turned up in the mail.

#### **FAVORITE NEIGHBORHOOD:**

I love the inner-city suburbs, including Surry Hills, Redfern, Newtown and Glebe areas, just to name a few. They generally have a very arty vibe, lots of great galleries, funky cafes with great

coffee and food and literally hundreds of restaurants to choose from. Of course, you will always find an Aussie pub on most corners to help quench a thirst. For a change of pace, get down to Bondi, which is probably Australia's most famous beach suburb. Many of the people working in our industry live here enjoying a more relaxed beach lifestyle.

#### **FAVORITE LOCAL ARTIST:**

Brett Whiteley is my favourite visual artist. Unfortunately, Brett is no longer with us. However, you can still visit his warehouse studio in the suburb of Surry Hills where he painted many of his most influential works. The studio is now run as a gallery museum that displays many of the works Brett was working on at the time of his death in 1992. He is famous for his interpretation of the Sydney landscapes with many focused on the harbour where he lived nearby for much of his life.

#### **BEST BAR/CLUB:**

Try the Opera Bar on the water's edge at the Opera House. A great place to mingle with the after-work types on a Friday evening with beautiful views over the harbour to the city. If you would like a more edgy experience, try one of the

many pubs in the very alternative suburb of Newtown and enjoy a drink with an interesting cross section of Aussie culture from hipsters to transvestites.

#### **BEST PLACE TO HEAR MUSIC:**

The best places to hear music are definitely the pubs and clubs. You will find a wide range of styles of music from a singer-songwriter performing, to a lunchtime crowd of city workers, to a

more upbeat Friday-night or Saturday-night rock band. The Basement is an inner-city music institution. It's a very intimate venue, perfect if you like blues, jazz or rock. The Basement hosts great live performances. No matter where you're standing, you can hear the music, see the band and reach the bar.

#### **BEST VANTAGE POINT/SCENIC VIEW:**

North Head has a fantastic uninterrupted elevated view all the way down the harbour to the city. Sydney Tower also has a spectacular bird's-eye view over the city. You can also try the walkway along the Cahill Expressway with a great vantage for views of Circular Quay, the Opera House and the Harbour Bridge, although the classic shot is from Mrs Macquarie's Chair in the Domain Park where tourists line up to get the classic shot across the harbour to the Opera House in front of the Harbour Bridge.

Also try the coast walk from Bondi Beach to Coogee Beach, which starts at the iconic Icebergs Sea Pool, giving wonderful views of the beaches and sandstone cliffs that define the Sydney coastline. You will see beautiful houses hugging the cliffs, all vying for a view over the ocean.



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## THREE MOST IMPORTANT WORDS IN THE INDUSTRY?

# LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION

by Lori Balton

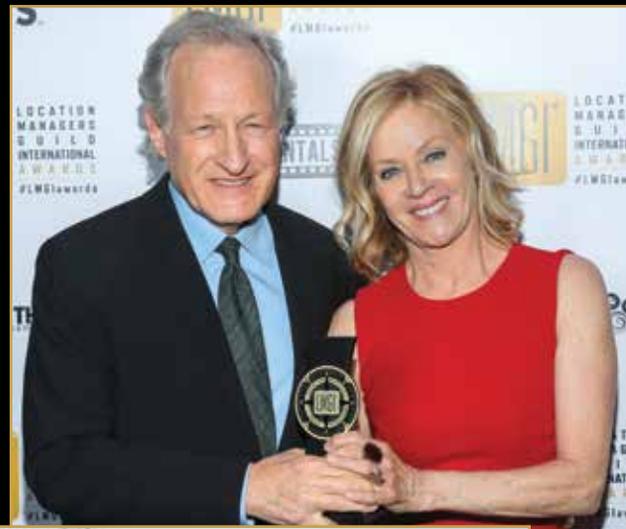
The 2016 LMGI Awards held this year at the iconic Alex Theatre in Glendale, California, were nothing short of amazing. Our host and location manager extraordinaire, David Doumeng, LMGI, hit it out of the park. In three short years, we have increased the international tenor of the gala, bringing together colleagues from around the world to celebrate our craft. There is no more solid proof of our tag line “Promoting Excellence on Location Worldwide.” We’ve done so in spades.

In keeping with our rebranding as the LMGI, the international community’s enthusiasm was reflected in this year’s record number of submissions for honoring the outstanding and creative contributions of location professionals and film commissions in film, television and commercials from around the world. This change is indicative of our dynamic growth. Rebranding is more than a name change. We are building a more authentic brand, with more direct outreach and impact to our growing worldwide membership. We are a global community. The Guild is an invaluable tool to our profession, encouraging dialogue across borders, transcending different unions and diverse cultures.

Submissions and attendees represented all corners of the globe, including Abu Dhabi, Australia, Austria, Bangkok, Berlin, Canada, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Ireland, New York, Jakarta, Jordan, Atlanta, Kenya, Boston, Malaysia, Germany, Norway,



From top: Jeff Goldblum and Tony Revolori accept the Eva Monley Award on behalf of director Wes Anderson; Michael Mann and Janice Polley with her Lifetime Achievement Award; Steve Dayan (center) with his Trailblazer Award, alongside location manager Ilt Jones and Amy Lemisch, director of the California Film Commission.



Presenter  
Christopher Guest



Host Dave Doumeng takes a selfie  
with Marco Giacalone



Amy Brenneman and  
Brad Silberling accept the  
Humanitarian Award



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**OUTSTANDING LOCATIONS IN A PERIOD TELEVISION SERIES  
GAME OF THRONES: SEASON 5**

(Robert Boake/LMGI and Tate Araez)

**OUTSTANDING LOCATIONS IN A  
CONTEMPORARY TELEVISION SERIES**

**SENSE 8**

(Marco Giacalone/LMGI and Bill Bowling/LMGI)

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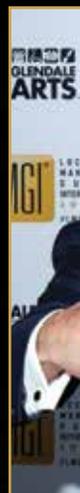
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WES ANDERSON**

**HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECIPIENTS  
BRAD SILBERLING and AMY BRENNEMAN**

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT  
JANICE POLLEY**

**TRAILBLAZER AWARD RECIPIENT  
STEVE DAYAN**



Louisiana, Mexico City, Puerto Rico, Rio de Janeiro, Seoul, the United Kingdom, Albuquerque, the Virgin Islands and Georgia—the country, not the state!

Actor Tony Revolori introduced this year’s recipient of the Eva Monley Award, director Wes Anderson. Receiving the award on Mr. Anderson’s behalf was Jeff Goldblum, who greeted the appreciative crowd with this message: “Eva Monley, for whom this award is named, fled Nazi Germany to Africa, became an expert on East African cultures, held just about every job in the film industry, including location manager for John Huston and Otto Preminger, for heaven’s sakes! She had a career that spanned four decades—a truly international renaissance woman!” Looking heavenward, he acknowledged Eva with a smile and continued.

“The amazing, unique, delightful, magical, entrancing and brilliant cinematic genius Wes Anderson couldn’t be with us tonight because he’s—guess what?—on location! But he has asked me to convey his boundless gratitude, his sense of delicious community that he shares with all of you, and his love for and dedication to our craft and to our art.”

Community emerged as the prominent theme of the evening, echoed by Humanitarian Award recipients, director Brad Silberling and actor Amy Brenneman. “Being in this room is such a powerful sense of community,” Brenneman shared. “I think that the real secret is that sometimes the thing we think we’re doing—which is making a movie or TV show or commercial—isn’t actually what we’re doing. What we are actually doing is creating community. And anytime we come together in that spirit, it’s a chance to change the world.”

Director Michael Mann, in presenting the Lifetime Achievement Award to his longtime collaborator, Janice Polley, examined the relationship between a director and location manager that develops over time. “It comes from being in the trenches. It comes from the crazy, outrageous, sometimes hostile, sometimes hilarious events that occur. It comes from sharing the ambition of a dream, and realizing an experience you want to impact an audience with ... overcoming impossible impediments. And it creates a very special bond.”

Polley thanked the Guild for continuously fighting to raise our profile in Hollywood, and commented on what a great opportu-





Clockwise, from top left: The crowd gathers; Contemporary Film winners S. Todd Christensen and Shani Orona for *Sicario*; Robert Boake (left) and Tate Araez, Period Television winners for *Game of Thrones*; presenter Kevin Clark (left) with Jodi Strong and Paul Audley, Outstanding Film Commission winners for *FilmLA (Bosch)*; Christopher Guest (left) presents the Period Film award to Robin Mounsey for *The Revenant*; presenter Milana Vayntrub (center) with Commercial winners Daniel Fontoura (left) and Sean Alquist for *Chevrolet Anthem*; presenter Melanie Mayron with Marco Giacalone, Contemporary Television Series winner for *Sense 8*.



## A MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR WES ANDERSON



Thank you very much, Location Managers Guild, for choosing me to receive the Eva Monley Award here tonight.

I want to thank a couple of my collaborators—Klaus Darrelmann, LMGI, the location manager on my last film, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. He and a driver named Darin Damjanow and I, and a couple of my other collaborators, we spent about two months wandering through Central Europe together, trying to figure out where to make our movie. And in the process of that, we not only found the locations but we also sort of rewrote the back story of the fake country where the movie takes place. We sort of found the country as we traveled, stealing little bits of different places along the way. And it was a very inspiring process.

Also, I'd like to mention the location manager of the film I made before that, called *Moonrise Kingdom*. That's Colin Walsh, who was the first person that we worked with in Rhode Island on this film and he was really a kind of a producer for us, almost.

And that's the thing that I want to particularly mention. I feel like the location manager is often the person who starts with you before anyone else does when you go to actually try to figure out how to really make the film.

I've had great experiences working with people in that way, and I'm especially grateful that you thought of me tonight for this award. I only wish I could be there.

Thank you again for thinking of me and I send my best wishes.

nity it is, to watch a director's creative vision unfold, knowing you play some small part in it.

Similarly grateful for all the opportunities his career as a location manager opened up for him, recipient of this year's Trailblazer Award, Steve Dayan, commented, "Location managers are all trailblazers in what we do." He advised the crowd to "take risks, be bold, take chances ... life is too short—don't waste it." Dayan concluded by observing how lucky we all are to do what we do.

Other presenters included directors Christopher Guest, Melanie Mayron and Jillian Armenante, actor Milana Vayntrub, AFCI Director Kevin Clark, California Film Commissioner Amy Lemisch and location manager Ilt Jones, LMGI. It was a thrill to have so many great storytellers take to the stage, extolling the contributions of location scouts and managers as partners in the narrative process.

From the tenacity of Local 399 Hollywood Teamsters CEO Steve Dayan; to the creative perseverance of location manager Janice Polley; to the humanity of Amy Brenneman and Brad Silberling; to the brilliance of director Wes Anderson: the determination and vision of our honorees, like our many nominees, inspires us to be the best we can. Not to mention the determination and organizational skills of the hardest working co-chair I could possibly have, a big thank-you to location manager Robin Citrin! In a night of luminaries, the spirit of the LMGI community shone brightest of all.



LMGI President  
Nancy Haecker



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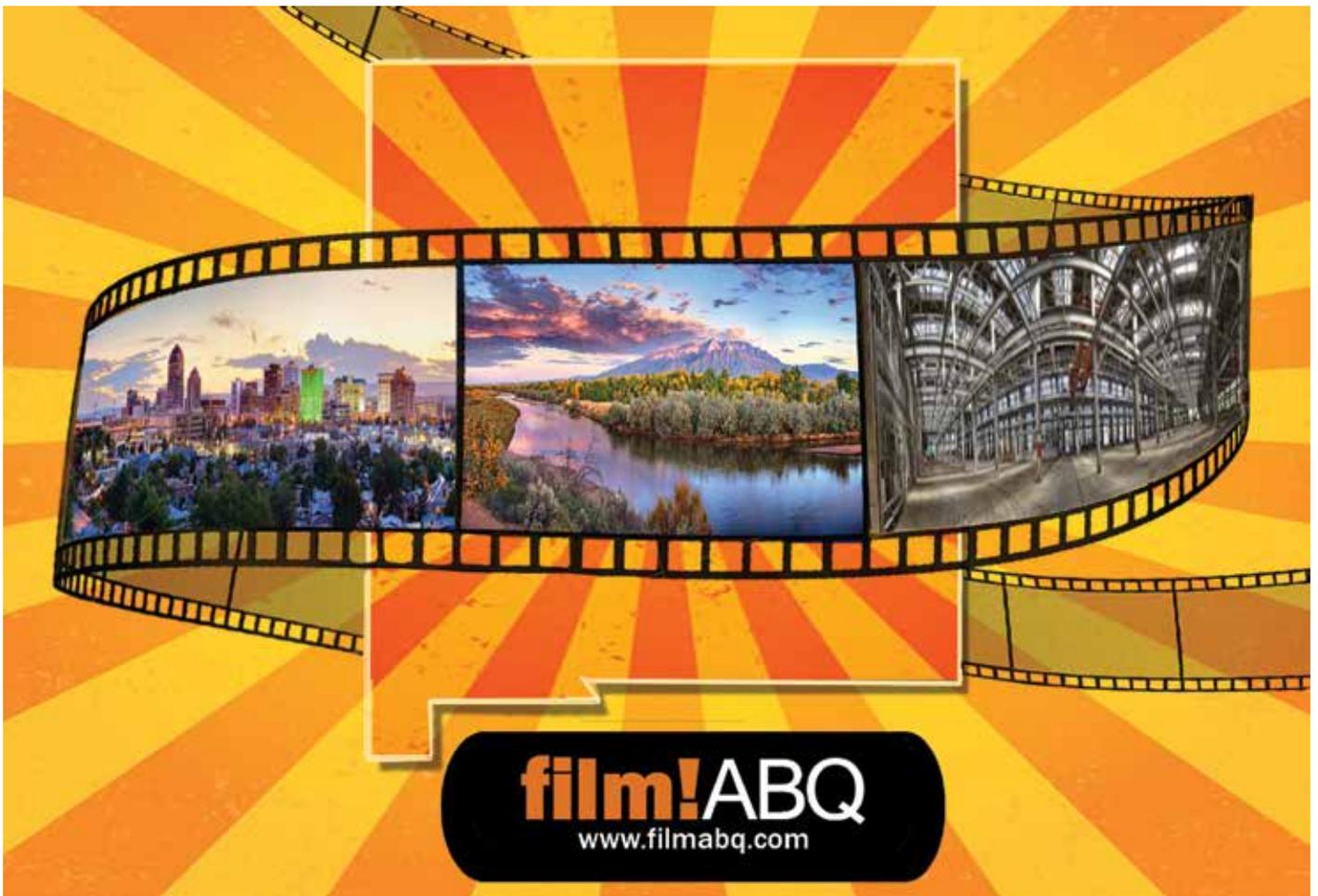
Photo courtesy of Robin Citrin



Lori Balton (left) and Robin Citrin

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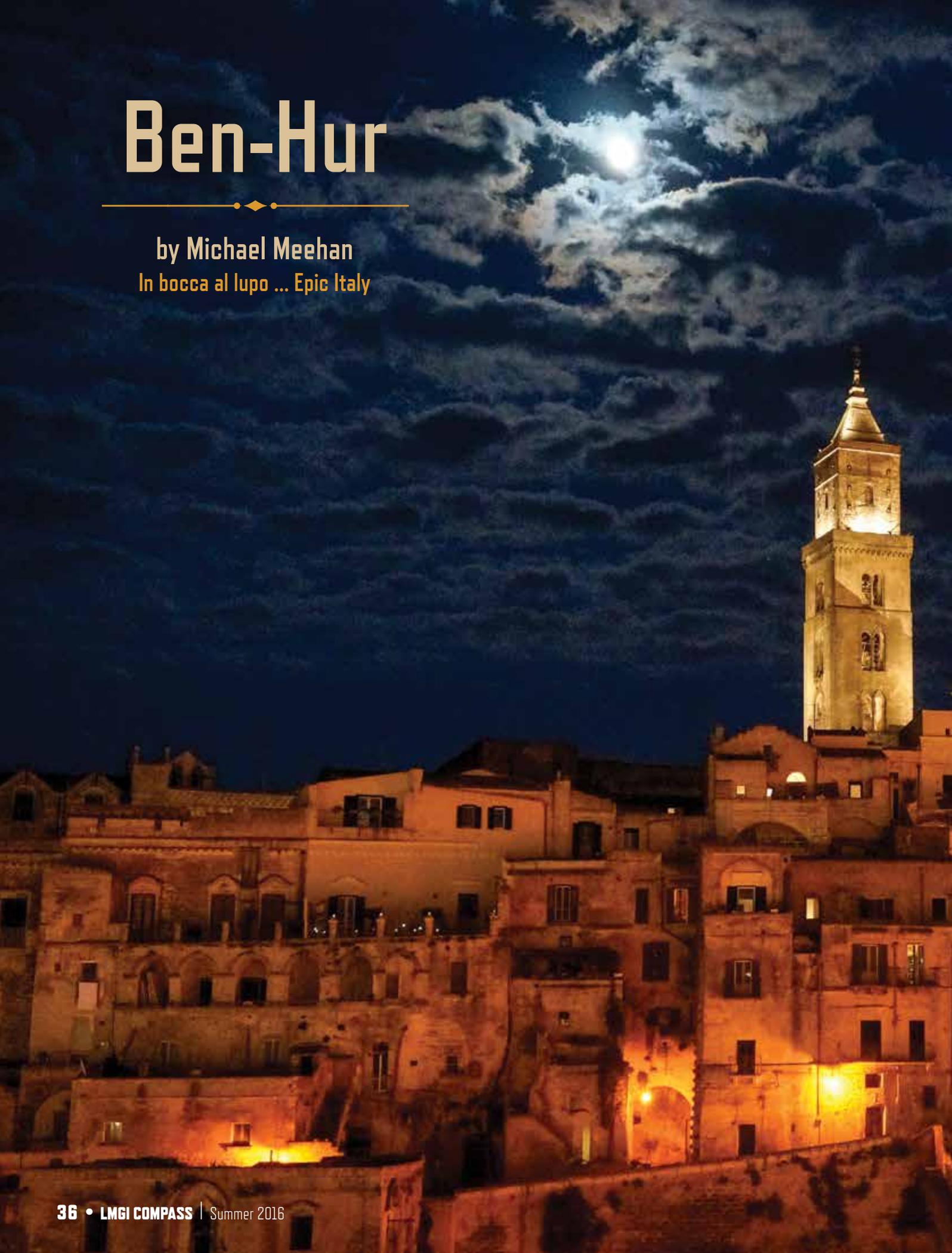
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# Ben-Hur



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by Michael Meehan  
In bocca al lupo ... Epic Italy

**A**s we are all busy people, I offer a quick synopsis of this article: *Ben-Hur* ... Italy ... 10 months.

It was a nightmare. The food ... terrible. The people ... dull. The traffic ... what traffic? The buildings ... falling apart. History ... some. Horses ... a few. The last *Ben-Hur* ... **only** 11 Academy Awards. Trust me, you wouldn't want to be there.

Of course, I'm kidding. It was spectacular—a one-off miracle. It was such a great experience, I'm reluctant to talk about it to others who might not be so fortunate to have this industry give them a similar chance.

Like most of us carnies, Italy was high on my bucket list. I have been lucky enough to have this business take me to more than 40 countries and I've shot major films all over the globe. But Italy, that was never going to happen. Then, it almost happened. Twice.

I had finished *Oblivion* and returned from Iceland to try and remember what night looked like. A few months passed, and a dear friend who is a producer, called to offer me a big-budget studio horror film going to Rome and England. I was to do the Rome part and my feet did not touch the ground for

days. Then, on my 65th birthday, I was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. I had not planned that. I checked my calendar several times and no, it was not on the schedule. Then I got the call, the film was not going to Rome and the project eventually went away. Let's face facts, it was too good to be true and my plate was full with "things that go bump in the night." A year passed, filled with medieval tortures and a full six pack of whoop ass. My center held and I got my feet under me again and then the phone rang. *Ben-Hur* in Rome. Like any sane person, I tried not to cry for joy in public but I did run around like an excited teenager with a new iPhone. Let this be a teachable moment from an old guy. Don't think these things will never happen to you. In short—never give up before the miracle.

I have been doing this for more than 30 years. I have done films in Bulgaria, Morocco, the Caribbean, India, the Galapagos, the Amazon, Mexico, Iceland and all over the United States and on and on. I have been exposed to situations that have afforded me a reservoir of experiences to draw from. While I knew I hadn't seen it all, "new" experiences were coming along less 'frequently.' Then I got to Rome.

We all know a little about Italy and Rome from the expressions that inhabit our language. Let's start there.



All photos courtesy of Michael J. Meehan, except as noted



## WHEN IN ROME, DO AS THE ROMANS DO

Many of us have worked in places with different cultural norms than those in California. This applies for those working in the United States (yes, I'm talking about you, Louisiana and Georgia) and especially abroad. South America is different than Northern Africa, which are both different than Atlanta. And then there is Italy.

A big part of a location manager's job is to meld the crazy world of the motion picture business to the real world of normal people with normal lives. I work very hard at trying to get the people I deal with up to the speed we need to work and to understand how change is constant. Moreover, I try to do this without alienating them or have them think we are all jerks. I feel it is a very important part of our job. It isn't easy, but it can be done. Italy was a bit trickier. They have had a film industry since before I was born and they produced films that made me want to get into this business. They just did them—differently.

Let's just say you want to get something done. It doesn't matter what it is or what department is asking. It doesn't matter who is inquiring. You start by asking the pertinent people—and you won't finish. Yes, you will get out a few sentences and as soon as the people you are talking to have a vague, and I mean vague, notion of what you are asking, they will begin talking. If you are speaking to five people, four of them will start talking over each other and yes, waving their hands. For the record, the fifth person will be drinking coffee and all will likely be smoking. If, at the end of the cacophony, it appears they can do what is asked the way you want it done and in the time you want it done, you are lucky. If not, the adventure begins.

They will tell you how they do things. You will tell them how we like it done and by what date. They will politely tell you, your way is wrong and will never work and it will never be done in that timespan. You tell them it has worked this way successfully all over the world for the 30 years you've been do-



respect and I returned the favor. I was very sad to leave them and I think the feeling was mutual. They are just different and seemed happy and content to stay that way. They have made great films—their way. In the end, the work got done and MGM was very, very happy. And so it goes.

### ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY

I'm amazed it got built at all.

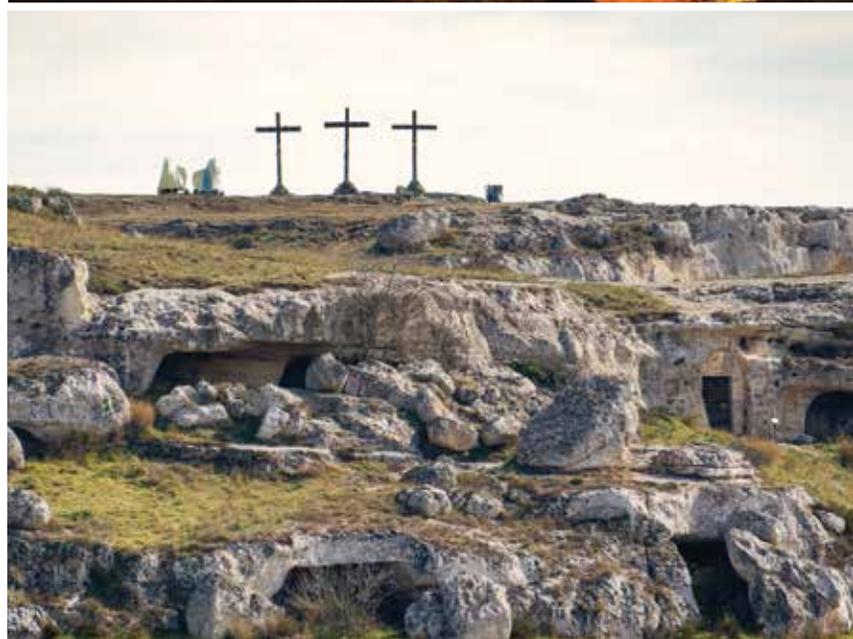
We had two major builds for the film, aside from a variety of small sets. First and foremost, was the circus for the chariot race. It was built on a grass field at Cinecittà World (formerly the De Laurentiis Studios outside Rome), along with the stables for our 84 horses. Next to this, we built the structures to house the construction and storage of the chariots. The second major build was the interior of the Ben-Hur house, which was constructed at Cinecittà Studios in Rome.

*The garrison location during the day (left) and at night (below); the set crosses (bottom).*



ing it. They will shrug. Some of the crew will lose their temper and yell at the Italians, which will elicit more animated shrugs from them. Others, like myself, will try and cajole them into doing it our way and reach a compromise that will work. Either way, in the end, it will be done their way and closer to their time limit. When you begin to lose your mind, after you find out and planned for it to be done your way and it was done a different way, the Italians will—shrug. Then, they will all talk over each other and drink coffee and smoke while they try and explain this is the best they can do. And on and on it goes.

This happened to every department—all the time. We tried talking, yelling, forcefully threatening, you name it. We were often frustrated. Here is the strangest part—I loved them. Every day I was greeted with a smile and a handshake by all. They treated me with



As you all know, in the United States, we would normally throw a large number of bodies to get the sets up and the count would drop as things were done. That is not how they do it in Italy. It's more the other way around. The Italians start with a few workers and the count builds as the time draws near and nerves begin to fray. Our offices were at Cinecittà Studios in the same building as the Ben-Hur house. I'd look in from time to time and it all began with six men nailing the floor together for the largest set in the largest studio space they have. It was like they were making a pair of shoes. The main reason for this is the Italians work on a flat bid system. The studio builds the set for an agreed-upon price and set of plans. They also do this on their timetable. When in Rome ... see previous pages.

### FIDDLE WHILE ROME BURNS

This phrase always came to mind as I walked the streets of Cinecittà Studios. The history there is palpable. Fellini, De Sica, Bertolucci, Rossellini, Antonioni, Leone, Visconti, *La Dolce Vita*, *La Strada*, *8½* and on and on. It is with that rich tradition in mind I remember driving on the lot for the first time with a great sense of anticipation. I was quickly disappointed. Sorry to say, Cinecittà is falling apart in front of your eyes. I am not being facetious when I say the place was last painted when Fellini

roamed the streets. They give tours and I can only wonder what the Italians think as they move past the painted, manicured entrance into the bowels of the studio. Cinecittà is a national treasure that is going the way of the Circus Maximus and the Coliseum—2,000 years later. You can hear the fiddle music and smell the smoke wafting through the air.

### ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME

All roads in Italy do lead to Rome and every Italian seems to be driving on them at once.

Driving in Rome was like no other place I've experienced. There are similarities to some other countries where lane markers are for the weak and morally compromised. Italy is where three lanes can hold four or more cars wide. It is also easy to laugh while you watch a car straddle a lane marker for miles and miles on an empty freeway. And the roads themselves are still a marvel. To be able to drive on the Appian Way after thousands of years, when many of our roads are trashed after 10 years, is amazing.

When I was first driven through the center of Rome, I thought I would never be able to drive there. It would, in fact, be foolish to try. By the end of my stay, I drove to the very center of the



city, where our apartment was located just a few yards from the Pantheon. I managed to do this by seeing what appears at first to be what utter chaos is, indeed, a controlled chaos. The cars are like a giant school of fish that flow around the fountains that lay in the center of most piazzas. How do they do it? As one Italian told me, "If you see a space, fill it. We expect you to and if you don't, we will." What most Americans would see as pushy, obnoxious behavior is, in fact, just keeping the flow going. Their way of driving was not personal, it was practical. It was one of my favorite lessons from Italy. I was not being disrespected, I was being taught.



Meehan on the circus set.  
Below: Filming the  
horse-riding scene

## VENI, VIDI, VICI

(I came, I saw, I conquered)

Let me quickly dispel the obnoxious term “I” and replace it with “we.” What **we** accomplished on *Ben-Hur* was due in most part to the outstanding team I was lucky enough to get—led by Andrea Alunni. Their work in Rome was outstanding, but in Matera, they did the impossible. I do not say that lightly.

Matera is a five-hour drive south of Rome in what would be the ankle of the boot of Italy. It was founded in the third century BC by the Romans and lays along the side of a canyon and spills up over the lip and adjacent hills. The heart of the town is Sassi (the Rock), a rock-cut settlement that is a World Heritage Site. It is simply breathtaking, a unique capsule of times gone by. Several films have used it for ancient Jerusalem, among them, *Christ the Lord*, *King David*, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*,

and most famously, Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*. These films have brought much-needed tourism to the town. More importantly to us, a more film-friendly location I have yet to be in. We were treated wonderfully by the government and the people, in spite of our heavy footprint. They understand the positive impact films can bring to a town. But (and there is always a but), filming in Matera is a **huge** logistical challenge.

The Sassi has but three short roads. It is a town for walkers and those with thighs and knees of steel. Once you drive down to the bottom, there is little or no parking. You then begin to climb back along the face of the cliffs, up and down ancient stone stairs of varying heights and widths. When we first arrived in August of 2014, the temperature was above 90 degrees and the handful of us scouting were exhausted by noon. Eventually, we got accustomed to the conditions.



Photo courtesy Metro - Goldwyn - Mayer Pictures and Paramount Pictures





When we returned in winter to film, it was cold, rainy and extremely slippery. All the equipment had to be carried by hand to each location and stored in abandoned houses, caves, small patios, restaurants, etc. Since we had a large crew and numerous extras, we fed more than 300 people a day in many small restaurants all over the hill-sides, and all within walking distance. There was little room for the trucks, let alone anything like a tent. By the time we finished filming all over



Matera crew, from left: Franco Campagna, Vincenzo Testa, Luca Gagliardi, Michael Meehan, Andrea Alunni, Serena Peleggi, Valeria Casciaro, Nicola Di Marzio and Raffaele Stifano.

the Sassi, it seemed like we signed a location agreement with every one of its citizens.

How do you accomplish such a difficult task and succeed? Simple—you hire great people. Andrea and his gang spread out over the area and by force of will, made it happen and under budget to boot. What seemed impossible at first—well, it still seems impossible. These are the kinds of challenges we all overcome as part of our job. It is the very definition of what a location manager does. “No” is never an answer, it’s just a starting point.

And now, I must find an ending point. Italy was a location like no other and my time there was magical. From the bottom of my heart, I hope everyone reading this is given a chance like *Ben-Hur* in Italy. Remember, don’t give up before the miracle.

***In bocca al lupo (in the mouth of the wolf) is an idiomatic Italian expression that translates to “good luck,” which Mike had in spades on his epic Italian adventure. Meehan’s credits include Dead Poets Society, Pirates of the Caribbean (both Dead Man’s Chest and At World’s End), Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World, Witness, Outbreak and The Perfect Storm.***

We are sitting in a Starbucks in Mar Vista, California. The day is cool and breezy. It is Super Bowl Sunday. Over lattes, location pro Sean O'Brien opens up to me about his experiences as a location manager, a soldier and the assignment of a lifetime ...

## Location Manager in a War Zone

# Sean O'Brien

34° 56' 39" N / 69° 16' 23" E

by Diane Friedman

**I**t is 2002 and Sean O'Brien on assignment in Afghanistan is having a "What the hell am I doing here?" moment. He is driving a Toyota 4Runner, with a cameraman and sound man in tow, angling for a shot of an armored mine-clearing tractor when a voice crackles over the radio, "HALT, HALT, HALT!"

"We had been told the route was clear," Sean recalls. "But the area we were in, at the edge of Bagram Air Base, was apparently still an active minefield, left courtesy of the Russian army. I had to slowly back up in our tracks. It was terrifying!"



Sean O'Brien. All photos courtesy of Sean O'Brien/LMGI



So, what was Sean doing in Afghanistan? As a veteran of the second Gulf War, he had already served as a Navy corpsman. Stationed in Japan from 1988 to 1992, his stint as a medic took him to places such as Borneo, Malaysia, Panang, Hong Kong and the Philippines. By 2002, he was a working location manager in Los Angeles. He was an assistant to the late Mauni Caves, and scouts Frank Yoshikane and Galidan Nauber were helping him break into commercials.

He just wrapped his first job as a location manager on director Allison Anders' feature film *Things Behind the Sun*, when a friend forwarded him an email for a job requiring a very unique résumé: A new documentary series

was looking specifically for a location manager with a military background.

The show, *Profiles From the Front Line*, was being produced by veteran *Amazing Race* producers Jerry Bruckheimer and Bertram van Munster with the full cooperation of the US military. The series would profile the day-to-day lives of the Special Forces and the men and women of the US Armed Forces in the most dangerous location of all ... Afghanistan.

"This was during the Bush administration," explains Sean. "We were there because we were trying to stabilize the region. It was after the Russians had retreated, after 9-11."

*Profiles* crews would be the first in recent times to be embedded with the US forces in combat and would pave the way for later coverage of the war in Iraq. “The show needed someone who understood military structure, the chain of command and the way things are done,” says Sean. “They also needed someone who was self-reliant and knew how to interface all the moving parts of the military with a small documentary crew. You know, the kinds of things we do as location managers.

“I became very excited about being involved with this project. I was just beginning my career. I thought I could elevate myself by having ‘Bruckheimer’ on my résumé. How many people can say, ‘I was a location manager in a war zone?’ But of course, I didn’t really know what I was getting into.

“In our world, we re-create reality to tell stories. When we get a script that says ‘Afghan Village,’ we know where to go to find Afghanistan in Los Angeles. But there is nothing that can compare to the real danger, to the desolation, to the dust in your clothes and in every possible orifice of your body; to the crazy, dry, hot air, like someone breathing heavy and up close, right in your face.”

Unfazed by the potential danger, Sean signed up for a two-month tour. He was paired with a producer from *The Amazing Race* and given a twofold mission. He would have to help locate and retrieve 165 tapes from several *Profiles*

units that were already in Afghanistan and had been filming for weeks. “These guys were so deeply embedded with the Special Forces, they had lost touch with the producers back home,” says Sean. “We were essentially sent in as a rescue mission.” He would have to travel to areas that he cannot disclose to retrieve some of the footage. And secondly, he would serve as a liaison for more behind-the-scenes stories.

Stationed out of Bagram Air Base, Sean would move between there, and Kabul, Kandahar, and other locations in between, either by air or ground. Every three days, he would take the harrowing 45-minute drive from the base to the DSL office in Kabul to ship whatever footage, old and new, that had been retrieved or shot from the embedded crews.

“I had been to Third World countries before, so I was not really shocked to go into Kabul for the first time. The city was pretty decimated. I saw kind faces, and even got to interact at times with the Afghan shopkeepers when we would stop to pick up supplies or grab some kabobs and hummus. But mostly, I saw looks of hopelessness. The one thing that really shocked me was the women in head-to-toe burkas. My interpreter told me that everyone was very afraid. The Taliban was everywhere. “

Sean was advised not to do anything that would attract attention. “I was wearing shorts and a T-shirt the first time I went into Kabul, and every time I’d step out of the vehicle,





people would literally stop and stare at me. I later learned from my interpreter that it wasn't culturally appropriate for a man to wear shorts, so I never did that again! You learn very quickly to be more culturally sensitive."

Sean had a glimpse of what a beautiful city Kabul had once been when visiting the headquarters of the World Press. "They had taken over what had been the last known residence of Osama bin Laden, in a nicer area across from the Indian Embassy. It had beautiful gardens and I actually slept in the guest house for a couple of nights," Sean recalls. "It was very creepy, sleeping in the former home of the world's most hated terrorist, especially when you juxtapose it with the situation we were in."

Sean had to secure his own driver and interpreter for these deliveries between the base and Kabul. While production was given unprecedented access, it was not afforded military or UN protection. He was always aware of the possibility of being kidnapped or killed.

He was also advised not to take any pictures in Kabul, especially of the Taliban. But his assignments off base kept him moving, and he pointed his camera when and where he could, most often while harnessed and hanging from a Chinook.

"I had the opportunity to shoot a lot of video with my Sony PD150 from the air when I was traveling to pick up footage from all of the in-country *Profiles* crews, 'B roll' that could be used in the show. I also shot stills; my Canon Rebel was always with me." His photos reveal a terrain that is stark, disturbingly absent of life and without much greenery. He was able to gather images of dusty tribal towns and bombed-out compounds; military convoys, Black Hawks and Chinooks lined up on the tarmac, and rows and rows of troop tents from his unique vantage point.

"But there were also so many things I witnessed that are too horrific to even talk about," he adds. "Things I could not even take pictures of."

Twice, Sean found himself in a Boeing C-17 shuttling to the US base in Germany.

"The plane took off in this wild corkscrew maneuver, rotating in a very small radius as we rose. This was to avoid any possible missile fire aimed at us. That was pretty hairy. During one of these takeoffs, the sound man—this big guy from South Africa, and I realized we had been holding hands. We were so scared!"

Is it no wonder that Sean sometimes asked himself what he was doing in Afghanistan instead of working on a movie set back in LA? Yet, when he had arrived home in 1992, freshly discharged from the Navy, the entertainment business was not even on his radar. He had enrolled at Santa Monica City College on track for pre-med. "I had no intention of being in the film industry. It was not my path," he says. "I was going to be a doctor. That is what I had trained for."

But in true Hollywood fashion, Sean caught the eye of a casting director, which led to a gig as a stand-in on the MOW *Legalese*. "There I was, hanging out on set with James Garner, Kathleen Turner, Mary-Louise Parker and Gina Gershon. This opened up a whole other world to me, a world that I had not even thought about!"

Soon after, a friend asked him to help her out scouting for locations and pasting up folders. He added photography, film and acting classes to his course work. He discovered that he loved taking pictures and was good at it.

"I really love photography. I think I have a pretty good eye," says Sean. "And I loved everything about the job. I liked putting all the puzzle pieces together, I liked someone giving me a script and saying, 'Here is what we are looking for, go find it!' What we do, sets the tone, adds to the texture and is a very important part of storytelling.

"But," Sean admits, "I also have a lust for adventure and new experiences, so even though I sometimes thought 'What am I doing here?' taking this job on *Profiles*, it was a challenge I could not pass up. I just had to remove myself from the idea that a full-on war was going on and focus on why



I was there. The troops kept me going. And I wanted to do a good job. I really wanted to show how hard our military works.”

Sean’s role expanded and he was allowed to find his own stories and choose subjects to interview. Sometimes he asked the questions, other times, he shot the footage. “I did a piece on a tough but really beloved female sergeant who ran the mess hall at Bagram. What an operation, feeding 3,500 people three times a day. She was pretty awesome.”

As a former medic, Sean was drawn to the medical team for inspiration. He was able to arrange access to the field emergency room facility for segments on the top field surgeons at work. He followed a wounded soldier from the Bagram medical facility all the way through on his flight to the US military hospital in Germany.

“These stories meant a lot to me, I wanted to show the aftermath, what really happens in war. The hardest part for the medical team, aside from losing a patient, is maintaining antiseptic conditions in an impossible environment,” Sean recalls. “There is just so much dust! Our production tent blew down three times during a summer windstorm, and temperatures were between 120 degrees-125 degrees.”

The six 1-hour episodes of *Profiles From the Front Line* aired on ABC in 2003 and can be found on YouTube. While Sean’s stories were mostly shot on base at Bagram, crews

were filming military action wherever it was happening.

There were human interest stories; others were more action packed. One unit might be filming fighter jets refueling in midair or be aboard an aircraft carrier watching fighter jets land at night while others followed Special Ops negotiating with tribal leaders or going house to house looking for suspected hijackers. The focus was always on the men and women involved in these missions.

“The footage was raw and visceral,” says Sean. “Bertram van Munster produced *Cops*, after all, so *Profiles* had that same dynamic up-close, in-your-face style.”

The scenes chronicled on the series are now part of our national psyche, reenacted in movies that we have seen again and again. But these images were new back in 2003 and *Profiles From the Front Line* provided the first look. It is both terrifying and chilling to watch. Not only because these missions were truly dangerous, but because now, in 2016, we know how this war will play out, and is in fact, still being played out.

Critical response to the series ranged from the show being outright propaganda for the military, to the choice of covering the war as a popular entertainment-reality series instead of as news. Despite these concerns, the series holds up as a time capsule, a snapshot of our troops at the very beginning of the War on Terror.



“We were coming out of a devastating attack on our own soil on 9-11,” says Sean. “The troops saw their mission as a true call to duty, but not so much as the aggressor. They believed that they were there to fight terrorists by winning over the Afghan people. I think that comes through in a lot of the stories. I am glad that I got to work with the US Air Force and US Army personnel during that time. It was a great honor.”

Sean wore many hats on this project, and he may have pushed for a field producer credit had he stayed longer. “I had already extended my contract, even after all the missing footage had been accounted for. I figured if these men and women can sign up for three years and do multiple tours, I can do two more weeks. But when they asked me to go to Iraq, I realized I had enough.

“Being over there, if I can use an analogy, is like working in the ER. There are periods of waiting around, then all of a sudden, something happens and you have to mobilize very quickly. There is extreme boredom, but also high anxiety, because a bomb can literally go off at any minute. I think Kathryn Bigelow came closest to what it feels like in *The Hurt Locker*. She shot it in Amman, Jordan, close to the Iraqi border. I really respect her for that!”

Sean was flown out of Afghanistan to the US base in Germany, but instead of going right home, he took up an offer by a friend to chill at his Tuscan villa. “I just really needed to decompress,” he says. “And it doesn’t get more beautiful than

Tuscany. It was very strange to go from that bombed-out desert to the lush green rolling hills and bubbling streams of Tuscany.”

What began as a résumé builder became a much deeper and transformative experience for Sean. It has taken him 14 years to talk about his time in Afghanistan and his role on *Profiles From the Front Line*.

“Looking back, I have no regrets. I got to do so many amazing things way beyond the job description, as we all have to do from time to time, and the skills we have, served me well. We have to be willing to go to any lengths to go and get what is needed, whether it’s in Hollywood or Afghanistan. I am credited as a location manager and I am really proud of it!”



# A Moving Experience

## Finding the Most Qualified Mover for Your Production Move

by Laura McHolm

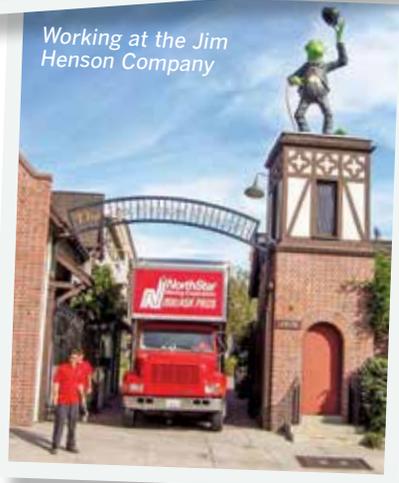
**I**s googling “moving company” really the best way to find a mover for your production move? Sure, you will find a mover, but will you find a mover that is experienced in the intricacies, timeline and budget restraints of a production? Instead, here are some tips on what to look for when hiring a mover. They will save you time, money and headaches. Find a mover that knows how to assist you behind the scenes, making you look like the star.

First, reputation is crucial. A great reputation is the key to saving you time and money. But how do you know if you can trust a moving company and if they can handle a production move? Asking key questions, not only uncovers a wealth of knowledge about the company, it also prepares everyone on location for moving day. Here are some surefire questions to ask before hiring a mover for your production:

- ▶ Has the moving company ever done a production move? How many have they done, what scope of a project and for how many years have they been doing production moves? Ask for a list of production moves they have done and for the location managers' info from those productions to contact as references.
- ▶ How long has the moving company been in business? Experience counts and a track record shows the ability to deliver each and every time. Do they have repeat clients? If folks don't want to use them again, that should tell you something.
- ▶ Have they moved celebrities? Experience with celebs suggests they know how to deal with high-profile/detailed moves as well as media, confidentiality and the overall demands of the entertainment industry.
- ▶ Are they licensed? If your production is moving from state to state, the moving company should have a US DOT number, which is a unique license number issued by the United States Department of Transportation. Make sure the mover's DOT number is valid by searching for it at [http://li-public.fmcsa.dot.gov/LIVIEW/pkg\\_carrquery.prc\\_carrlist](http://li-public.fmcsa.dot.gov/LIVIEW/pkg_carrquery.prc_carrlist). If the move is occurring within California, then the moving company needs to have state license numbers. In California, this would be a Cal T number.
- ▶ Is the company insured? Verify that the company is insured on the same website you use to check their license number. Never use a moving company without a license number or insurance.
- ▶ Are they an LMGI member?
- ▶ Have they won any awards or accolades for service? Ask to see letters of recommendation. If they haven't won any awards for service, chances are they aren't going to win any awards from you. Remember, a great reputation absolutely saves everyone money and time. No one gives a glowing review to a company that over promised, under delivered and overcharged. Five-star reviews mean the company exceeded the clients' expectations.
- ▶ Be sure to check out the company's rating with the Better Business Bureau (BBB). Social media sites such as Yelp, Citysearch and TrustLink will give you a look into homeowners' experiences with the company. After all, you want the company to perform on all levels.
- ▶ Low rates don't necessarily mean a low final bill. Study rates! What do their rates really include? Are fuel charges incorporated? Also, just like the airlines, rates can vary based on season and days of the week. Will they give you a better rate if they conduct the production move on a Sunday as opposed to a Monday? The best indicator of getting good value is a good reputation. Again, no one wins awards for service when they overcharge.
- ▶ Will the moving crew wrap and protect the furniture to prevent damages? How many movers will be on the job? How long will the job take? Is there enough hours in the day? Will they charge if there is overtime? By law, a moving company can only give you rates on the phone; not estimates on the phone. Does the moving company provide free on-site estimates?



Production for The Green Hornet moving from Bel Air



Working at the Jim Henson Company

- ▶ What sort of specialty experience do they have? Are they familiar with moving a homeowner out of their home for the production to take place in their home and then moving them back in with exact precision? In other words, do they put the pillows back on their bed just as they were and the frames on the wall in the same exact position?
- ▶ Ask the movers to measure the doorways, stairways, elevators, etc. ... and take pictures of them before the move so you can't be blamed for any damage.
- ▶ Know exactly how you want all of the furniture/production items arranged in advance. And, make sure they fit! This saves a lot of time while the movers are on the clock.
- ▶ Lastly, let the moving estimator ask YOU questions. If he/she hasn't asked a single question, yet is ready to give an estimate, turn and run.

Laura McHolm is an organizational, moving & storage expert and co-founder of LMGI business member NorthStar Moving Company. NorthStar Moving Company is an award-winning, "A+"-rated company, which specializes in providing eco-luxury moving, storage services and production moves. [www.northstarmoving.com](http://www.northstarmoving.com)



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# Storm Coming In, Part II: Safety on the Road Ahead

by Mark London Williams

In our winter 2016 issue, we ended the first part of “Storm Coming In”—our look at the conditions faced by location managers both when scouting, and on set, and some of the general obliviousness that has greeted those conditions—with a look forward at ways to make the profession safer.

Sarah Jones



Since that first part went to press, we lost hall-of-fame cinematographer Haskell Wexler, who passed away this past December at 93. We had mentioned his documentary, *Who Needs Sleep?*, which he was prompted to make not only by his own sleep-deprived car accident (he happened to favor restored Chevy El Caminos), but by the 1997 death of assistant cameraman Brent Hershman, attempting to drive home after 19 hours on set. He fell asleep at the wheel, crashed and died.

In a remembrance of Haskell, *SHOOT* online’s editor Robert Goldrich wrote about his last encounter with him, at a venue quite familiar to *LMGI Compass* readers: “It was in March 2014 when Billy Crystal presented Wexler with the Humanitarian Award at the 1st Annual Location Managers Guild of America Awards. Crystal recalled directing the HBO film *61\**, which was shot by Wexler. Crystal said that Wexler implored him to make sure that the production of *61\** was ‘really safe,’ without any crazy long hours.”

If so little had changed between Hershman’s death and the time of Haskell’s turn-of-this-century credit on *61\**, what has changed in the years since?

And is anything likely to change further?

Location manager Clay Dodder, LMGI, currently working on the series *Bones*, thinks if it is, at least on the locations side, the burden may fall on the scouts and managers themselves: “We’re expected to have all of our own equipment, computers, cameras, tripod and car. No production thinks we need anything other than what we bring ourselves. Safety items like a Spot Messenger or a satellite phone are expected to be supplied by us and the cost of these items are absorbed by us.”

In other words, for basic safety, you might be on your own. Dodder continues: “In still scouting, my kit fee runs from \$100 to \$150 per day, so the cost of my Spot and the annual service is paid for in a few days a year. In TV, I am lucky to get \$10 a day, if anything, so the cost becomes a burden. The majority of my work is in TV here in Los Angeles, and the production companies are not supplying anything in the way of safety equipment. Hell, my current show won’t even pay cellphone reimbursement!

“Cellphones are the first line of safety, both on set and out scouting. I think getting more money for box rental (TV and features especially) is the only way for scouts and managers to provide the safety equipment they feel comfortable with. Not all scouts feel they need a satellite phone, I don’t, but the peace of mind my family and I get from the Spot, is well worth the expense.”

In addition to the basic ability to let others know—and communicate from—your whereabouts on a scout, Dodder lists other basics—knives, water, car tools, wilderness kits, etc., that he takes with him, but other tools are being developed, too.



Amy Brenneman and Brad Silberling, 2016 LMGI Humanitarian Award recipients





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LOCATION MANAGERS GUILD  
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Perhaps more for on-set safety than solo scouting, the group A Pledge to Sarah—named in the wake of the entirely preventable on-set accident that killed *Midnight Rider* camera assistant Sarah Jones (on which we reported in Part I)—has created a downloadable app to make reporting safety violations even easier.

As *Deadline* described it, the app “gives users quick access to safety hotlines for reporting unsafe working conditions and excessive work hours. It includes access to Contract Services Administration Trust Fund (CSATF) safety bulletins that can be read at the touch of a finger for the direct and immediate viewing of specific safety guidelines. Users can also anonymously send in photographic evidence of safety and time card violations to the app, which will then forward submissions to union and industry organizations that are tracking complaints.”

Besides making it easier to report the kind of blatant working condition violations that got Jones killed, the group’s FAQ addresses the issue that Wexler so vociferously advocated for, and answers those who ask if “set safety and excessive hours are two separate issues—why are they together in one app?”

The group says they “feel that they are both a set safety issue. It has been scientifically proven that fatigue impairs decision making. If you are working excessive hours, then it is more likely you won’t make good decisions while doing your job. Poor decision making can lead to accidents, both on set and on the way home.”

But of course, it’s not only being on the way home, but away from it, that gives location workers their own additional safety concerns.

“I think scouting can be scary for the scout,” says Alison Taylor, LMGI, a recent COLA winner as supervisor for the location team on *Straight Outta Compton*. She cites one incident for a scout working with her on the series *Southland*: “We were looking for a house that would be like a meth-head house, out in the middle of nowhere. He was scouting out in Lancaster—on these really large properties, bizarre places. He got to one place, and somebody came to the door with a shotgun!”

Luckily, the gun was never fired. But it got Taylor considering how things look to those being scouted: “I know when I was scouting for *Straight Outta Compton*, you’d cruise up and down the street looking for something. When we do that, we look like stalkers—because we drive down the street, looking at property we think might work. People wonder, ‘Who are these crazy people?’”

She wonders whether providing location scouts and managers with some uniform type of identification would help smooth in-



Top: Rob Mendel sporting his Sarah Jones safety vest. Photo by Lori Balton/LMGI. Above: Haskell Wexler with Billy Crystal at the 2014 LMGA Awards. Photo by Deverill Weekes

teractions from the get-go: “I’m happy the LMGI sends membership cards,” she allows. “At least it gives people some kind of credibility. But it seems we should have something from contract services—something we can carry, that lets people trust us.”

Beyond that, she wonders if digital technology can be brought into the mix: “Maybe we need a location app for checking in so that someone else knows where you are.” She sees it as another routine precaution that could be taken—nevermind the occasional encounter with the shotgun-toting owners. Every time “You’re about to step in a house,” she says, “tell them, ‘I have to check in, to let them know where I am.’”

For veteran TV producer Harry Bring (*The X-Files*, *Criminal Minds*), the Jones tragedy hit all too close to home: “I was part of the company that hired Sarah into the business as an intern on *Army Wives*,” he recounts.

“After I flew back for Sarah’s funeral, the first day back to work in Los Angeles, I brought everyone back on the set. ‘That will never happen here, not on my watch.’”

Bring didn’t need to wait for an app for his on-set safety procedures. He tells his crews, “If you see something, say something. If something doesn’t feel good, say so.” And they never need to fear any retribution from the producers’ end, or someone saying “that guy screwed us up, and we missed two shots.”

But in spite of such safety precautions, “There’s all this chaos. Take the extra five seconds, 30 seconds, go to your first AD, your stunt coordinator, and ask, ‘are we safe up here?’”

Of location work he says, “We all steal a shot, here and there—but you’re on a sidewalk, in front of a 7-Eleven.” Not, he emphasizes, “in traffic or on a roof.” Or on the tracks of an actively working railroad.

“Our stunt industry is so safety aware—I mean, they’re crazy, but they’re very safety conscious. And yet, they still have a couple accidents a year that takes a life or cripples somebody. We don’t have those shot-by-shot safety procedures for those normal close-ups, or a guy walking into a door.”

And even less so for location scouts and managers, usually flying solo in an urban wilderness, or an actual one.

“It’s a crazy world,” Bring says, “and producers and UPMs should completely support safety.”





And we'll be looking at that "world" more in our next part. We'll see whether things are better in places that have been presumed to have more "sane" work hours, for example (like Europe), than on American film shoots.

One example of how that's changing comes from Matt Palmer, a Canadian LMGI member, working on the FX series *Fargo*. He's also a member of the Canadian DGA and has sat on a number of their Boards there (in addition to his own by-his-bootstraps work as a producer and director).

In one circumstance, they anticipated one of the changes that Taylor called for here: "Years ago, we used to have official police identification cards, that we used in concert with our contacts at the Film Commission, so that any business or homeowner has numbers to call to verify a scout's identity. While we don't have the ID cards anymore, we have a template letter provided by the Film Commission that gives a number people can call to verify identities."

As Palmer says, "We need to shift our perspective of seeing safety as a cost, and instead, understand that working safely can save money, lives and downtime due to injuries. Long hours and exhaustion cost productions money. The longer one works, especially in high-stress workplaces over long stretches of time, severely restricts their ability to make good decisions, let alone be able to use critical-thinking skills to solve complex production issues."

Which sounds exactly like something Haskell Wexler might have said. Though perhaps with somewhat saltier language.

Next issue, we'll be looking to pool some of those critical-thinking skills mentioned by Palmer—both in terms of a further look at the problems, and how solutions are emerging in "locations" around the world, as we try to cultivate a habit of safety.



Sarah (far right) and crew on location. Photo by Harry Bring

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Confidently go forth into unknown adventures with your trusty camera and notebook, for this is what you live for. But before you do, take these tried-and-true tips with you.

## 1 > GLOBAL ENTRY

Regarded as the best \$100 and 11 minutes I have ever spent in my life, the Global Entry “program expedites clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States” (U.S. Customs and Border Protection [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)). A savvy traveler, such as yourself, can simultaneously apply for a TSA Pre which expedites screening through domestic TSA checkpoints. Do you ever notice those stress-free travelers zipping past your seemingly never-ending security line, straight to the TSA representative? Just head over to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website at [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) and get started. Keep in mind, in conjunction with the fee, there is an in-person interview that must be conducted before approval is granted and scheduling that appointment can take weeks. Plan ahead. It’s worth it.

## 2 > PLANNING YOUR TRAVEL

Typically when starting a new project, your travel itineraries are coordinated through production. However, it would serve as an injustice not to recommend what has become a staple when I’m traveling nearly anywhere foreign—the lost art of the travel agent. I believe that in order to truly experience a place, you must wander a little off the beaten path. Having a travel agent is one of the most direct ways for laying a foundation of efficient travel. I offer you this advice: use readily available resources to locate several points of interest in and around a specific region, find a travel agent that specializes in that area and have them do the grunt work of efficiently planning your path of travel in the form of hotels, rental cars and intercontinental flights. From there, your time can be wisely spent diving deeper into your research of finding local places, local guides and local cultural activities that may be lost in the ether of “convenient” one-click travel solutions.

### 3 > BRAND LOYALTY AND ACCRUING POINTS

The idea of brand loyalty and the benefits of point hoarding is not a new concept. Consider your options and revolve your loyalty around an airline/hotel chain/rental car establishment that best fits your travel plans. For example, I almost solely use American Airlines if I can specify. Beneficially, they are also part of the Oneworld Alliance that is partnered with international airlines such as Cathay Pacific, whom I use for the majority of overseas travel. Ultimately, my American Airlines and Cathay points can combine to fit my needs with any airline in Oneworld Alliance.



### 4 > MONEY

The ability to fund your traveling experiences is an integral piece of the adventurer's puzzle. While productions cover expenses such as airfares, rental cars, hotels and per diem, there are some experiences that just aren't covered when on the road and thinking out of the box. A surefire way to get the best bang for your buck and not waste money on fees is to sign up for one of the many travel-friendly credit cards. Perks such as accruing points, no international fees in foreign transactions and the ability to use them nearly everywhere in the world are a no-brainer. Gone are the days of loose traveler's checks and walking around with wads of cash in your fanny pack. When you do need to pull out cash, which can be unavoidable at times, always talk to your local bank about exchanging cash in your destination's currency before you leave and/or get a list of foreign banks that cooperate with your home branch. Avoid exchanging cash at the airport or hotel, as the fees can be astronomical.

### 5 > YOUR LUGGAGE SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT YOUR TRAVEL SKILLS

Fundamentally, the exertion of your finite energy should lay in your actual traveling activities and not managing your belongings during said activities. Most airlines allow a free carry-on bag and a personal item such as a purse or backpack. For your personal item, I personally prefer the backpack, as it gives you the best bang for your buck in terms of size and also spreads the load across your two shoulders thus limiting the energy exerted. Noticing a theme here? Traveling for an extended period of time? Get a durable, airline standard, checkable "duffle"-sized bag that has rollers and can maximize the belongings you will need on your trip. Going away for a lazy weekend? Pack light with a carry-on-sized weekender bag in conjunction with your personal item. Either way, luggage is not an area that I would recommend economizing in; you get what you pay for. A good brand of luggage can last years before showing signs of wear. One last tip I adopted from globe-trotting location manager Ilt Jones, LMGI is to have a closable/latchable passport case for your passport and essential travel documents. This is the key for holding onto any of those ridiculously small custom tickets, airline ticket stubs or your newly acquired Global Entry card. \*Wink wink\*





## 6 > THE CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN/WOMAN

In my experiences, the less time you hover around TSA checkpoints, the better. Thus, I have perfected my wardrobe plan to make this process as efficient as possible from feet to my head. Wear comfortable, easily slip-off shoes and for the love of all things holey, wear socks. This last part is especially true if you didn't heed my advice and get your Global Entry/TSA Pre card, which waives the requirement to remove your shoes. Nothing seems more unsanitary than walking around with bare feet in an airport that has had millions of people bused through all day. The second most crucial piece of your wardrobe should be your outerwear with the most important part being pockets that are sealable. Suit jacket with buttons? Good! Hoodie with zippers? Done! Light jacket with snaps? Boom! The idea is as soon as I show my ID and ticket, all my loose belongings go in these pockets and are zipped up until I reach my destination. Walk up to the conveyor, throw the jacket on, throw the bag on, zip through the scanner and walk out with no issues. There is no better feeling of being completely confident you know where your loose belongings are at any given minute. Headwear? You will normally catch me donning a baseball cap when walking through security and rarely am I asked to take it off. But one piece of advice for all the rock stars out there, leave your sunglasses in the carry-on, Kanye. It took me one time of losing an expensive pair to realize how stupid it is to wear them indoors through the airport.

## 7 > TRIP CASE TRAVEL APP: THE FUTURE OF TRAVELING

I never endorse products unless I absolutely love them and in this case, I am smitten with an app I cannot leave home without, TripCase. This game-changing little iPhone/android-friendly app serves as an up-to-the-minute personal assistant that manages all your personal airfares, hotels and activity details with ease. You add all your travel information into the app or the conveniently laid-out website, which is then downloaded and updated to your phone. Think instantaneous notifications of gate transfers, gate numbers, flight delays and baggage claim carousel numbers. That alone is worth its weight in gold. Lastly, there is a handy feature that will notify your friends/relatives via email when you are supposed to depart, arrive and any delays.

## 8 > ENERGY IS A RESOURCE

Onto what I highly consider one of the most overlooked finite resources you have as a traveler: your energy. Everything you do from leaving your house to arriving at your destination should be executed in the most energy-conservative fashion. As you venture through the unpredictability of the world, it takes one major misstep or an unwelcome surprise to throw a wrench into the most carefully laid travel plans. If you have been wasting your energy, you will be left with no reserves to tackle and solve such issues. Here are some helpful tips for conserving energy. Pick luggage best suited to your traveling situations and when in doubt, go for the roller bag. Always utilize any form of automated mode of pedestrian transportation such as escalators and luggage carts offered at the airport. Eat and keep hydrated. Your body and your attitude will thank you in the long run.



*(Editors' note: To help you travel like a location scout, Flight 001 is offering LMGI members 20% off their products at [flight001.com](http://flight001.com). Use code **FIGULD**. Good through 9/30/16. Some restrictions apply.)*

## 9 > AIRLINE LOUNGES ARE YOUR FRIEND

Never stepped foot in the cushy oasis of paradise known as an airport lounge? These little hideouts peppered throughout any major airport are key when needing a place to relax during a long and unavoidable layover. “But Nick,” you say, “I’m not a first-class or business-class-platinum-gold-very-important member of any airline.” I say, “No problem, dear friend.” You can pay to hang out in these sanctuaries stocked with comfortable chairs, private rooms, televisions, fast Wi-Fi, drinks and snacks comparable to any craft service with the inclusion of alcohol. A cool \$50 gets you a day pass at any American Airlines Admirals Club lounge at nearly any airport without capacity restrictions at the time. Think long and hard the next time you’re thinking about shelling out \$25 for a lousy sandwich and a beer at the food court.



## 10 > AVOIDING JET LAG

Jet lag is the silent killer of the first few days of any distant getaway. Your brain is foggy, your body hurts and things seem to melt together as if you were on a trip with Hunter S. Thompson. Luckily, there are some tips to ease the transition and get to work or play in immediate fashion. Before you embark on your trip, consult a jet lag calculator. A good one is at [www.jetlagrooster.com](http://www.jetlagrooster.com). This handy little website calculates the times when you should be sleeping, avoiding light and seeking light for not only the long flight but also days after arriving. Now that you have a sleeping schedule while on the flight, cut back on the alcohol and drink copious amounts of water instead. Save the celebration time for when your brain is functioning properly and you’re out experiencing a new town. Jet lag is not completely avoidable however, the above tips should help ease you into your new adventure.

**Whether traveling for work or pleasure, these fundamentals have yet to let me down. Try them on your next big adventure and see if they don’t make your trip a bit smoother!**

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 Power and Communication  
 Services Inc.  
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 Reel Waste & Recycling, LLC  
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 Riverfront Stages, Inc.  
 Rocky Mountain Security LLC  
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 San Telmo Productions  
 Santa Anita Park  
 Santa Barbara Location Services INC  
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 Collections and Botanical Gardens  
 The Intercontinental Los Angeles  
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 Centre  
 Toni Maier - On Location, Inc.  
 Truenorth  
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43° 33' 10" N / 7° 1' 2" E

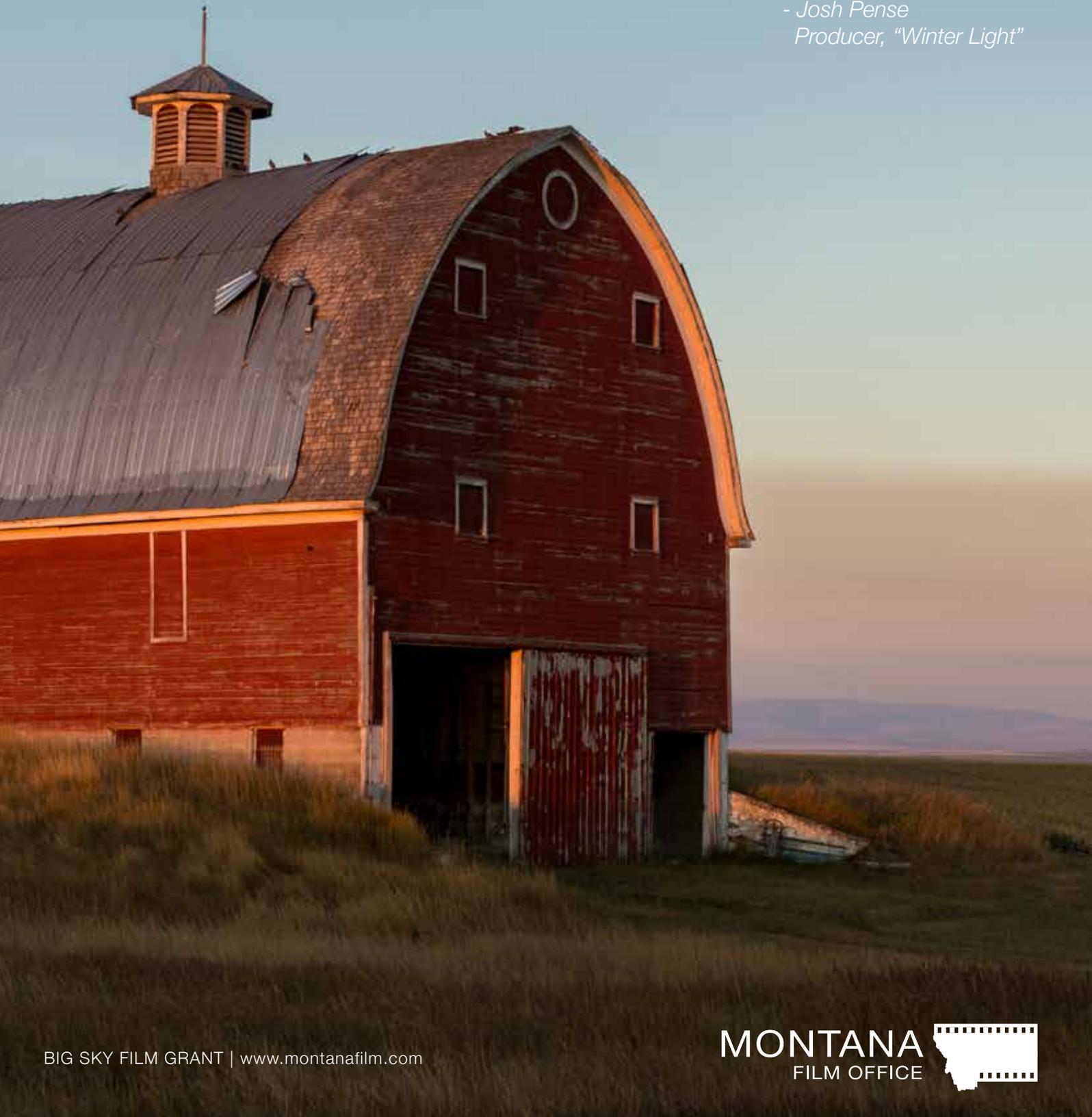


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