

695 QUARTERLY

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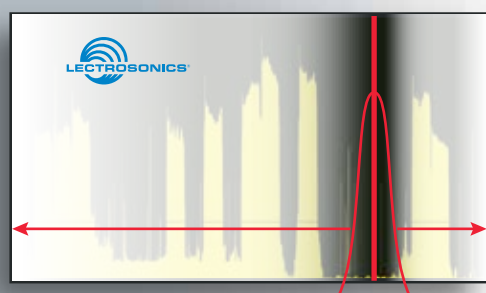


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**Cover: House of Cards. Top frame is the original 4K
with boom poles in the frame. Bottom is after VFX work.
Photo: David Giesbrecht for Netflix**

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From the Editors



Welcome to the summer edition of our 695 Quarterly.

Lorenzo Millan explains the process of "digital boom pole removal" in the hit Netflix show *House of Cards*. This technique should be SOP on every production that has a VFX budget.

"*Whiplash*" by BAFTA and Oscar winner Thomas Curley CAS describes his work during the nineteen days of shooting on this low budgeted but fascinating motion picture.

Contrasting that is "The Traveling Road Show on *Mad Max: Fury Road*" by Ben Osmo, chronicling their six months in the Namib Desert, on an extremely complex and technically difficult production.

"The Sound of *Birdman*" by Thomas Varga, the CAS Award winner, relates how his crew tackled the nearly continuous Steadicam choreography on this dialog intensive show.

Happy reading.

Fraternally yours,
Richard Lightstone, Eric Pierce and
Mark Ulano

We're witnessing a surge in organizing as evidenced by many successful outcomes. The community is watching and we have been at the forefront of this development. To me, this is very important as it underlines the essential nature of the crafts we collectively supply the industry. Without sound and video engineering, production cannot occur.

It's especially interesting to see the large uptick in successful organizing of the ultra-low budget projects and reality television. The working rank-and-file crewing these shows have been acting on their wish to gain the benefits of collective bargaining and union representation.

A standout example of this awakening took place on a reality TV show called *Broken Skull Challenge*. This show became a battle zone over the workers' desire for better terms and conditions. The employer pushed back hard, refused to negotiate after a legal crew election had taken place and were declared an unfair employer by International President Loeb. A full-blown strike ensued, with simultaneous picket lines in three Los Angeles locations. It got pretty ugly with the employer attempting to replace everyone.

Local 695 took up the charge to support the five-man sound crew honoring the picket line. These guys are real heroes. Lead by their department head, Doc Justice, and his crew, Jason Wells, Kenny Beane, Jim Gomes and Reese Wexler. They never faltered. They understood the risk and the weight of their commitment.

As Doc Justice said, "We know that all strikes are tough on the crew, and we know that this strike is more difficult than most. Through all of the nasty displays of posturing that production has displayed, we have all strengthened our belief that this is a fight worth fighting. In time, we'll detail all of the efforts made against us, but for now, know that I'm proud to fight with the support of my crew, and the support of my Local. We will continue to Hold for Audio, and Fight for Justice. Thank you all."

I'll revive an old affirmation: Right-on!

When these guys took a stand, Local 695 made it a first priority to man the drive in support of the job action. At Business Rep Scott Bernard's direction, Laurence Abrams and Joe Aredas Jr. established a 24/7 command post, calling out the troops to show up, in real numbers every day. They called on our Social Media Committee Chairman, Chris Howland, and Director Devendra Cleary CAS to work their networking skills to the max and the membership responded beautifully. There were many days when

From the President

Local 695 alone was providing 70% to 80% of the members on the picket lines, as we coordinated closely with the West Coast Office leadership of Vanessa Holtgrewe and Steve Aredas.

We have proudly risen as a "Go-to" Local when it comes to delivering a focused organizing campaign. We are stakeholders in this organization. Our stock rises and falls in direct proportion to the participation we contribute. Thanks for showing up. L695 solidarity is being noticed broadly. Keep it up!

Fraternally,
Mark Ulano CAS, AMPS
Local 695 President



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Our Contributors



Thomas Curley CAS

After graduating film school and working in broadcast engineering for a few years, Thomas moved from upstate NY to Los Angeles to pursue a production sound career. He has been mixing features, docs and television since 2001.



Lorenzo Millan

Lorenzo began his career as a Boom Operator more than twenty years ago in his hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. His work includes award-winning productions such as *Homicide: Life on the Street*, *Something the Lord Made* and *The Wire*. Lorenzo is currently sound mixing the fourth season of the hit show *House of Cards*.



Ben Osmo

After ten years recording projects from documentaries to drama at the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), Ben went freelance in 1985. That's when he started his career as Production Sound Mixer on feature films, including *Dead Calm*, *Strictly Ballroom*, *Lorenzo's Oil*, *Babe, Babe: Pig in the City*, *Oscar and Lucinda*, *Peter Pan*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Happy Feet 2*, *The Sapphires* and *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Ben is also a founding member of ASSG (Australian Screen Sound Guild), lectured and mentored at AFTRS (Australian Film Television and Radio School) and the New York Film Academy Australia, Sydney Campus. Ben is also a keen musician and singer/songwriter and writes and performs whenever time permits.



Tom Varga

Tom has been recording movies for close to thirty years. After graduating with a degree in communications from Temple University in 1986, he started in the industry in Philadelphia. He moved to Los Angeles for a few years in the early '90s and settled back in New York where he is now currently based. Tom is originally from Lake Placid, New York, where he can be found either on a mountain bike or in a kayak.

Photos courtesy of the respective contributors.

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I.A.T.S.E. Local 695 Production Sound Technicians, Television Engineers, Video Assist Technicians and Studio Projectionists

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and L.A. Central Labor Council

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From the Business Representative

The New Contract

The IATSE and the West Coast Studio Locals sit down to hammer out a new Basic Agreement every three years. Both sides come in with a list of proposals that address working conditions on production, cost issues and the continuing support for our Pension and Health plans. In 2012, we worked hard to shore up the monetary shortfalls we would have experienced in the Pension and Health plans.

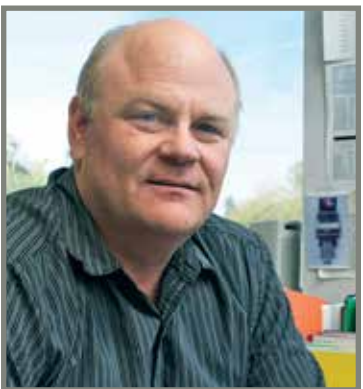
The commitment for the 2015 contract negotiations was to address quality of life issues. We focused on the long hours and short turnarounds all IATSE members experience working production. President Loeb made an impassioned speech to bring the effects long hours and short turnarounds have on the health of our members and their families. I only wish every rank-and-file member could have witnessed his fire and passion. With this speech the negative effect of long hours and short turnarounds became very real in the eyes of the AMPTP.

The Producers agreed that this is a real problem but seem to stall when working out a solution. The Basic Agreement will now include a side letter, "Guidelines Regarding Extended Work Days." This will address how sleep deprivation affects your driving but it falls short of saying that sleep deprivation has the same effect as driving while alcohol-impaired, yet the employer refuses to bend on the long hours worked. The IATSE has been very successful including the 10-hour daily turnaround and 56-hour weekend turnaround in one-off contracts with the Low Budget producers and all contracts in Canada. President Loeb asked why production companies could make their low-budget shooting schedules work, however, under the Basic contract, the major studios just can't seem to do it.

The last day of negotiations went twenty-four hours straight, fighting over several issues, not least

of which was the long hours and short turnarounds. In the end, we were able to achieve many significant gains, but sad to say, the Rest Period/Callbacks was not one of them. The battle is not over. The spotlight is very bright on this issue and I see a time when the employers will acknowledge this and work with us to achieve a more healthy and safe working environment and give back our weekends.

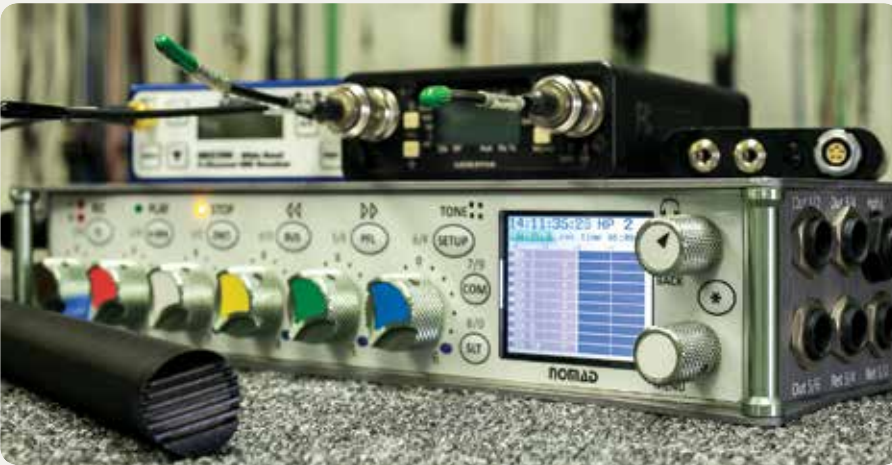
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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Two Members Invited to Join AMPAS

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) has invited Local 695 Mixers Thomas Curley CAS and Mary H. Ellis CAS into AMPAS membership. The Academy extends invitations to those "who have distinguished themselves by their contributions to theatrical motion pictures."



Local 695 Young Workers Committee Hosts First Event

On Saturday, June 20, a group organized by the Young Workers Committee, headed by Eva Rismanforoush, Timothy O'Malley and Rebecca Chan, met at the top of Lake Avenue in Altadena to hike the Sam Merrill trail to the ruins of the Echo Mountain House.

In 1894, professor Thaddeus Lowe built a resort in the mountains which included the Echo Mountain House, with 70 sleeping rooms, a 40- by 80-foot social hall, a dining room, souvenir shop, Western Union office, bowling alley, billiard room, barbershop and shoeshine stand, accessible only by a funicular railway. The hotel burned to the ground in 1900.

The first-ever IATSE Young Workers Committee was formed to identify young leaders and give young union members a greater understanding of the responsibilities of leadership. Local 695 implemented the committee as a community building tool and to integrate new members. More events are being planned.

2016 Membership Directory



Information for the Local 695 Membership Directory 2016 will be collected on October 2, so make sure your information is up-to-date. Log on to www.local695.com to add or change the information in the print, Web public and Web members-only directories.

In Memoriam

BRUCE SOLBERG

Y-7 Service Recorder,
Television Eng/Video Assist
June 4, 1943 – Deceased 2015

NELSON WEBER

Projectionist
September 4, 1947 – April 10, 2015

JAMES "JIMBO" R. YOUNG

Y-1 Sound Mixer
February 13, 1970 – June 30, 2015

ARTHUR ALLEN NAMES

Y-1 Sound Mixer
July 25, 1925 – August 9, 2015

67th EMMYS

Local 695 honors the art of production sound through the success of all the Emmy nominees.

The Creative Arts Emmys will take place at the Microsoft Theatre at L.A. LIVE on Saturday, September 12, 2015. FXX will broadcast a two-hour version of the awards show on Saturday, September 19, at 8 p.m. ET/PT, encoring at 10 p.m. ET.

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (ONE-HOUR)



Better Call Saul "Marco"

AMC
Nominees: Phillip W. Palmer CAS,
Larry Benjamin CAS, Kevin Valentine
Production Sound Team:
Patrick Martens, Zach Sneesby



Downton Abbey Episode 9

PBS
Nominees: David Lascelles,
Nigel Heath, Kiran Marshall
Production Sound Team:
Jim Hok, Duncan Craig, Peter Allen



Game of Thrones "Hardhome"

HBO
Nominees: Ronan Hill CAS, Richard Dyer,
Onnalee Blank CAS, Mathew Waters CAS
Production Sound Team: Simon Kerr,
Jonny Waite, Daniel McCabe,
Bradley Kendrick, Kelly Stewart



Homeland "Redux"

Showtime
Nominees: Dieter Keck, Nello Torri CAS,
Alan Decker CAS, Larold Rebhun
Production Sound Team: Bert Roets,
Clair Hesom



House of Cards "Chapter 27"

Netflix
Nominees: Lorenzo Millan,
Nathan Nance, Scott R. Lewis
Production Sound Team: Randy Pease,
Chris Jones

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE



American Crime Episode 11

ABC
Nominees: Ben Lowry,
Rick Norman, Ryan Davis
Production Sound Team:
Misty Conn, Shawn Harper



American Horror Story: Freak Show "Magical Thinking"

FX Networks
Nominees: Bruce Litecky CAS, Joe Earle CAS,
Doug Andham CAS, Evan Daum
Production Sound Team:
Steve Huerstel, Jack Bigelow,
Wade Summerford



Bessie HBO

Nominees: Jim Emswiller, Roberto Fernandez, Damian Volpe, Ed Cherney,
Evyen J. Klean
Production Sound Team:
Thadd Day, Maaiké Snoep, Mark Agostino



Houdini Night 1

HISTORY
Nominees: Tamás Csaba CAS,
Onnalee Blank CAS, Ken Burton CAS
Production Sound Team:
Gábor Máté, Milan Tuska,
János Csáki, János Csáki Jr.



Texas Rising Night 4

HISTORY
Nominees: Santiago Núñez,
Christian Cooke CAS, Brad Zoern CAS
Production Sound Team:
Leon Sandoval

Names in **bold** are Local 695 members

67th EMMYS



OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A VARIETY SERIES OR SPECIAL



The 57th Annual Grammy Awards

CBS

Nominees: Tom Holmes, Eric Johnston, John Harris, **Eric Schilling**, Mikael Stewart, Ron Reaves, Tom Pesa, Michael Parker, Pablo Munguia, Josh Morton, Bob LaMasney

Production Sound Team:

Michael Abbott, Rick Bramlette, Jeff Peterson, Andrew Fletcher, Phil Valdivia, Andres Arango, Robert Brogden, Billy McKarge, JP Velasco, Steve Anderson, Craig Rovello, Bill Kappelman, Mike Faustino, Mike Cruz, Peter San Filipo, Ric Teller, Damon Andres, Eddie McKarge, Paul Chapman, Ray Lindsey, Bruce Arledge, Greg Ferrara, Kirk Donovan, Dave Bellamy, Grant Greene, Corey Dodd, William Bellamy, **John Arenas**, Joe Watson, Bob Milligan, **Steve Chavez**, Ray Porter, Joel Singer, Max Feldman, Mark Linett, Robert Wartinbee, Stacey Hempel, Brian T. Flanzbaum, Fred Coury, James Spezialy, Greg Price, **Hugh Healy**, Peter Dahlstrom



Late Show With David Letterman

Show 4214

CBS

Nominees: Kevin Rogers, Harvey Goldberg, Tom Herrmann, Seth Mintz

Production Sound Team:

Gary Kiffel, Pete Pelland, James Murray, Larry Zinn, Pierre DeLaforcade, Mike Muller



The Oscars

CBS

Nominees: Paul Sandweiss, Biff Dawes, Tommy Vicari CAS, Kristian Pedregon, Patrick Baltzell CAS, Pablo Munguia

Production Sound Team:

Michael Parker, Bob LaMasney, Emily McDonnell, **Hugh Healy**, Douglas Wingert, **Jeff Peterson**, Ric Teller, Steve Anderson, Jeff Fecteau, Debbie Fecteau, Bruce Arledge, Dan Vicari, David Mounts, Eddie McKarge, Larry Reed, John Perez, JP Velasco, Larry Mah, Jenny Cote, Oren Hadar, Robert Brogden, Tom Pesa, Dave Bellamy



Saturday Night Live: 40th Anniversary Special

NBC

Nominees: Robert Palladino, Bill Taylor, Marty Brumbach, Ezra Matychak, Bob Selitto, Chris Costello, Devin Emke, Josiah Gluck, Bob Clearmountain

Production Sound Team:

Michael Ferrara, Tyler McDermott, Chris McKevitt, Patricia Reilly, Jason Spence, Michael Witzer



The Voice Finale Results

NBC

Nominees: Michael Abbott, Kenyata Westbrook, Robert P. Matthews Jr., John Koster, Ryan Young, Randy Faustino, Andrew Fletcher, Christian Schrader, Michael Bernard, Eric White, Michael Parker, Eddie Marquez, Bill Dietzman

Production Sound Team:

Robert Brogden, Matt Campisi, Jim Fay, Damon Andres, Tom Banghart, Jonathan Brooks, Michael Cruz, Michael Faustino, Alex Hoyo, Billy McKarge, Peter San Filipo, Steve Schuman, Jason R.E. Sears, Alan Vega, James Young, Tim Hatayama, Sterling Cross, Marlon Moore

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR A COMEDY OR DRAMA SERIES (HALF-HOUR) AND ANIMATION



Modern Family "Connection Lost"

ABC

Nominees: Stephen A. Tibbo CAS, Dean Okrand CAS, Brian R. Harman, David Michael Torres

Production Sound Team: Srdjan Popovic, William Munroe, Peter Hansen, Ken Strain, Corey Woods, John Sheridan, John Hays, Noel Espinosa, Brian Wittle, Devendra Cleary CAS, Steven Morrow CAS



Parks and Recreation "One Last Ride"

NBC

Nominees: George Flores CAS, John W. Cook II CAS, Bill Freesh CAS

Production Sound Team:

Kelly Ambrow, Mitchell Cohn, Valeria Ghiran, Ben Greaves, David McJunkin



Silicon Valley "Server Space"

HBO

Nominees: Ben Patrick, Elmo Ponsdomenech, Todd Beckett

Production Sound Team:

Corey Woods, Chris Diamond, George Flores CAS, Colin Campbell, Jaya Jayaraja, Laura Rush, Kelly Chulack



The Simpsons "Simpsonorama"

FOX

Nominees: Tara Paul, Mark Linden



Veep "Mommy Meyer"

HBO

Nominees: Bill MacPherson, Richard Davey

Production Sound Team:

Steve Saada, Travis Groves

OUTSTANDING SOUND MIXING FOR NONFICTION PROGRAMMING (SINGLE- OR MULTI-CAMERA)

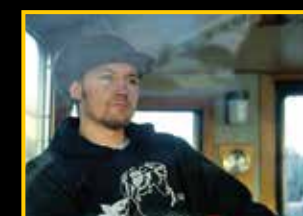


Anthony Bourdain "Parts Unknown"

"Jamaica"

CNN

Nominee: Brian Bracken



Deadliest Catch "Lost at Sea"

Discovery

Nominee: Bob Bronow CAS



Foo Fighters: Sonic Highways "Seattle"

HBO

Nominees: Fred Stuben, Jeff Fuller, Eddie Kim

Production Sound Team: Ian Wood



Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief

HBO

Nominees: Dave Mitlyng, Tony Volante

Production Sound Team: Mark Mandler, John Zecca



The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst Chapter 2: "Poor Little Rich Boy"

HBO

Nominees: Tim Hays CAS, Paul Marshall, Coll Anderson MPSE



Kurt Cobain: Montage of Heck

HBO

Nominees: Eric Thomas, Anthony Enns, Devin Golub, Jason Anderson, Steve Pedersen

Names in **bold** are Local 695 members

THE SOUND OF B I R D M A N

or
(The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)



The three of us figuring it all out: Tom Varga and Boom Operators Brendan O'Brien and Adam Sanchez work out the next scene. (Photo: Alison Cohen Rosa)

BY THOMAS VARGA

It was a great honor to receive the CAS Award for Outstanding Achievement in Sound Mixing for *Birdman*. Being nominated by my peers for a BAFTA Award, an Oscar and then receiving the CAS Award, makes the latter so valuable to me.

I had been approached by many talented mixers who asked me the same question: "How did you do it?" Well, hopefully, I will shed some light on the process.

Initially, I was asked by a line producer I had worked with on *Everybody's Fine* and the Washington, DC, portion of *Breach*. She informed me about the project and set up an interview at Kaufman Astoria Studios, where the



Clockwise from top: Michael Keaton stars in *Birdman*; Keaton and Edward Norton outside the St. James Theatre on 44th Street (Photos courtesy of Fox Searchlight Pictures); Boom Operator Brendan O'Brien working in a narrow hallway. (Photo: Atsushi Nishijima)

sets for *Birdman* were being built. I was familiar with Alejandro Iñárritu's work and thought the script was brilliant. I was looking forward to meeting him and working on the project.

The interview turned out to be one of the most surreal I've ever experienced. I entered a room with Alejandro, expecting it to be one-on-one. I was surprised to see several producers, the Production Designer, Kevin Thompson, and the Cinematographer, Emmanuel Lubezki "Chivo."

They were all in the room to collectively drive home the point that *Birdman* was going to be "impossible" to record. "I don't know how you're going to do it" was expressed to me many times. Chivo made a point of saying that he didn't think it would be feasible to use a boom because of the complexity of the shots. They were clearly concerned about the technical aspects of tackling such a nonconventional movie, and what that would mean for the soundtrack.

Luckily for me, one of our Producers, John Leshner, called James Gray, the Director of *The Immigrant*, a project in which we collaborated on a year prior. James said good things about me so I basically just told Alejandro that "whatever you guys throw at me, I can handle. I am not afraid." I also made it clear that I loved the project, was willing to accept the challenge and would be honored to be a part of their team.

Within fifteen minutes of leaving the studio, I received a call from the Line Producer, while on the subway home. "They loved you. We'd like to offer you the job." I didn't expect the decision so quickly. Taking a moment to reflect on what just happened, the last scene of *The Graduate* came to mind. Dustin Hoffman is on the bus after stealing Elaine away from her wedding. It was a "be careful what you ask for, because you just might get it" moment.

I met with my crew, Adam Sanchez and Brendan O'Brien, and it was apparent that in order to handle the challenges of this film, I would need to upgrade my wireless and bag rig. I decided on a wideband Lectrosonics VR Field unit with four different blocks, to go along with my SMs, SMVs and SMQVs. I have always believed that in New York City, the more blocks the merrier.

In my experience, the SMQVs can be too large to hide in tricky situations, although they are bombproof. I usually put the smaller SMs on women or use them with tight-fitting clothing on men. My bag rig included a Sound Devices 788 with a CL-8. I also invested in several Lectrosonics 401 and 411 receivers to match the cart-based Venue Field receivers. With this setup, if I couldn't work off the cart, I could grab the bag, go portable and not have to touch the transmitters on the actors. I could also record part of a scene outside on the cart and have the interior portion covered with a portable rig simultaneously. Luckily, I never had to do this on *Birdman*.



Left to right: Michael Keaton rehearses a scene with Steadicam Operator Chris Haarhoff, Director Alejandro Iñárritu and Director of Photography Emmanuel Lubezki. (Photos courtesy of Fox Searchlight Pictures)

I have an assortment of COS-11s and B-6s. My main cart now houses two 788s and a Cooper CS-106 with a seventh channel. The Main mix is on Channel 1, Iso's are 2 through 8. On *Birdman*, I used one 788 as my main recorder and a Fostex 824 as a backup. Yes, I know, the 824 is currently in a giant pile of unused 824s on the "Island of Misfit Toys." I used Schoeps MK-41s for all interior dialog and 416s and 816s for all the exteriors. The Schoeps CMT 5U was too long to use with the very low ceilings that were purposely designed to make the audience feel more "claustrophobic."

Effects gathering was one of the most fun parts of the job. A good friend and very talented sound mixer, Mark Cochi, lent to me a Holophone H2 7.1 surround Dummy head, for gathering Times Square sound effects. The locations department found us a couple of offices that were directly above Times Square. This allowed me to record many different interior perspectives with large crowds below. I recorded passes with the windows closed, partly open, fully opened and at different distances to the window; close, two feet back, four feet back, etc. Locations also found a theater in Times Square that would allow me to record the crowds entering before a Broadway play. Martin Hernandez and Aaron Glascock, our wonderful Supervising Sound Editors, were happy with all the ambiences I was able to record. Finding

the time to break away from the set to record useful ambience is often a challenge. Luckily, Alejandro was very adamant that the AD department budget time for us to gather these unique sounds.

I had set aside a good three weeks of prep time to incorporate all the new gear. However, on a Friday, almost a month before production, with piles of various cables and connectors lying on the floor, I received a phone call. "The director and producers would like you to be part of the rehearsal process." I thought "Wow, what a great idea." Then the bomb was dropped. "We want you to start this Monday, recording all of the rehearsals to the Alexa with the stand-ins running the lines."

I had a stress-induced out-of-body experience and all I could hear was "Come Sail Away" by Styx. I spent the next forty-eight hours straight building a better bag rig, accommodating seven receivers and a wireless boom option. I also had to make an Alexa input cable and a Comtek feed from the bag. I have almost exclusively worked off a cart, so putting this entire rig together in a weekend was a daunting task. After a soldering marathon and a groggy Monday morning, I had everything up and running and along with the rest of the crew, learned just how tricky these shots were going to be.

“ I had set aside a good three weeks of prep time ... However, on a Friday, almost a month before production, I received a phone call. ‘We want you to start this Monday.’ ”

I carried the bag behind the camera, exposed the lavs on the stand-ins and tried to figure out at what point in the shots we could utilize booms. I later found out that they had rehearsed in LA and used on-camera microphones which sounded awful. I was brought in to help Alejandro hear the stand-ins so he could gauge the timing of the dialog with the camera moves. This proved to be an invaluable experience in planning an approach to getting booms over the actors instead of relying on wires.

To me, it is a testament to Alejandro's vision to see how little the camera blocking changed from the initial rehearsals. We ended up bringing first team in to rehearse for a week before principal photography. This gave us yet another opportunity at squeezing in booms whenever possible. When we started principal photography, every department had a game plan and I don't think we could have pulled it off without the director and producers willing to pay us to be part of the rehearsal process.

There were many curveballs thrown along the way. One such curveball was an overhead LED light array that Chivo, our talented DP, wanted to use as his primary source in the St. James Theatre. This location was to be used for about three weeks of our schedule. The rig was quite amazing, a series of 12-inch by 12-inch LED panels, connected side by side and hung over the stage. This rig enabled Chivo to computer control the colors and effects of each panel separately. The problem with the rig was that each panel had a fan in it. Multiply that by 12 and you have 144 fans all hanging over the actors in a relatively quiet theater. I stumbled upon this rig one day as they were setting it up to test it.

This LED panel Chivo liked would mean looping the dialog, which Alejandro and I did not want. The producers thought I was being overly demanding until they learned that this same problem existed with the LED lighting rig used on *Gravity*, resulting in a lot of ADR.

They initiated a series of LED light tests, costing a fair amount of money with additional time and manpower. In the end, they found a company that manufactured a similar system that Chivo liked where all the fans could be switched off without the panels overheating. Many thanks to the producers for paying for these tests. I am extremely grateful to the grip and electric crews who always gave us a hand when needed. Their professionalism and talent never went unrecognized by my department and was a contributing factor in Chivo's Oscar win for cinematography.

We can only record what is in the room; if the room is noisy, our recordings include that noise. It doesn't make a difference what mics you use. All of the subtleties of the human voice;

the quiet breaths and sighs, the minute details, all add to the effectiveness of a performance. It is our job to capture it to the best of our ability, even if that means risking popularity. In the end, we can only hope that the battles we fight are appreciated.

Every day on *Birdman* was basically one shot. We would rehearse for six hours, eat lunch and shoot take after take until all the elements came together. It was the first time in my career that after breakfast, we could safely say, "Martini's up."

While each day posed a new set of challenges, there was one shot in particular that my crew was very proud of. It is when Riggan (Keaton) comes into the main entrance of the theater from outside, only in his underwear, so wiring him was not an option. The camera covered four areas. In rehearsals, I decided that we would need a third wireless boom operator. Luckily, our wonderful line producer approved that request.

The third Boom Operator, Teferra McKenzie, was waiting in the entrance and there was a plant mic for the actress behind the ticket booth. Teferra covered Riggan in the first room and was able to let the camera sneak through a narrow doorway before entering the room and covering four other actors. We had another plant on the arm of the wheelchair. Once Riggan opens the door to the theater, I cross fade to Brendan, booming Riggan as the camera is over Riggan's shoulder at the stage. Brendan boomed Riggan's lines until the camera pulls a quick 180, revealing where Riggan came in. At this point, Brendan has no chance of clearing the shot. We got him in wardrobe and left him in the scene. During this four-second pan, Brendan has to grab a line, then move into a sitting position and hide his pole behind several extras sitting in the same row. While Brendan is doing this, Adam Sanchez is fully extended with a twenty-two-foot pole on stage behind the curtains. The moment the camera pans off the stage, I cue Adam to move, Brendan sits and Adam sprints down a set of stairs into position over Riggan. Cross fading to Adam's pole, the boom handoff was very fast and we were lucky to get what we did. Adam had to continue with a couple of 360-degree moves around the actors. This also required another magic disappearing act off stage somewhere. Sound magic; it all worked, but only by fractions of a second.

Birdman was a collaborative effort. There were many talented sound people in all the stages of post production. It's wonderful to know that the tracks you work so hard for are going to safe and competent hands. Often, the problem with giving post so many tracks is that they don't know how to build them as you intended. The *Birdman* post crew did great justice to my production recordings, along with adding a brilliant sound design and final mix. To all my talented new friends that I had the pleasure of meeting during this awards season, thank you. It was a pleasure and let's do it again soon.

The Traveling Road Show on



by Ben Osmo

Our mission was to record dialog and sound effects while constantly in motion. We set up three multiplex systems to give me a range of one to three kilometers (about two miles). This became a necessity after the first run through with the Armada, where they took off to a distance of seven kms (four miles).

I relocated all my equipment into a small 4WD van and followed the action. The crew dubbed it **The Osmotron**.

The Osmotron

My setup included four Sound Devices 788T, each with a CL-8. I did a mix down to each recorder as well as a two-track mix to a 744T for dailies. There were six Lectrosonics Venue receivers on Blocks 21, 22, 23 and 25, as well as two VR Venue Field receivers on Block 24. One Mackie 1604 for monitor mixes, four Lectrosonics

Boom operator Mark Wasiutak and stunt rehearsal in front of the War Rig



Ben Osmo in The Osmotron in Namibia

IFB transmitters and three video monitors all powered by a Meon, a Meon Life and one more UPS (see Schematic #1).

When traveling, the equipment was powered by a 2k generator mounted on the back of the vehicle.

I was happy that all of the 788Ts had SSDs (Solid State Drives), as most of the filming was off road and they performed exceptionally well under extreme vibration. They were in road cases that were well insulated. The 744T was suspended in a pouch, so it could absorb the many bumps in the Namib Desert for six months.

The eight principal cast riding on the War Rig wore Lectrosonics SMV or SMQV transmitters on Block 24 with DPA 4061 lav mics. I find the DPA microphones quite transparent and the best for wind protection.

Andrea Hood, the genius Set Costumer, helped us enormously by designing a system to attach the packs and pre-sewing the lavs on costumes. I am forever indebted to her help. We supplied the lavs and packs at the end of each shooting day, as Andrea had to have the outfits washed.

There was an antenna hidden inside the cabin of the War Rig, with a coax cable to the interior of the tanker to two Lectrosonics Venues, Block 24 with their outputs to twelve Lectrosonics UM400 transmitters on Block 21. RF Engineer Glen English in Canberra, Australia, multiplexed the RF out of Block 21 to a specially designed RF combiner/booster.

All this was in an "E Rack" ruggedized road case with a Meon UPS. In the back of the case was a cooling system, as it got to above fifty degrees Celsius (122 F) and very dusty inside the tanker. We called the road case the Sputnik (see Schematic #2). There was a 10k generator in each War Rig for special FX, lighting and sound, so I was able to tap in to this to run the Sputnik.

From the RF combiner/booster, one coax went up the inside of the War Rig, where we hid a transmitter aerial on the top, above all the metal, giving a 360-degree line of sight.

We built Sputnik #1, Sputnik #2, as well as Pod #1 with one Lectrosonics Venue and six UM400s. A small generator or the power from the Edge Arm camera car could run Pod #1.

Additionally, we had a Mini Pod, with three channels, that was battery-driven for use on small vehicles. Three Lectrosonics 411 receivers Block 25 and three UM400 transmitters on Block 23.

The Sputniks and Pods were shifted to different vehicles, as required. The main cast were on Block 24 and kept their wireless packs as



Amazon case with six Lectrosonics VR receivers



The Edge Arm camera crane in action

they moved between one of four War Rigs that were in different stages of art department breakdown, for different camera and driving configurations, or special FX requirements.

At the same time as recording dialog, we also tried to grab as many sync sound effects as possible. We placed a lot of hidden microphones in the cab, in the engine bay, near exhausts, transmissions, on the top of the War Rig, in other vehicles and on the vast supporting cast.

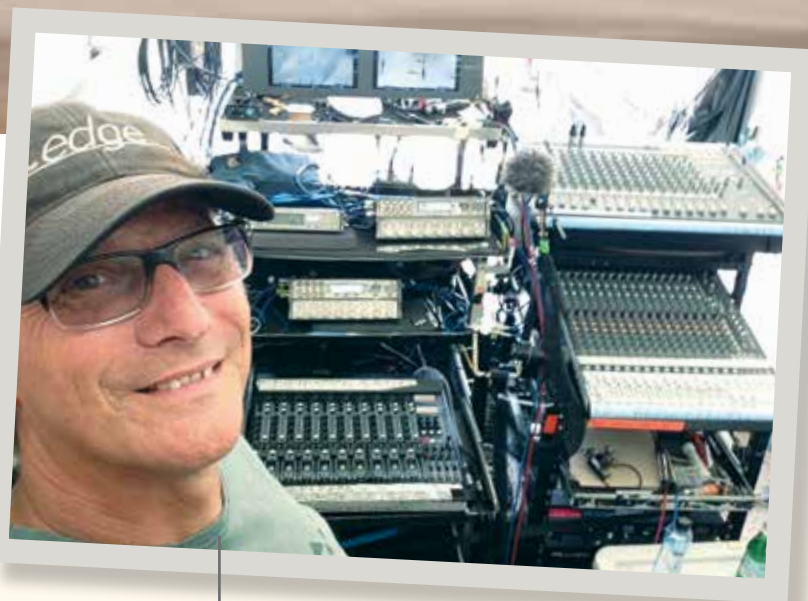
I was in The Osmotron, with Erwin our van driver, a local safari guide. We never got stuck anywhere!

There were times, in close proximity, that I was able to record direct with the Venue Fields on Block 24 and bypass the repeaters. But all the exterior vehicle microphones were direct, either on Block 24 or Block 25.

Traveling long distances meant the walkie-talkie repeater towers were often out of range. I provided my Lectrosonics wireless and IFB comms to Director George Miller and First AD-Producer PJ Voeten. They too were great distances apart and now able to have hands-free communication. Additionally, Cinematographer John Seale, two of his Camera Operators and the First ACs were on this system.

George might be in his van with a few monitors, traveling behind the action and discuss shots with PJ and John and the Edge Arm crew that were shooting other angles. Or, George would be in the Edge Arm vehicle, while PJ and crew were on the War Rig or other tracking vehicles.

This also helped some of the cast. Immortan Joe (Hugh Keays-Byrne) would be in the extremely loud Gigahorse vehicle, where you could barely hear yourself think. We put



Ben and his setup in Sydney, Australia

a DPA 4061 microphone inside his mask and an IEM (In-ear monitor) to a Lectrosonics IFB receiver, so conversations were able to take place.

Iota was Coma on the Doof Wagon; he played the double neck guitar with flames. Iota wrote some guide temp music with drums and guitar whilst in Namibia, on Pro Tools. I imported the sessions and transmitted him a mix via an earwig.

Iota had no dialog, but wore a mic so he could communicate with George Miller, PJ Voeten, my crew and me. The vibrations were so intense when traveling off road, my laptop kept crashing. I quickly downloaded the cues to my iPod, it worked well and later, to an iPad. There were also four drummers that had to keep time, they also had IEMs.

Mark J. Wasiutak was the Key Boom Operator; he was also on the first *Mad Max*. Mark traveled wherever the cameras were set up. Mark was able to troubleshoot the War Rig, slate the cameras as backup and record sound effects. And of course, as the Key Boom Operator, Mark was in charge of booming whenever we had traditional setups.

For timecode, Ambient master clocks were used with GPS antennas set to Greenwich Mean Time. All the cameras and Denecke timecode slates were supplied with Ambient Lockit boxes. My 788T recorders and the 744T were jammed from the same Ambient master clock.

The two-track mix down was transmitted to our genius Video Assist, Zeb Simpson, who was in a larger truck with an RF trailer that had a forty-five-foot telescopic tower with microwave and UHF antennas.

Sam Sardi, our sound department RF Engineer, modified one of my IFB receivers with an SMA connector to facilitate a connection to a large Wizzy antenna that was also on the forty-five-foot mast. This gave us a range of at least five km (three miles) to send a mono guide to video assist, so Zeb could compile the action and drama sequences from both main and action units for Director George Miller. Using our IFB comms, Zeb could talk to George remotely. Thanks to support from Greg Roberts, of Lateral Linking Broadcast Pty Ltd, Zeb was able to show George cuts, loop playback and show various live cameras, including the Action Unit.

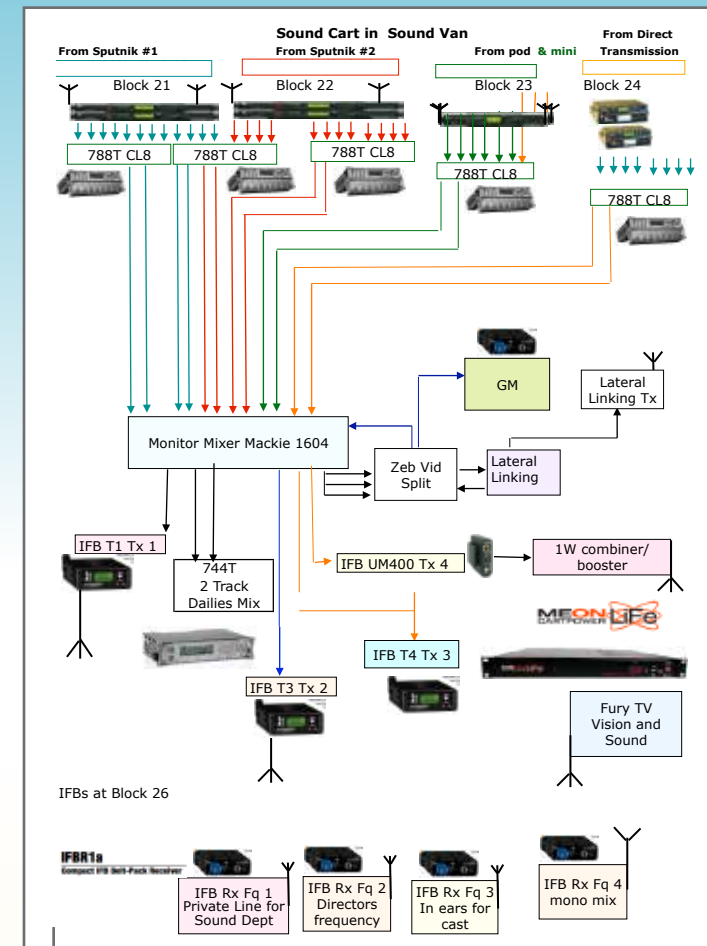
On the last weeks in Namibia, we set up my assistant, Oliver Machin, to record specific vehicles with a 788T, hard-wired and multitracked. Oliver was fastidious with his recording and logging of his sound reports. He did a great job.

Derek Mansvelt was the Action Unit Sound Mixer from Cape Town who, with Boom Operator Ian Arrow, duplicated a smaller version of my rig in a van and chased the stunt teams and vehicles around the Namib Desert for a few months, recording vehicles, explosions and crashes.

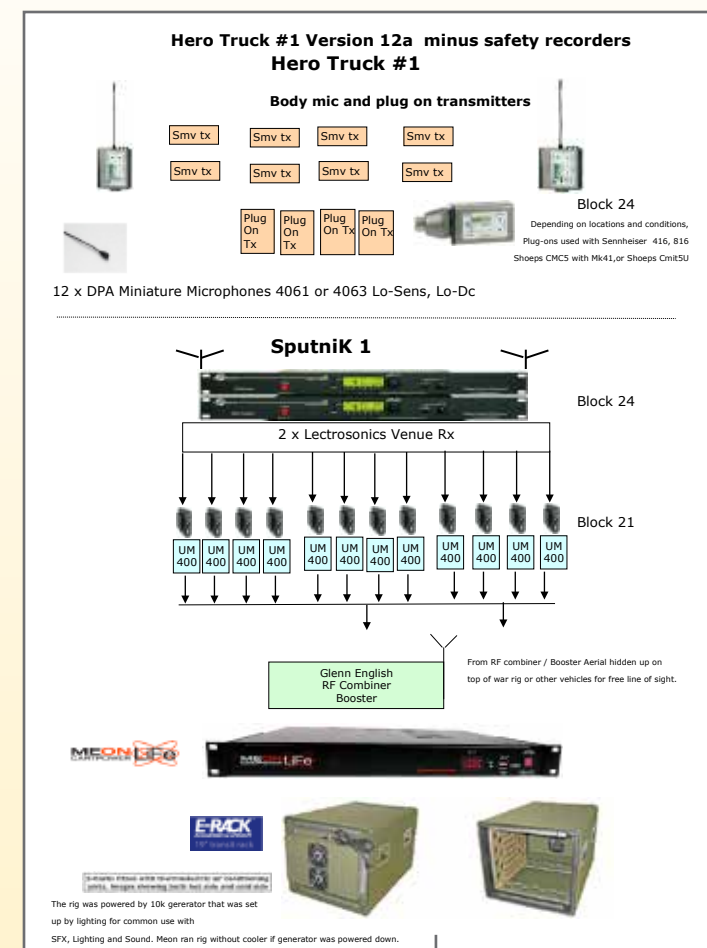
Finally, we were off to Cape Town Studios, where green screen components were filmed. It was still a hostile environment; in order to simulate the wind and dust, large Ritter fans were used.

I continued to mix in the The Osmotron as there was no time to reconfigure. We parked it outside the soundstages, cabled inside to Video Assist and our antennas. Along with the usual comms and talkback for George, PJ and the camera crew, we also needed a VOG with handheld Shure SM 58 microphones with on-off switches into Lectrosonics plug-on transmitters. I continued to use the in-ears for Immortan and Coma, and smaller battery-powered speakers, placed in vehicles for communication and playback.

After a break for a few months of editing, we regrouped in Australia, for the crucial Citadel sequences. The exterior Citadel location proved a challenge again, as it was spread out, 100m wide by 200m long (328 x 656 feet). We rented two large speaker stacks for the VOG, from Slave Audio in Sydney and our gentlemen grip department built us scaffold towers on either side of the large set.



Schematic #1



Schematic #2

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Back row, from left: Assistant Gareth Evans, Boom Shanti Burn, Key Boom Mark Wasiutak, Boom Paradox Delilah, Assistant Sam Davies. In front: Production Mixer Ben Osmo

The Citadel sequences proved fun for the Boom Operators, as they were in costume and makeup so they could wander amongst the crowds with the costumed Steadicam crews. It was a great opportunity to record large crowds with multiple booms.

The interior of the Citadel was back in the studio, with very large sets as well as tunnels. The VOG was still in use as well as in ears, for drummers.

I reconfigured my equipment to two sound carts and no longer required the Sputniks and Pods.

The two carts contained two 788T with CL-8, a 744T, Pro Tools 10, a Sonosax 10SX, Mackie 1604 and Yorkville PA. Three Lectrosonics Venues, four Lectrosonics 211 receivers, four Lectrosonics UM 200 transmitters (for additional comms), eighteen Lectrosonics SMV and SMQV, DPA 4061 and 4063 lavaliers. Four Lectrosonics IFB transmitters, along with twenty-four receivers. Boom microphones were Schoeps CMT 5U, Schoeps CMC5 with MK41, Sennheiser

416 and 816. A Nagra 4.2 for loud vehicle crashes a Meon UPS and Blackmagic HD monitors.

I must acknowledge Sound Designer Wayne Pashley and his team at Big Bang Sound, who initially took on the job and constructed the fundamentals.

Later, Sound Designer David White came on board with his team at Kennedy Miller Mitchell and continued to work closely with George Miller to come up with the brilliant tracks.

In fact, hats off to all the Post Production teams and Re-recording Mixers in Australia and the United States, who did a bang-up job on the final mix.

It was a real adventure and I feel privileged to have been a part of this iconic film and very proud of the amazing international cast and crew that contributed to this film above and beyond.

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Above: Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright on 'Air Force One.' At left is the original 4K image. At right is the same frame with the booms digitally removed.
Below: Robin Wright and Paul Sparks, season three. (Photo: David Giesbrecht for Netflix)



HOUSE *of* CARDS

& Digital Boom Pole Removal

by Lorenzo Millan

I began my career in 1993, in a circuitous path, growing up in Baltimore, Maryland. My family owned an old reel-to-reel tape recorder that was purchased to teach my father English, but my older brother and I commandeered it, where we recorded ourselves playing instruments.

Thanks to a geometry teacher in high school, who screened 16mm prints of *Battleship Potemkin*, *Birth of a Nation* and *Un Chien Andalou*. He encouraged us to make two Super 8 movies a semester and on graduation, I decided to apply to NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. I signed up for a class called "Sound Image." I was hooked and for the next four years, was the Sound Mixer on many of my fellow student film projects.





Left and right: Kate Mara and Kevin Spacey, season one, with boom and with boom digitally removed. (Photo: Melinda Sue Gordon for Netflix)

After returning to Baltimore, I taught a film class for two years at my old school and later, was introduced to Camera-man Richard Chisolm, who gave me the phone numbers of several local Sound Mixers. I joined IATSE Local 487 and worked on commercials and then Second Unit for NBC's *Homicide: Life on the Street*.

Bruce Litecky, the mixer on that show, asked me if I wanted to boom the fifth season. That was 1996, I was so green, however, I dedicated myself to it and ended up being the main boom operator in the Baltimore area.

In 2010, when *The Social Network* came into town, I worked with Mark Weingarten for several days. Mark called me again in 2012 to ask if I would like to work on a new show, *House of Cards*, as a Utility. I was trying to do more mixing and declined his offer, going on to mix an independent movie, *Better Living Through Chemistry*.

Shortly after finishing that project, Mark asked me to come in to do Second Unit on *House of Cards*. Mark listened to a few of my takes and told me he was going home for his son's birthday and would I be available to cover him for that week? I'll be honest, I was scared, but I said yes. The week went off without a hitch and Mark told me he was leaving to do a feature and wanted to recommend me as his replacement. Mark was even kind enough to leave much of his equipment package. It was a steep learning curve, but I grew with confidence.

I was asked back for the second season of *HOC*, it was now 'my' show. One of the producers had mentioned putting

booms in the shot, but I was unclear of the parameters. When David Fincher came to visit, I asked him to explain the process and had a good discussion about it with the director and some producers. We tried it while Fincher watched and explained when to and when to not use it.

The opportunity to put booms in the frame helps in many ways. First, we get good quality sound and don't have to wire the actors. Secondly, the directors don't have to sacrifice a performance by having to loop a scene later. Thirdly, other departments can take advantage of the same principle with a stand, flag or light.

There are several hard rules to "busting the frame." If the shot has some movement at the top, then we look at the possibility of dropping the mics in, once the move has ended. Sometimes it isn't practical to do this just for a few lines of dialog, as the majority will have to be on a wireless, due to distance from the boom, lighting, and/or geography.

If the wide shot is static, then we'll bust the shot from the top and decide how we are breaking down the scene with the two booms.

We consider the vocal levels of the actors and what their tendencies are. How much of the room is covered by the cameras. Sometimes we end up with a triangle of people so we'll decide who to wire and who is the best to cover with the booms.

If it's crucial dialog in the scene, like a speech by Francis Underwood, I want to get those on the boom.

We look at the boom movement. Are there reflections, shadows on the actors? Is the boom crossing through moving foliage in the windows? It's an organic discussion with Boom Operator Randy Pease, Chris Jones, our Second Boom/Utility, and the A Camera Operator, Gary Jay.

Sometimes after a rehearsal, Gary will say, "Well, you can bust this one."

We make sure the 1st AD and the Director know we need a few seconds at the top before action. We'll roll a clear frame without the booms and count off a second or two. Then Gary says, "OK, come on in boys." We do the same at the end of a scene too.

I'm benefiting from David Fincher, who is the innovator and I am just riding that wave. The Post Production Supervisor, Peter Mavromates, and the current Post Supervisor, Hameed Shaukat, and their teams of Editors and VFX people have been enormously helpful.

I always record every line on camera or off. We have also built a small ADR booth on our stage, located in Edgewood, Maryland, about 20 minutes northeast of Baltimore.

We use the PIX System, LLC, so the editors in Los Angeles can upload a QuickTime file and a cue sheet and I can record the actor with my Zaxcom Nomad and a Sennheiser MKH 40.

I began the second season with a Cooper 106+1, recording onto a Deva 4. I use Lectrosonics wireless and Sanken lavs.



From top: Randy Pease, Boom Operator; Lorenzo Millan, Sound Mixer; Chris Jones, Utility/2nd Boom, season three. (Photo: David Giesbrecht for Netflix); Lorenzo Millan. (Photo: Nathaniel E. Bell)

The boom microphones are the Sennheiser MKH 50 and sometimes the 60 and even the 70. I love the sharpness of Sennheiser and the MKH 50 in particular. For podiums, we use the Sennheiser MKH 40 or the same Shure SM57VIP dual microphones that match the presidential podium.

Sanken CUBS are for car interiors. They are very natural sounding and can be positioned very easily.

I moved to the Zaxcom Fusion 12 and the Mix 12 for season three.

We don't use slates on *HOC*. Everything is linked by timecode and metadata. The workflow begins with my metadata; episode, scene and take numbers in tight collaboration with our Script Supervisor, Robb Foglia. The Assistant Picture Editors use my file name for the clips.

Fortunately, we have a very experienced camera crew and great Camera Operators who look out for things that I can't always see. *House of Cards* treats the sound department and my tracks with great respect. The stages and sets are quiet. The actors expect quiet as well. Many times before I've had a chance to tell the AD department about noise issues during a take, an actor has already spoken about it. It is the way it should be.



by Thomas Curley CAS

Mastering Reel #1 at
Technicolor, Paramount.

People are astonished that principal photography on Whiplash was only nineteen days and a \$3.3M budget, so every day had to count. Add to this a first-time Director, Damien Chazelle, and a complex music intensive plot and the degree of difficulty increases. When the script and actors are top notch, then there is no room for compromise.



Craig Mann, Ben Wilkins and Thomas Curley CAS pose backstage with the Oscar®.
(Photo: Todd Wawrychuk/©A.M.P.A.S.)

Pulling off the shoot took a lot of logistics and the AD team led by Nic Harvard was instrumental in making all of this work. I have worked with Nic several times in the past, so when I took his call to do *Whiplash*, I knew it would be a challenge, but he put me at ease.

I do not have a musical background. After finishing film school, I worked as a licensed Broadcast Engineer for television; my approach is both artistic and technical. Music is like a foreign language to me. After reading the script, I knew that the sound department would have our work cut out for us; we had to knock this out of the park.

I met with Director Damien Chazelle, and we spoke about the problems he had in shooting the short version, which won the Sundance Film Festival Short Prize in 2013 and how we would approach this for his 'big screen version.'

Re-recording Mixers Craig Mann and Ben Wilkins as well as Music Editor Richard Henderson were already on board and working on prerecords of the drums, and the orchestra. We decided that it would not help to have a properly mic'd drum set and jazz band in the school environments, so doing live recording was out. The other major challenge would be the start-stop band practice scenes.

For these scenes, Miles Teller would wear a wire, and the boom would dance back and forth between J.K. Simmons and the drum kit. The rest of the music scenes were 95% playback. We recorded every playback take with the boom and faded the track down, rather than just stopping playback, so that any resonance, room tone and noises from the real instruments, were part of the production track. Additionally, Craig Mann recorded impulse responses on each set to get a precise model to apply reverb and the results were very convincing.

I improved my package for *Whiplash* and purchased a Schoeps CMIT 5U microphone, a Lectrosonics OctoPack, with four SR dual receivers and a Sound Devices CL-9 controller. I had previously owned a Yamaha 01V96 and a Sonosax SN-S eight-channel console. I gave them both up for a much more streamlined workflow with the CL-9. While it lacks some functions of a traditional analog console, the elegance of the system more than makes up for it. I like that it controls the mix track in the 788T without having to lose an iso track. It works off of the same power as the 788T, which is important to me, as I never know what our power source will be.



The drum practice room below the stage at the Orpheum.

Even if my cart power and NP1 systems go down, I can still mix off the CL-9 with the internal 788T battery.

Our tech scouts revealed how we were going to pull off a nineteen-day shoot. Two weeks of our shoot were at the Orpheum Theatre in downtown Los Angeles. The building proved amazing for the art department to build different sets on different floors. We had at least ten different sets in that building. All we had to do was hop in the elevator.

There was one spot where I knew there would be a huge problem, the Jazz Club, where Andrew reunites with Fletcher. The set was built in the lobby of the Orpheum Theatre. The back wall where the band would play did not exist, so the art department agreed to my request to build a double wall. The resulting air gap served to dampen the incessant bus traffic on Broadway. There was some bleed through, but it made the difference between rolling off the lows or sending the five-page scene to ADR.

By the end of the nineteen days, everyone on the crew knew they had worked on a really great film, no matter where it ended up. The level of professionalism and collaboration was exemplary. I felt like this was the set I dreamed of working on when I was driving from upstate New York to Los Angeles many years ago.

Whiplash turned out to be the gift that keeps on giving. I was thrilled to learn that it would open the Sundance Film Festival. I was on a mission to get into that screening. Just

five minutes before the film started, I got the very last ticket and witnessed a standing-room-only crowd blow the roof off as the end credits rolled. What a rush.

A few weeks later, we were BAFTA and Academy Award nominees! I have never been so pampered in my life. We were thoroughly surprised to win a BAFTA, a unique and unequalled pleasure. This was also a special honor for Ben Wilkins, who is from the UK. We were suddenly backstage, a whirlwind of press and then partying until the early morning.

Fast-forward to the Academy Awards. I couldn't believe when the day came to walk the red carpet. I brought my dear mother, who couldn't have been more proud. I spent most of the ceremony convincing myself that there was no way we could win. Statistically, no film this small had won the Academy Award for sound in thirty years. The amount of talent and money we were up against was intimidating too.

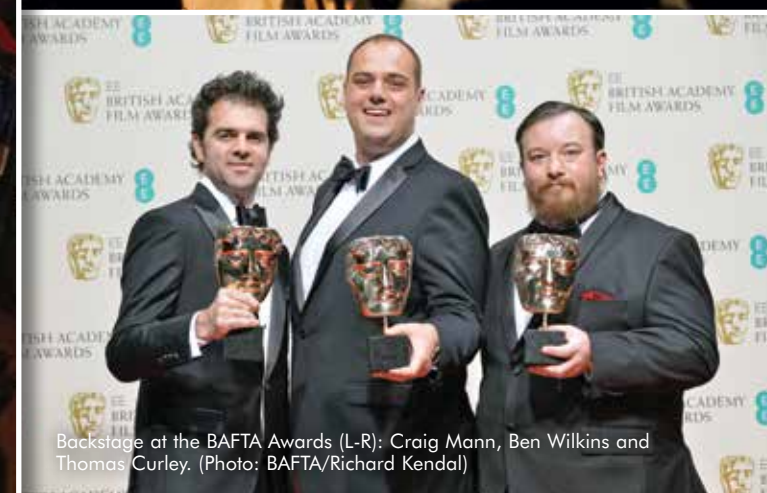
When they called our names, it was an overwhelming rush of pride and terror. I now had to gracefully walk to the stage in front of a 1.5 billion television audience! We were told that only one of us could speak, but when they didn't play us off, I had to get a shout-out to my crew. It is still somewhat surreal to see these trophies in my living room. I got to check off several items from my bucket list, thanks to *Whiplash*. My life will never be the same. However, looking forward, I am excited about the great things I'll be working on to keep challenging me much further.



Damien with DP Sharon Meir blocking out the final scene on the Orpheum stage.



Mix cart and playback



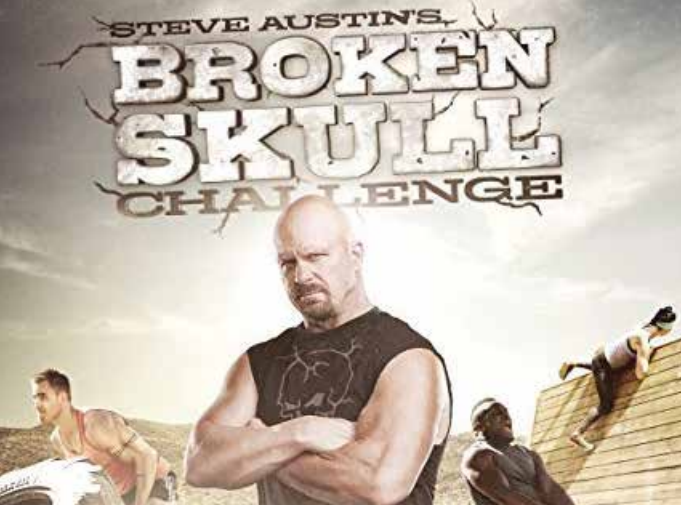
Backstage at the BAFTA Awards (L-R): Craig Mann, Ben Wilkins and Thomas Curley. (Photo: BAFTA/Richard Kendal)



Mom and my Oscar



Director Damien Chazelle working on a playback stem with Music Editor Richard Henderson backstage at the Orpheum Theatre.



Picket Line Wins a Contract for Steve Austin's Broken Skull Challenge

by Laurence B. Abrams

Steve Austin's Broken Skull Challenge is a successful reality show with great ratings and a bright future on Viacom's Country Music Television Network. Weekly contestants compete on a difficult obstacle course, each vying for the \$10,000 weekly prize. Drama, victory and heartbreak ensue.

But what the *Broken Skull* production and post-production crews lacked through three seasons of production was a contract that assured fair wages, excellent healthcare, a pension to provide security for their families and other features we know to be a part of an IATSE contract. And so this led to a request from the crew for representation by the IA.

Typically, when this happens, the IA asks the producer, in this case, 51 Minds Entertainment, to sit down and have a conversation. But this time, those attempts were denied.

And so began the picket. Three picket lines, in fact, spread across thirty-five miles from North Hollywood to Agua Dulce, filled with representatives from the IA and from nearly every IA Local in town.

Those of us who attended these picket lines will have noticed a few things. It was hot out there. And the days were long. But the spirit, camaraderie and sense of purpose was nothing short of electric. Another thing that was hard to miss was that Local 695's disproportionately large representation on the picket line. The turnout from our members was incredible and at times, it seemed like it was all 695 and gaining in strength as each day went on.

But the most significant presence we saw was the *Broken Skull* audio crew, all five of whom had left the show to take a position on the picket line ... Audio Supervisor Doc Justice, Production Sound Mixers Jim Gomes, Jason Wells and Kenny Beane, and A-2 Reese Wexler. To a man, it was obvious that these guys believed in *Broken Skull* and in 51 Minds Entertainment and they wanted to do all they could to help bring success to both. But they wanted a union contract too, and they set out to prove that these two things are not mutually incompatible. Doc and his team were ever

present on the picket and gave unflinching inspiration to everyone who had the good fortune to speak with them.

That commitment, mixed in with a hefty dose of perseverance across ten days of picketing and eventually, negotiating, resulted in an IA contract. The editorial crew is back at work now, with good union benefits and several months of work ahead of them. For the production crew, a few hurried days of scab labor had already enabled the show to finish off this season but each and every one of them is guaranteed first right-of-refusal when the show picks up again in a few months, with a contract that assures benefits and a schedule for raises and contract improvements going forward.

Many unscripted productions on network TV are already working under IA contracts but the contract achieved by the *Broken Skull* crew during those ten hot days in July has laid down a crucial foundation in the move toward crews on cable television productions finally getting union representation, as well. This is just the start.

The observations made and lessons learned are in some ways, very simple. We, as crew, are part of a fantastic community of incredibly talented women and men. Producers who want to have access to this great talent but are worried they can't possibly produce their show under a union contract ... actually can. We truly can overcome what appear to be insurmountable obstacles when both sides finally sit down to talk. Solidarity and perseverance are a pair of forces that combine with enormous power. And we won't back down.

Top: Local 695 Field Rep Joe Aredas, *Broken Skull* Audio Supervisor Doc Justice, *Broken Skull* Sound Mixer Jason Wells, *Broken Skull* A-2 Reese Wexler, *Broken Skull* Sound Mixer Kenny Beane and Video Engineer Jordan Kadovitz

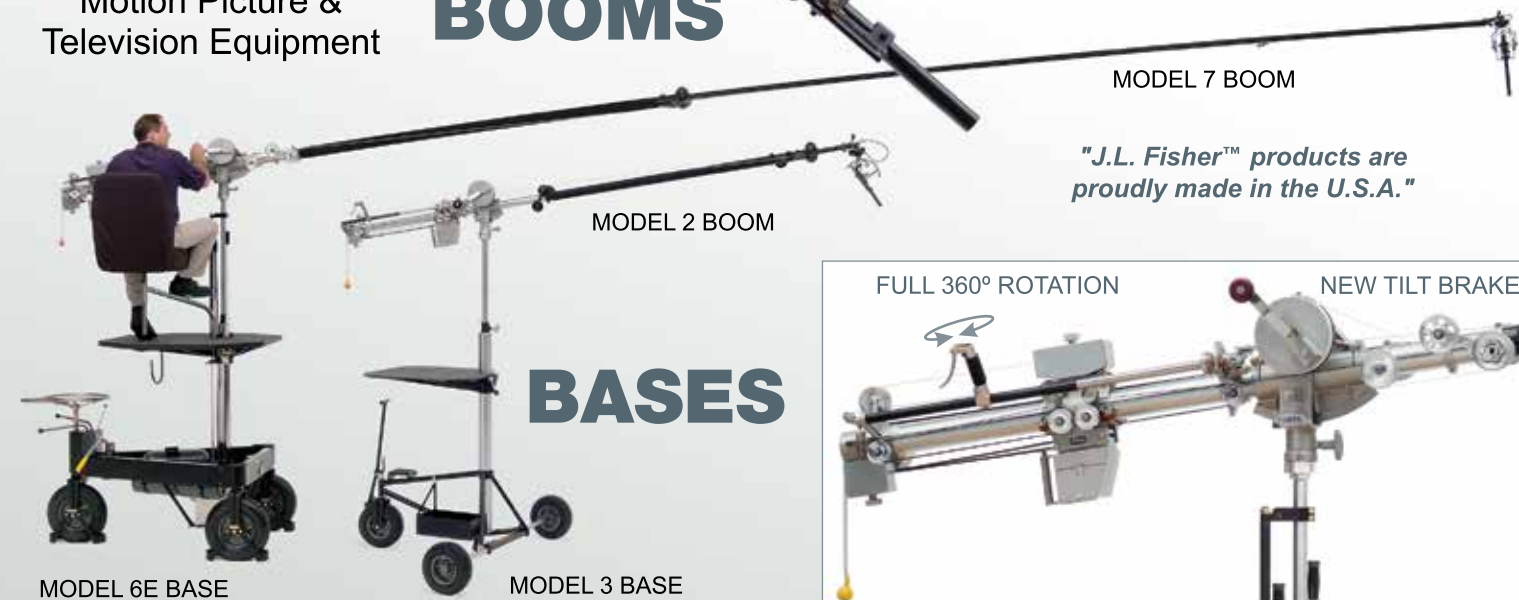


Right: Doc Justice, Audio Supervisor on *Broken Skull* Challenge, walks the picket line on day ten of the strike, just two days before the contract was signed.

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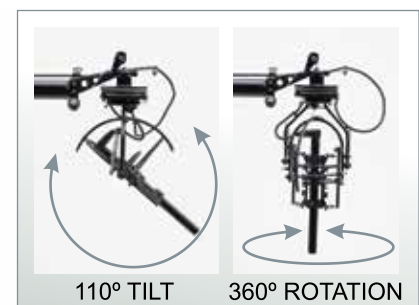


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