

Equipment List for Today's Shoot

BlackMagic Pocket Cinema Camera - Original model. Frame Size - 1920 X 1080, Frame Rate 23.98, Recording format ProRes LT, Film lut. Camera is housed in a cage. We are using a SpeedBooster with a Nikon mount - result is approximately Super 35 frame, including depth of field. The SpeedBooster also increases the amount of light hitting the sensor by 1 2/3 stops, and increases sharpness.

Nikon Prime Lenses. 24mm, 28mm, 35mm, 50mm, 55mm Macro, 85mm, 105mm, 200mm.

SmallHD HDMI monitor.
HDMI splitter, battery-powered.
Baseplate with V-mount battery adapter to power camera and monitor,
Sennheiser Shotgun microphone, plugged into camera.
Tripod
4' Slider
Lighting - Aputure 120D with fresnel, soft box and spaceflight attachments, Videssence fluorescent light, two Ikea LED bulbs in an Ikea china lantern, two crappy battery-powered lights.
Four C-stands, some light stands, extension cords, tape, grip clips, a big piece of tan fabric, a piece of white silky fabric, a fog machine, some reflector materials (foamcore, styrofoam), two apple boxes.
My terrible makeup kit. Mostly Halloween makeup.
A Branch-o-loris.

Why?

None of this equipment (except for maybe the Aperture light!) is high-end. We're recording in a 'bad' codec, recording audio using a mini-jack into the camera, etc. We'll end up with a good film anyway. This is an exercise in proving that equipment is secondary to creativity and technique.

Story rules

Avoid cliches in storytelling. Avoid doing anything you've seen someone else do. Avoid your first idea. Judge your ideas based on inventiveness. My Intermediate Film Professor gave us a list to avoid; guns, dream sequences, flashbacks, voiceover narration, chases, montages, etc, because they're all overused by beginners. Avoid using a technique instead of telling a story. Stories are based around human beings. I look for big moments in small lives. I also try to figure out a good ending, and work backward from there. Write your beginning, middle and end, then write your script to that structure. Figure out what you can accomplish with your cast and crew, and plan accordingly. Additionally, simple is best.

Today's shoot is two scenes - a summer afternoon in a living room, and a winter night in an alley. The scenes will be cut together so that there is a surprise at the end. The living room will be warm, comfortable, elegant, and the alley will be cold, contrasty and dirty. We want the cuts between the scenes to be shocking. We will shoot with a wide aperture to minimize backgrounds (make bad things out of focus) and focus the viewer on the character. There will be moments in the script where we will cut from one scene to the other, and we want those moments to match cut, so we're going to shoot 'identical shots of both scenes - a two-shot, two over-the-shoulders, and two singles. In the second scene, we won't be able to reverse the angle because we don't have an appropriate background, so I'll flip the shot in post.