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PRODUCED BY CONFERENCE 2013
PRODUCED BY
The Official Magazine of the Producers Guild of America / May - June 2013

J.J. Abrams

“Figure out what makes the story different, and then go further.”

In this issue:
Getting biblical with Mark Burnett
Tracey Edmonds goes digital via YouTube
PGA ProShow finalists
SLEEP LIKE A BICOASTAL BABY.

INTRODUCING FLAT BEDS ON SELECTED FLIGHTS TO JFK.
Deep breath.

Big smile.

**Hello!**

I hope that our regular readers can forgive my “introduction routine” (which I like to refer to as “smeathing”) but for many people, this will be the first issue of Produced by magazine they’ve ever held in their hands, and when I meet a new friend or supporter, I like to put my best foot forward.

Welcome to the first-ever Produced By Conference (PBC) issue of our PGA magazine, which not only marks the first official conjunction of our two “Produced By” brands, but also represents the payoff of our magazine’s move to bimonthly publishing. We’re now putting out six issues per year (up from five), which makes us quite possibly the only print publication in the country that’s actually adding pages and issues! Producers and producing team members always want more information, more insights and more tools with which to do their jobs, and that’s what we aim to provide, in our magazine and on our website, as well as via our Produced By Conference.

Although it may seem to run counter to the Guild’s “green” orientation, the decision in fact was motivated by the desire to save paper. In the past, the Conference provided a glossy program book to contain the weekend’s schedule of events, session descriptions, participant bios and other relevant information. This year, we’ve moved that copious amount of information over to our mobile app, and instead, have provided Conference attendees with this special edition of our magazine. This issue has been designed to reflect and supplement the content of this year’s Conference ... witness our cover story on one of the event’s cornerstone speakers, J.J. Abrams, and a major feature on another one of our most anticipated guests, Mark Burnett. Additional feature stories include a piece on Tracey Edmonds, who elaborates on her experience as a YouTube channel pioneer in her Conference session entitled “Universal Remote: The (R)Evolution of Digital Channels.” Likewise, one of our Conference moderators, David Robinson, expands on the content of his session (“Are You Getting Your Fair Share?”) with informed observations on the effects of vertical integration on producer share participations. Other features provide a look back at the past four years of the Conference, as well as a de facto guide to the participants in the popular PGA Production Showcase (ProShow) market.

In short, this magazine serves two purposes. For those who have chosen to join us at the Conference, this issue serves as a vital companion to the content they will see, hear and experience at the PBC. For those who are unable to attend, we hope that you will consider this magazine a small but significant piece of our special event that we can share with you. I’d like to think you’ll be excited enough by the material herein to commit to joining us next year, where I’ll be happy to greet you in person. But for now,

Deep breath.

Big smile...
PRG IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF THE PGA PRODUCED BY CONFERENCE
Raise your hand if, back in 1998, you predicted that the creator of the WB’s earnest college drama *Felicity* would go on to take over *Star Wars*.

Yeah, we didn’t think so.

Only a handful of filmmakers ever achieve the status of becoming a household name. Has J.J. Abrams achieved that status? It probably depends on the household. If it includes an individual who’s ever wondered how they’d fare as a Jedi, or a Starfleet officer, or an island castaway facing down “the Others,” then there’s a fair chance that you could drop Abrams’ name at the dinner table and be received with nods and smiles all around. And if Abrams isn’t yet a household name in your neck of the woods, listen closely, because he’s knocking on the door.

Abrams’ current pop culture pre-eminence is no overnight development. After first breaking in as a feature screenwriter (with credits including *Regarding Henry*, *Forever Young* and the blockbuster *Armageddon*), Abrams tacked towards television, resulting in the 1-2-3 punch of *Felicity*, *Alias* and *Lost*. The success of *Lost*, whose intricate plotting and dense backstories stoked a passionate fanbase, emboldened the industry to get behind Abrams’ creative risks. The result was work like 2008’s formally radical found-footage monster movie *Cloverfield*, and FOX’s unsettling science-gone-wrong series *Fringe*. Despite their affectionate embrace of genre conventions, Abrams’ stories remain uncommonly accessible, as evidenced by his triumphant reconception of *Star Trek* in 2009, and the deeply heartfelt *Super 8*, by any account the greatest Steven Spielberg movie not actually directed by Steven Spielberg. This year has seen Abrams achieve something like the sci-fi singularity, entrusted with the stewardship of George Lucas’ *Star Wars* franchise even as he shepherded *Star Trek Into Darkness* across the finish line. (As of this writing, the film has grossed more than $150 million in the United States alone.)

This is the 60th in *Produced by*’s ongoing series of Case Studies of successful producers and their work. In advance of his appearance at the 2013 Produced By Conference, J.J. Abrams took a break from putting the finishing touches on *Star Trek Into Darkness* to sit down with *Produced by* editor Chris Green in his post-production suite on the Fox lot. The resulting discussion (which included a detour into an SFX stage to finalize a sound cue) encompassed everything from the formative experience of a childhood tour of Universal Studios, to the guiding ethos of his thriving company Bad Robot, to the unlikely eleventh-hour origins of *Lost*. 

Photos by Zade Rosenthal (except where otherwise indicated)
You grew up in the industry. Was it always a foregone conclusion that you would be a part of the family business? Or was there a decision that was made somewhere along the line?

It was always a dream to have it be more than a hobby. I was born in New York and moved to Los Angeles when I was 5. My father worked for CBS selling commercial time, so he was really on the business side of things at the network. When I was about 8, I went to Universal Studios and I realized that what movies and TV shows were things you could actually make. We had a camera at home, and I got the bug. Around the same time, my father started getting interested in production as opposed to commercial sales; he became an assistant to a producer of TV movies, and soon became an associate producer. As a kid, that feeling of knowing, ultimately, that it’s an illusion, it’s not real, and yet, you’re doing something that’s aware of someone’s specific point of view, the eyeline to where a coin or a card may be hidden. You’re doing something very technical, but at the same time, it’s to the effect of creating an effortless magical event. I always thought it was interesting to be able to show that just ever form it took — the use of some sort of technical sleight of hand to affect an emotional response. So the form it took was stupid magic tricks, and equally stupid Super 8 movies. Later came plays, short plays that were non-shows. All through college, I was writing and constantly working on different ideas, whether it was ideas for animation, or when computers became available, how could I use computers to create an illusion? Even something as basic as writing an incredibly simple program to try and see if you could write words and sentences and have a computer respond as if it was talking back to you. But whether it was doing some sort of primitive visual effects, making movies, doing plays… whatever it was, I loved the process of creating things. Though how I would ever do that as a profession remained a mystery to me.

Your early credits are as a writer, principally. How did you come to choose that as your entry point into the business? I always knew what I wanted to do. But of course, I was completely uncertain as to what doing it as a job was. I remember when I ran into a friend, Jill Mazursky, and it turned out she had sold a few screenplays. I immediately begged her to write something with me. I wanted to take advantage of the first friend I knew who was professionally screenwriting. In a typically charitable moment, she agreed to work with me, and we wrote and sold a treatment for a TV series. I don’t remember what it was the first opportunity that felt concrete, as an engagement with the business. I wasn’t exactly strategizing, thinking that I would use writing as an entry point, but it certainly made the most sense. I knew I wasn’t going to be an actor, I knew that while I wanted to direct, no one would let me. Writing felt like the most promising and most tangible path. I was just hoping to get to a place where maybe I could write something, and they’d ask, well, who should we say? I could say, “Well, I want to.” Luckily, that’s what happened.

Your career arc is more like a pendulum swinging: You started in motion pictures, then tilted toward TV, and now swinging back to features. I guess the question is, what leads to that first transition? Because it’s in TV that the industry started to take note of you, at least as a producer.

I met a woman, Kate McGrath, who became my wife. Very early on, she reminded me to write the thing I love. It was sort of the most obvious reminder, but it was a good one and I needed it. Kate had a great idea for a story, I was having dinner one night with my good friend Matt Reeves. I said listen, I have this idea for this story about this girl who graduates from high school and follows this boy. It was a rough idea, and we decided at the dinner that it would be better for a TV series than a movie. We sketched out what the pilot could be, and in a couple of weeks, I wrote the first draft of the script. Matt had notes that made it better, so I did another pass, and we had a script. Again, it wasn’t a strategic thing. I just came from the inspiration of what this thing could be. I knew nothing about television series. So we sent it to our agent, who gave it to Imagine Television, which was just forming at the time. Tony Krantz was the new head of TV at Imagine, and he had never produced anything before; he had been an agent about 10 minutes earlier. So we went and met with the WB network. It was a brand-new network. It had Buffy and Dawson’s Creek just starting. We had a meeting, we left the script on the table. A couple hours later, we got a call saying, “We want to make it.” We were suddenly producers of a television pilot. We didn’t really know how to approach it. We had made some movies before, and Matt had directed. That was always the agreement. Matt was going to direct, and I would write it. So we ended up doing this pilot. And when they picked up the show, the WB did this thing that was contractual or expected or even asked that was really extraordinary. They had Bob Bibb and Lew Goldstein as heads of publicity at the WB, and what was amazing was that they made their series seem like events. Their posters were beautiful. They treated their TV shows the way other companies treated films. I don’t remember seeing this before they did it: Right on the posters, “from Executive Producers J.J. Abrams and Matt Reeves.” They put our names out there in a public way. We never asked for that and never expected it. But it made their shows seem important by celebrating the people who were creating them… Kevin Williamson, Joss Whedon, and us. At the time, it was a very smart move, I think, in terms of trying to elevate what they were doing. But also, it was this unexpected publicity. When ABC did Alias, they did a similar thing. Again, it was never anything that was contractual or expected or even asked for. Being a feature screenwriter, truly you are a cog in a massive machine. I know what it’s like to be fired. I know what it’s like to be re-written. I know what it’s like to be asked to re-write. I know what it’s like to be used as a pawn in a much bigger game. But to have was just a dream. I felt like I had found the director’s name as big as anything,
How were you introduced to Damon?

What happened was, on that Friday, I told Lloyd that I had an idea, and that it wasn’t going to be *Cast Away*. A lot of survival stuff, but the island itself was a character. There was a hatch in the island. It was a place that had a history and mysterious elements which would be discovered over time. There was something terrifying in the jungle. It was an incredibly vague pitch, but it had feeling, and tone. Lloyd said, “I love it,” which, I admit, surprised me. Monday, I met this guy named Damon, who I had only heard of. Heather Kadin, who had worked at ABC, had talked about him on a number of occasions... “You gotta meet this guy Damon, he’s a writer on *Nash Bridges*. He’s great.” I realized that I couldn’t work with any of the writers from *Alias*, because it was in production. So literally, it was a shot in the dark, let’s see what happens. Damon comes in, we immediately hit it off, wildly. We start working on the outline over that week. There were some other writers pitching it, helping out at the time, just throwing out ideas. By Friday we had an outline. We turned it in to ABC. Got the green-light. But it was still just an outline. We still had to write the script, cast it, location scout, film it, and post and deliver it, all in under 12 weeks. So it was a very, very, rushed, intense, but also very special and sort of weird experience. It felt like there was no time to second-guess any of it. A huge amount of money, $13 million, was being spent on the two-hour pilot. The pilot got the show off the ground, but ultimately, Damon and Carlton Cuse ran the series. Because their writing, over the six years the show was on, is ultimately what galvanized the thing. The pilot aside, the show didn’t grow roots with one or two episodes; it was the years of work they put in. But I could tell while we were shooting it that it wasn’t going to be a normal pilot, job, or show. It was epic in scale, a big cast, visual effects, huge locations. It really didn’t feel like any show I had seen. There was magic in the experience. Not to say that there weren’t similar feelings while doing *Felicity* or *Alias*. But for some reason, the *Lost* experience really did feel like a different kind of thing.

It seems almost ironic that this eleventh-hour piece that got put together should serve as the foundation for this intricate mythology that ultimately gets built out over the course of years and years. True, but I do think that that is ultimately the leap of faith you take. When you begin a story, you think you may know everything. Think about Dickens, turning in one chapter at a time to get published in the paper. But you’re building upon mythology you just created. People will argue about how much any given author knows at the start. But some details are planned and planted, and some are not. I’m friends with certain filmmakers and certain authors who have jumped into famous movies or novels and didn’t have a fucking clue how it would resolve. And yet when you read or see the thing, there’s an inevitability to it. You feel like, *come on, you must have known*. But on a number of occasions — and this is the only consistency I can see with this — when I’ve been lucky enough to get to talk to them about it, they’ve said, “I did not know how that story was going to end, or how that movie would end.” And in a weird way, that’s the power. Because if you don’t know, and you’re writing it, then that’s what the audience is feeling. If it’s clear to you, it’s clearer to the audience than you want it to be. The power in great storytelling is just going “ooh, I’m so intrigued how this will turn out.” The piece, through osmosis, takes on a kind of electricity and uncertainty, not knowing what’s going to happen.

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*Produced by*
I remember Lucy Fisher talking about *The Fugitive*, how they had half a script when they started shooting and they didn’t know what was going to happen by the end. I remember all the nightmare stories and whispers during the shoot of that movie. It came out, and it was so perfectly entertaining and wonderful. It worked for them. It worked for *Casablanca*. It’s worked again and again. Of course, it also has not worked more times than it has. That’s the nature of the game.

What was the nature of your contribution over the later years of *Lost*, once Damon and Carlton were in full command of the ship?

Once it got up and running, essentially nothing. The way that Bad Robot works, we find people we desperately want to work with… people who are deserving storytellers and filmmakers, people who want to and should be running their own shows. We desperately try to find stories that are interesting to us, and find the right people who want to tell those stories. And then we support it in the early stages… Giving notes and suggestions on re-writes, with casting, with crewing, support with networks and the studio, and all that stuff. Once the show finds its groove, which is usually halfway through the first season, things kind of click. Sometimes it clicks earlier, sometimes never. But once a show is working, it’s not just working because we’re doing our job. It’s working because the showrunners are doing their job. With *Lost*, Damon had completely relatable doubts — deeper than doubts — about its longevity. But thanks to his and Carlton’s tenacity and brilliance, they told a story that, I think, endures. My job at that point was to not get in their way. I was doing *Mission: Impossible 3* and *Star Trek*. They were working on *Lost*. I was working on prepping *Super 8* and other shows, and they were still working on *Lost*. They stayed on that show and did an incredible job. I have always been very proud to be associated with the show, to set the tone and begin the process, but I also remain profoundly grateful for these two incredibly deep-thinking people navigating that thing to the end.

When you talk about trying to find projects for deserving showrunners, or projects for people, where does it start? Do you tend to find people you want to find projects for? Or do you find projects that you need to attach great storytellers to?

What gets me excited is the story. If someone pitches something and I feel “I want to watch that…” that’s a good sign. We say no to most things. We say no if we feel we can’t do it justice. But if Alfonso Cuarón comes in with a pitch for story, one that he desperately, deeply cares about, and has our hair standing on end? You fight for that. That’s a no-brainer. We certainly misstep too, and I can live with that. We go left where we should have gone right, all the time. But it’s like when I first met my wife. I fell in love with her before I even sat down with her at the table. I felt like it was going to be inevitable that she was going to be married, and I would hate the guy… and she wasn’t. Or she was dating someone… and she wasn’t. Or she would be an actress. And she was none of those things. It was like an impossibility. When you feel something, and you just know it’s the right thing, it’s not a discussion. Obviously, we have to do this. That’s the thing we try to look for.
You started in movies as a screenwriter for hire. How has it felt returning to the medium as director and as a producer? What was the process like, engaging with the medium the second time around?

I got sort of pulled back into movies on a more serious basis as a director. It really was Tom Cruise who presented me with this offer to direct a *Mission: Impossible* movie. I don't know anyone who would have done that. It was this crazy, surreal chance to do the thing I had always dreamed of doing…of being offered this thing by someone who believed in what I could do, almost more than I did. I had directed pilots and episodes of a TV series. I knew I could do it. I just couldn't believe that anyone would take a chance to prove that wrong or right. I got to write the script with Alex Kurtzman and Bob Orci, who I had been working with on *Alias*. And we got to jump on this movie. It was as much fun and as challenging as anything I could ever dream, and while we were doing post, I was asked, here, on this lot, if I would be interested in taking on *Star Trek*.

In terms of dealing with *Star Trek* as a producer, you’re dealing with a property that has a fully developed mythology and a fan base that is deeply familiar with this mythology. Trying to reboot seems like a massive challenge in terms of the multiple masters you have to serve, in terms of both the new, contemporary audience and the very vocal fan base. How did you approach the problem of threading that needle?

Because I was not a giant fan of *Star Trek*, I was sort of a more perfect audience member, I think, than someone who might have been a bigger fan. I knew a little bit about it. I had seen some episodes, but I never really got on board the Enterprise. So I thought, if I was excited about the story, someone else who might not care about *Star Trek* could get excited as well. Damon and Alex, in various forms, were far more familiar with the stories than I was, and Bob Orci was a rabid fan.
What were the challenges this time out?

Last time, we were being compared to some films and series that were seen as not particularly successful. There were people saying it was dead on vine... “Really, you’re going to do Star Trek?” People said it was a moribund franchise. I thought, great, there’s only one way we can go. This time, on Into Darkness, we were in our own shadow a little bit. The feeling of wanting to make this one bigger and deeper was tricky. Because just having it be bigger, or louder, or more pyrotechnical doesn’t mean it will be any good. You have to figure out what makes the story different, and then go further, test the characters in a new way. I hope it still has the same sense of humor, and honors what’s come before, but doesn’t make the classic sequel mistake of assuming a broad familiarity with the world. You always have to start over. Not only did we not want the audience to have to know about the TV show, we didn’t want people to have to have seen our first movie. It was just a very tricky thing, to totally be aware of the baggage coming with this. It’s hard to let go of the right pieces, hold on to the right pieces, and make the whole thing seem effortless. It was far more of a challenging project. And it oddly felt more satisfying, this one, than the last.

I can’t let you go without talking about Super 8. How do you go about the process of creating personal art, or personal craft, in a medium that is so collaborative and has so many moving parts? How do you keep that personal element front and center?

Obviously, that movie was born out of a very personal experience of making Super 8 movies as a kid, and of the friends I would do it with. And it’s also about having a kind of love of the horror movie vibe that Steven supported with his Amblin films... this otherworldly force that intrudes into a familiar setting. The idea was to tell a story that was a love letter to both the actual experience of making those films, and also to everything that inspired making those films. That was a weird sort of personal goal, or mandate. It always was. But Steven was the first call I made, even before I had a story, just to ask “Would you want to do a movie called Super 8 with me?” From the very beginning, the movie was a collaboration with Steven. We worked together to figure out what the movie would be, what the tone would be. Would it be Stand by Me? Was it going to be The Goonies? It was the first time I really got to work with him as a filmmaker.

What was that experience like?

Incredible. We first met in 1989. I remember seeing how he worked as a producer. He would go from meeting to meeting — he had a ton of plates spinning — and he came to each meeting with incredible instant enthusiasm, ideas, and specificity. It was like when you meet with a doctor or an agent and they make you feel like you’re the only patient or client they have. It was cool to be one of his “patients.” At the same time, he was directing Tintin, working on War Horse, producing various TV pilots... It felt familiar, that kind of pace. I learned so much from him. I saw how well he was able to not just focus, but constantly pitch certain things that he was never wedded to, never mandated, but simply offered. It was an incredible thing to work with someone I had admired for so long, then had become friends with. I was of course, terrified the whole thing would go south and I’d ruin everything, but it ended up being, for both of us, a very special collaboration.
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In a small village two hours south of Ouarzazate, Morocco, on the edge of the Sahara Desert where the road ends and a sign reads “Tombouctou: 52 days by camel,” Mark Burnett is shooting his first day of scripted television on *The Bible*. Instead of biting off an easy first day on set to get his crew gelling together, he’s scheduled an enormous battle scene over three days with hundreds of militiamen, horses, and chariots.

“Why not?” he says incredulous when questioned about that strategy. “It’s got to be done. You might as well make it exciting for people—it’s epic stuff.” This naiveté, according to Burnett, was one of his secret weapons on the shoot. He had many, as you will see.

Heralded as the man who changed the television landscape at the turn of the century with record-breaking audiences for *Survivor*, followed by ratings giants *The Apprentice*, *Shark Tank*, and *The Voice*, to name only a few, Burnett is blazing a new trail into scripted television—but not just any scripted television. He has taken on a narrative that is near and dear to billions of people around the world—the Bible. It’s like learning to ride a bicycle, but instead of starting with a trip around your neighborhood block, you enter the Tour de France.

*The Bible*, a 10-hour miniseries, highlights significant stories in biblical history including Noah and the ark, the parting of the Red Sea, Joshua conquering Jericho, and the life of Jesus. After 2½ years of preparation, Burnett and his (predominantly) UK team finally landed in Morocco for five months of production on a $22 million budget. That’s $2.2 million per hour on a period drama with a cast of 80 actors, hundreds of extras, hundreds of animals, covering thousands of years of history, and hundreds of special FX shots (Network dramas spend $3 million–$4 million per episode, with HBO’s *Game of Thrones* breaking the $7 million mark).

How did he do it? That’s where the tale gets interesting.

**GETTING THE STORY RIGHT**

In 2000, Jerry Bruckheimer reached out to military historians and participants involved in Pearl Harbor to gather feedback and buy-in before ever shooting one frame of film. Burnett did the same with *The Bible*. He assembled 40 faith leaders and biblical scholars for advice, including Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, Bishop T.D. Jakes, the Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, and Cardinal Wuerl, who recently elected the new pope. He not only benefited from their historical and biblical acumen, but he was able to make sure Christian leaders felt heard.

**NOT JUST A SURVIVOR**

Mark Burnett’s Leap Into Scripted Television

by Deanna McDaniel

In a small village two hours south of Ouarzazate, Morocco, on the edge of the Sahara Desert where the road ends and a sign reads “Tombouctou: 52 days by camel,” Mark Burnett is shooting his first day of scripted television on *The Bible*. Instead of biting off an easy first day on set to get his crew gelling together, he’s scheduled an enormous battle scene over three days with hundreds of militiamen, horses, and chariots.

“Why not?” he says incredulous when questioned about that strategy. “It’s got to be done. You might as well make it exciting for people—it’s epic stuff.” This naiveté, according to Burnett, was one of his secret weapons on the shoot. He had many, as you will see.

Heralded as the man who changed the television landscape at the turn of the century with record-breaking audiences for *Survivor*, followed by ratings giants *The Apprentice*, *Shark Tank*, and *The Voice*, to name only a few, Burnett is blazing a new trail into scripted television—but not just any scripted television. He has taken on a narrative that is near and dear to billions of people around the world—the Bible. It’s like learning to ride a bicycle, but instead of starting with a trip around your neighborhood block, you enter the Tour de France.

*The Bible*, a 10-hour miniseries, highlights significant stories in biblical history including Noah and the ark, the parting of the Red Sea, Joshua conquering Jericho, and the life of Jesus. After 2½ years of preparation, Burnett and his (predominantly) UK team finally landed in Morocco for five months of production on a $22 million budget. That’s $2.2 million per hour on a period drama with a cast of 80 actors, hundreds of extras, hundreds of animals, covering thousands of years of history, and hundreds of special FX shots (Network dramas spend $3 million–$4 million per episode, with HBO’s *Game of Thrones* breaking the $7 million mark).

How did he do it? That’s where the tale gets interesting.

**GETTING THE STORY RIGHT**

In 2000, Jerry Bruckheimer reached out to military historians and participants involved in Pearl Harbor to gather feedback and buy-in before ever shooting one frame of film. Burnett did the same with *The Bible*. He assembled 40 faith leaders and biblical scholars for advice, including Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, Bishop T.D. Jakes, the Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, and Cardinal Wuerl, who recently elected the new pope. He not only benefited from their historical and biblical acumen, but he was able to make sure Christian leaders felt heard.
Produced by

“You’re not dealing with a made-up story,” Burnett says. “It’s something people rely on for their lives. It’s a sensitive subject. You have to understand how to deal with the story so that it’s uplifting for people in their deepest seeded beliefs.”

Did Burnett feel he could do justice to a sacred text? With all these folks surrounding him, the answer is yes.

NEVER CAVING IN
ALWAYS LOOKING UP

When asked any kind of question about difficulties or doubts, Burnett just won’t be dragged into the mire. He turns every negative into a positive. His enthusiasm is decisively uncommon, even fascinating. When asked if there was ever a time when he thought he might not be able to get The Bible done, he starts laughing.

“Never! Why would I say that? Seriously! No, that’s nutty. Then I shouldn’t start, right? Were there issues coming up? Six months on location on the edge of the Sahara; running out of days; having to spend more money; actors’ schedules; snakes! But we just had to solve those issues.”

On The Bible, there were four distinct blocks of shooting. Within those shooting blocks, there were 10 different groups of actors that were unrelated to each other — using a script that was constantly being rewritten on set. The scheduling issues were enormous. Added to this, the desert location was either so hot and dry that crew members had to drink gallons of water each day, or it surprised them with sudden rainstorms that destroyed sets which had taken months to construct.

“If you don’t expect that,” Burnett says bluntly, “if you’re not into solving those kinds of problems, you probably shouldn’t be doing this kind of work. You should just stay and work on the lot at Warner Bros. or something like that.”

His producing partner, actress Roma Downey (Touched by an Angel), represented another secret weapon on set, someone whose narrative experience guided the emotional through line of the biblical story. “He has the ability to be calm when things go wrong and he’s very solution-oriented,” she observes. “He has a very efficient use of energy. If a problem has already happened, he asks, how do we fix it? He doesn’t use up energy in being upset that it’s happened.”

THE (not so) BIG LEAP INTO SCRIPTED

Burnett calls reality television “non-fiction storytelling.” One might rather call it partially non-fiction storytelling; producers set up a plot line, drop real people into unreal circumstances and see what happens. Then they create a story in the editing room.

Conan Stevens, left, as Goliath, discusses a take with Burnett.

“From left: Burnett watches the action with cast members Langley Kirkwood (David) and Dhaffer L’Abidine (Uriah).

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So what is the correlation between (semi) non-fiction and fiction television? The bottom line for Burnett is storytelling. You have to be able to connect emotionally with people watching a television screen and make them feel a certain way.

“People who can take a show like Survivor that shoots 300:1,” Burnett excitedly explains, “meaning 300 hours shot to one hour on screen — the edit is a massive process. Many editors from the narrative world come in and leave after a week, and they’re like, how can you guys do this? This is crazy. But it’s what we do. And that training means you’re good at storytelling and editing. So therefore, all non-fiction producers could just as easily be in narrative and probably take bigger risks and do a better job of it.”

Burnett makes the case that non-fiction producers can succeed at scripted television by (1) leaning on their storytelling experience, (2) working faster, (3) delivering high production values on low budgets, (4) being tough enough to handle tricky locations, and (5) staying out of the system. When one learns to be a producer under these circumstances, a totally different kind of cellular memory for filmmaking is created — and this is what Burnett brought to the production of The Bible.

“If you look at our screen and our CGI — what we were able to achieve by staying outside of the system, that is a little value of my non-fiction background. I’m used to smaller budgets. The quality of the lensing and the production is beautiful on Survivor and The Apprentice. I’ve learned to treat every show like a major motion picture, but responsibly within the budget.”

Admittedly, Burnett was able to achieve much of his success on The Bible by hiring crewmembers with years of narrative experience, from his directors all the way to his horse wrangler. Burnett also doesn’t seem to mind remote locations, which dates all the way back to his Eco-Challenge days, even remarking how many times he’s had to wipe himself with a leaf after a trip to nature’s W.C.

“Mark’s experience of shooting in strange and exotic places,” says Downey. “He’s so comfortable in that outdoor terrain, with an eye to safety and with an eye to knowing what’s possible to maximize those locations was fantastic.”

For reality producers like Burnett, having a limited budget is par for the course. On The Bible, the majority of actors were accomplished yet unknown and worked for scale. The wardrobe department had to make a little go a long way, repurposing costumes for other actors. Miracles had to happen in hair and makeup every day. A leather factory was created on set to make sandals for the actors. All resources had to be used efficiently.

Reality producers are accustomed to working at breakneck pace as well. “We moved very quickly,” says Downey. “We were in and out of episodes quickly. We didn’t have the luxury of many, many takes — and it was one of the reasons we were able to keep the costs down. We had schedules and we had to keep them.”

With a huge pool of non-fiction storytellers, making up nearly 75% of American television programming, the fiction space for producers might just get a whole lot more competitive.

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Burnett has a policy of having editors and AVIDs on set during all of his productions. On *The Bible*, every Friday night, he invited the cast and crew to a screening of the week’s work—but not of dailies, rather of an edited piece with music that would likely make it into the final cut. Burnett combined beer, wine, and food with a chance for everybody to see what they had accomplished and getting their name on the screen and standing there receiving an award. There’s a big difference. As a really proud member of the Producers Guild, I think people know how I feel about that. The word ‘producer’ shouldn’t be thrown around like something you get from a Cracker Jack box. You know, you gotta earn it. It’s not free.”

Burnett has duly earned his spot as a producer and shown that he isn’t afraid to try something new, moving into scripted television with a great deal of fearlessness, and delivering a winning product.

“For those people who are just starting out or who want to be in this business, they look at me and the shows that I’ve made and they think, well, he already knows so much. But I don’t really know. All I do know is that when I want to do something and I believe in it, I’ll figure it out.”

Will other non-fiction storytellers be inspired by his accomplishments? Burnett’s forecast is yes.

“I believe *The Bible* will be another shift. Survivor shifted to make half of prime-time television non-fiction. And I believe *The Bible* will bring in an enormous amount of non-fiction storytellers who’ll realize, hey, Mark did it, we can do it too. Because honestly, I’m not that good. I’m just doing. I’m figuring it out while I go along.”

“I wanted everyone to understand what we were making and how important this was,” Burnett says. “Can you imagine the enthusiasm and the love for the project? People were coming in — experienced actors — saying, ‘Whoa, I had no idea what I signed up for.’ The wardrobe, stunt coordinators, the caterers, the Moroccan locals, the people who cleaned the toilets, everybody was invited, and it felt like an army that couldn’t lose.”

Creating an environment of kindness and camaraderie was a priority for Burnett. “Love your neighbor as yourself. Not almost as much, but the same,” he says with a certain punch. “The person cleaning the toilet and the PAs are as important as the producer. I’ve always felt that way, and this translates — without all these folks, what are we? That’s the feeling on our sets and that’s the only way I know how to be.”

This attitude served him well during production as the momentum carried his new filmmaking family onward, but also, when word got back to London about the Friday-night screenings and the quality of the work, suddenly every fine actor in Britain wanted to be part of the production. Smart.

**UNSTOPPABLE?**

Not everything Mark Burnett touches turns to gold, but when all of his productions are plotted onto a grid, he’s had a pretty high success rate. Perhaps his proclivity for taking huge risks has served him, or his work ethic, or his egalitarian philosophy, or his uncanny enthusiasm. He has a stubbornness about producing that is nearly unmatched. “There’s a big difference between being a real producer,” Burnett contends, “and someone who is tangentially involved and getting their name on the screen and standing there receiving an award. There’s a big difference. As a really proud member of the Producers Guild, I think people know how I feel about that. The word ‘producer’ shouldn’t be thrown around like something you get from a Cracker Jack box. You know, you gotta earn it. It’s not free.”

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Feeling ALRIGHT

Tracey Edmonds channels positivity via YouTube

by Emily Barclay

As any working producer in town knows, the perpetual buzz about “digital is the future” has become “digital is now.” Consumers are cutting the cord from traditional cable television, online multi-channel networks (MCNs) are leading the way as the next generation of global media powerhouses, and YouTube has become the primary source of entertainment for millennials.

“...and there is a need for that. So I took that as an indication that I should really do something and continue more positivity,” she continues, “and there is a need for that. So I took that as an indication that I should really do something and continue more positivity.”

Edmonds had wanted to do something in the faith-based arena for some time, having produced the film Jumping the Bassett. While making the film, one of her goals was to provide high-quality, entertaining content with an inspirational, faith-friendly message — but without hitting the audience over the head with a moral; rather her intention was to be inspirational, so she pitched him on the spot her concept for an alternative route for delivering her message and expanding her media outreach through a new platform.

Edmonds, a 20-year veteran of the industry, has established herself as an award-winning producer, savvy business mogul and accomplished executive, having created and produced groundbreaking projects for television, music and film, both independently and with major studios. She currently serves as COO and President of Our Stories Films, where she oversees the development and production of projects for urban audiences, while serving as the CEO of her own production company, Edmonds Entertainment.

Edmonds launched Alright TV through Our Stories Films this past Easter Sunday. You can find it at www.youtube.com/alrighttv.

The inspiration for Alright TV as a YouTube channel came to Edmonds over a year ago, when she began using Twitter on a regular basis to send positivity into the world with her daily ‘morning messages.’ “I wake up in the morning,” she says, “and whatever I’m going through in my life, I tweet out a message—just trying to keep myself positive, and trying to keep everybody else positive, as we deal with our daily struggles, and our daily ups and downs.”

Whatever was going on in her life, the good and the bad, she began sharing her thoughts publicly on Twitter, but with an upbeat tone. She found that by sending out positive messages in tweets, she in turn was keeping herself positive. Her tweets did not go unnoticed. People began responding — and returning the positivity twofold. Regular responses such as “I needed to hear that” demonstrated to her that people were paying attention. “We were all tweeting these positive, uplifting, stay focused, stay positive messages to each other,” she recalls. “And it just kept growing and growing.” She began to build her Twitter family and watched as this phenomenon grew, eventually becoming a movement of nearly 150,000 followers. “Everybody seems to really be lifted by each other’s positivity,” she continues, “and there is a need for that. So I took that as an indication that I should really do something and continue more positivity through uplifting content.”

Edmonds had wanted to do something in the faith-based arena for some time, having produced the film Jumping the Broom, a faith-friendly wedding comedy starring Angela Bassett. While making the film, one of her goals was to provide high-quality, entertaining content with an inspirational, faith-friendly message — but without hitting the audience over the head with a moral; rather her intention was to be inspirational, so she pitched him on the spot her concept for an alternative route for delivering her message and expanding her media outreach through a new platform.

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own network; she and her team went to work fleshing out what was to eventually become Alright TV.

As she came to the party late — Google’s YouTube Original Channel Initiative of $100 million toward these new funded channel partnerships already had been substantially depleted — Edmonds and Alright TV was launched with a fraction of the funding allocated to earlier premium channels. But Edmonds has enjoyed a strong relationship with Google and YouTube, and feels lucky to have been brought on at such an exciting time in the space. After all, YouTube recently hit 1 billion monthly unique users per month. That means 1/7 of all individuals on the planet (and growing) are on YouTube every month.

Edmonds pulled a small team from the Our Stories TV and film side of her business to run Alright TV. “We are very tiny. Alright TV is really four people,” she notes. “It’s been really fun and exciting. It’s the wild west out there for everyone, even YouTube and Google. All of this is changing, moving and evolving so fast that a lot of times, even when you talk to YouTube, and you ask ‘what’s going on with this?’ they say, ‘we’re still figuring it out ourselves.’” Her staff was very curious about the transition into digital, and they have quickly become more familiar with guerrilla production. Her team was challenged with creating a full slate of shows on shoestring budgets and with no marketing dollars, a typical welcome into the world of digital production for traditional media producers who are used to having things like script supervisors and dedicated craft service people.

“Coming from the production model of urban films, where Edmonds was always given modest budgets, this was a new level of micro-budget, which challenged her and her team to think differently. Although the Web is often forgiving, and raw, gritty videos are acceptable (and even the norm), they decided to set their bar high, with the goal to produce quality shows on modest budgets.

“ characteristically, Edmonds has been collaborating with some top talent who were also interested in experimenting online, as well as tapping into the stable of successful YouTube artists for key collaborations to help drive audience and bring more views to the channel. In the scripted arena, for example, they have worked with television showrunners and writers to deliver quality product. Vanessa Middleton, former Co-EP of *The Cosby Show*, joined their narrative series *Walk This Way* as the showrunner/director. On screen, the show features Michael K. Williams, of *Boardwalk Empire* and *The Wire*.

In further collaborations with other YouTubers, the channel has been working with Dormtainment to produce two of their shows, and next quarter, Alright TV is premiering a series called *The Choir* with YouTuber Issa Rae of *Awkward Black Girl* Internet fame producing. On the series *Mr. Right* and *Ms. Right*, a blind-date show, many YouTube stars have been featured including GloZell, “Black Nerd” Andre Meadows, Dormtainment, and The Playmakers.

Alright TV has also capitalized on the interactivity of YouTube. "You get to do a lot of fun, creative stuff you’re unable to do on traditional TV," she observes. Engaging the audience through calls to action and asking viewers to participate in the creative experience has kept fans loyal. With their interactive dating shows, *Mr. Right* and *Ms. Right*, the audience can choose the ending. And they are launching a new vlogger series, *Preach On/Teach On*, where viewers can submit their own inspirational video blog. Edmonds recognizes it takes time to develop new talent online, but she and her team are committed to supporting fresh voices. Alright TV also is in the process of launching live streaming of Sunday morning church services — so no matter where you are or what you
are doing, you can always make it to church on time via your phone or computer.

As far as the day-to-day operations, the channel does have some external support. They have engaged MCN Fullscreen to handle all of the nuts and bolts of channel management and tech support, such as uploading and annotations for the videos. “Economically that was the smartest way for me to do it,” she shares, “considering the fact that our funding was limited. I was able to use the people in place, then for all of the bigger channel management stuff I had the machine of Fullscreen behind it.” Having just launched this past Easter Sunday — March 31, 2013, the channel is doing very well. “We are really blessed,” she continues. “We’re at about 25,000 subscribers, and we just crossed our millionth view threshold, so I’m really excited about that.” Audience engagement is the core of success on YouTube; interactivity and the participatory response from the viewer sets YouTube apart from traditional distribution platforms. Edmonds had the benefit of an already-engaged online audience through her Twitter followers and an original niche concept of a faith-based motivational genre. Migrating that audience from Twitter to YouTube has been a key component to the success of the channel.

“My social media family has really been amazing in spreading the word, sharing, enjoying and promoting our content. If you were to look at my page, you would see all my Twitter followers/family retweeting and encouraging everyone to subscribe to Alright TV. Every day, I tweet out links to our episodes, and I see my Twitter family retweeting, saying, ‘Hey, I just watched this episode, check it out everybody. It’s so funny.’ It’s really been amazing. They’ve been incredible in helping me promote the channel.”

As they were given no marketing budget, everything Edmonds has done in terms of marketing and promoting the channel has been through social media and press. Edmonds has done interviews to talk about the channel, but for the most part, the viewership has been from the grass-roots viral internet movement of her audience.

The big question for most producers entering this arena is monetization. Currently, Edmonds’ focus is on creating the quality content, finding the audience, and keeping them actively engaged. As a YouTube partner, Alright TV has been managed by YouTube’s internal sales force, a team that sells ads and works to position brand deals for the network, which has allowed Edmonds to focus on the creative prior to launch. Now that the health of the channel seems to be on sure foot, Edmonds intends to turn an eye to building brand relationships and thinking about bigger strategic partnerships for the channel. Ancillary revenue streams are the next step for generating revenue. She has begun to focus on merchandising — a large pot of gold at the end of many YouTube rainbows — and is set to launch Alright Clothing, a casual, cool merchandise line including branded hoodies and track suits.

Diversification is important as well, to be successful as a producer of digital content, having more than one property online is key. So next on the horizon for Edmonds is the launch of PRIMEZONE Sports, with Deion Sanders. This subscription-based YouTube channel utilizes a new monetization model, and will feature high-profile current pro athletes, retired legends, as well as fans from all major sports, appealing to the broad spectrum of sports fans of all demographics. First out of the gate will be the show Know Like a Pro, a how-to series where Sanders and his team of expert friends from various professional sports leagues will give how-to athletic advice. Edmonds, having been a single parent, is excited by the prospect of parents taking their kids into the backyard with their mobile phone and have pro athletes demonstrate plays, drills and techniques — something she notes she would have loved to have had when raising her boys.

As convergence between the different distribution platforms finally seems to be taking shape, Edmonds is carefully crafting her programming slate, developing online series that could expand into television — and be viewable on any device.
Producers often have to be creative. Of course, if you do it and it works, then great; but if not,” she laughs, “it’s all your fault.” At least if something doesn’t work in the digital arena, it’s easy to move on quickly, adapt and make changes — and no one wasted $100 million.

So how to make the move into the space for a traditional producer with little digital experience? “You kind of have to find your own niche, really... discover something that no one else is doing.” But you have to commit to your brand, stick with it, and let your audience discover it, week by week. Of course, there are those occasional instant-hit wonders, but for the most part, it takes work and a commitment to building an audience, to creating a devoted community. “You see when you’re doing the programming some things that just all of the sudden just ‘catch’... For example for us, The Playmakers have really been taking off. A couple of their videos have passed 100,000 views. And then some of the stuff you have to stick with as your audience discovers it... you can see it building more and more each week. It’s something you have to be patient with, and that’s one of the things that I talk about with the YouTube executives. You can’t just expect to put content up and immediately everyone is going to know and you’re going to have a gazillion views. Every now and then, it can spark like that. But nine times out of 10, you’re going to have to be patient and build your audience and build your following and stick with it... And then think ahead in terms of your ancillary revenue streams.”

The beauty of the digital space is that it is so democratic; anyone can find a voice here and be successful, if they are able to just locate like-minded people who want to share in an experience. Edmonds believes that the greatest resource for navigating this new landscape is one’s peers — fellow producers. It’s helpful to compare notes and share information with colleagues and learn from each other as things evolve in the digital arena. The digital platform is proving to be an ideal space for a producer with vision and motivation... a  positive leader who daily can face the challenges that this unpredictable frontier might pose and continue to plow ahead and carve out her niche in the still-evolving digital world.

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It started with a crazy notion: One weekend. One studio. And every producer in town in attendance... talking, hatching ideas, making deals, learning from one another, swapping great stories and even better advice.

Due credit goes to longtime PGA member Rachel Klein, who first hatched the idea for a producers’ conference. The specific date of inception has been lost to history, but experts place it in the waning years of the second Bush Administration. The idea gradually found champions — first in the form of PGA East Chair David Picker, then PGA Executive Director Vance Van Petten, and finally, in longtime Board member Gale Anne Hurd.

It was Hurd who took on the challenge of chairing the first iteration of the Conference in 2009. After a development and production process that lurched forward in ungainly fits and starts, the magic materialized as the curtain went up on the very first Produced By Conference, held at Sony Pictures Studios, with a Friday night opening party hosted by Paramount. James Cameron dropped hints about the still-unsigned Avatar, Clint Eastwood planted the flag for fair producing credits, Roger Corman and Norman Lear took turns cracking each other up, and best of all, producers showed up. Hundreds upon hundreds of them. Its very first time out of the gate, the Produced By Conference sold out all of its available registrations.

Over the course of five years, the PBC has grown into one of the industry’s premier annual events, and a platform for the Guild to experiment with new ideas and programs. The Producers Showcase (ProShow) is now in its fourth year of helping emerging producers develop and sell their projects. Over 60 Mentoring Roundtables have enabled individual attendees to get specific, face-to-face advice and insights from the top producers working today. Best of all, hundreds of PGA members came to enjoy one of the greatest benefits of membership: a full day at the Conference, absolutely free.

Since that first Conference, the event has returned to Sony (in 2012), visited the Disney lot (2011), as well as 20th Century Fox (2010), where it returns this year. Over the course of five years, the Guild has learned what it takes to put on a top-flight industry event. While PBC veterans may fondly recall the white-knuckle adrenaline rush of its first year, the Conference today is a well-oiled machine, thanks in great part to the veteran leadership of its all-star team of organizers, including Chairs Tracey Edmonds, Marshall Herskovitz, Rachel Klein and Gary Lucchesi, event producers Barry Kaplan and Teresa Taylor, programming director Karen Schwartzman, PGA Associate National Executive Director Susan Sprung and unofficial PBC godmother Gale Anne Hurd.

Where will you be four years from now? Our best guess. Further along in your producing career, your passion project(s) in the works, looking at a future issue of this magazine, glancing over the photos from Produced By Conferences 2013, 2014, 2015… and thinking, “Yeah, I remember that.”
1. Conference attendees and PGA members pack the Disney lot for the opening night party.

2. Producer Lauren Shuler Donner with Conference Co-Chair Marshall Herskovitz.

3. Vice President Gary Lucchesi (center) talks global finance with fellow panelists Macdara Kelleher (left) and Rena Ronson.

4. NBC Chairman Robert Greenblatt shares his thoughts.

5. Indie icon Kevin Smith challenges the conventional wisdom.

6. Larry Gordon tells it like it is.

7. Morgan Freeman (center) gets the crowd’s attention, alongside Lori McCreary and moderator David Picker.
1. Touchdown! Brian Grazer (left) and Peter Berg discuss making Friday Night Lights.
2. Producer Emma Thomas, producer-director Christopher Nolan, PGA’s Vance Van Petten.
3. Speaker Mark Cuban holds court.
4. From left Conference Co-Chair Tracey Edmonds, PGA Officer Gail Anne Hurd, General Motors representative Bridget Wenczap, and producer Bonnie Arnold at the GM Speaker’s Lounge.
5. Todd Phillips answers an audience question in the “Franchise Building” session.
7. Hawk Koch chats with surprise visitor David Fincher in the GM Speaker’s Lounge.

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I'm often asked by producers, what's the biggest single issue confronting profit participants these days? By far, the most significant financial issue is the impact of related party self-dealing that occurs with vertical integration.

Vertical integration is the construct where one studio owns all aspects of film and television exploitation, from production, to distribution, to end use broadcasting and exhibition, thus providing a seamless conveyor belt from production all the way through exhibition of the content.

Vertical integration was the long-ago promise of the industry to tie the content producers with constant pipelines to feed, thereby securing placement for the content and securing content for the broadcasters. The repeal of the Financial Interest and Syndication Rules in 1993 removed the remaining barriers to total vertical integration among the studios. Prior to 1993, no network could have a financial interest in the shows they broadcast, whereas today, many of the top network television series are both produced and broadcast by one studio. The following is a list of the major studios and their broadcast affiliates through which much of the studio's programs are licensed:

- Disney: ABC, ABC Family, Disney Channel, A&E Networks
- CBS: MTV Networks, Nickelodeon, The CW Network, Paramount Home Entertainment
- Paramount: MTV Networks, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central
- Fox: Fox Network, FX Channel, MyNetworkTV
- Universal: NBC, USA Networks, Bravo, E!, Oxygen
- Warner Bros.: HBO, TBS, TNT, The CW Network, Cartoon Network

In addition to domestic affiliates, most of the studios have a network of international pay and free television affiliates in key territories through which they license their content. Vertical integration can be financially beneficial to unpopular film and television shows that would not have much success on their own. These large pipelines demand large feeds of content, both domestically and abroad. So a two-season television series from the '80s can still have an opportunity to make money in the vertically integrated structure. But there are significant pitfalls in this structure to profit participants.

Fast-forward to some recent headlines:

- In July 2010, a federal jury awarded Celador International, Ltd. $269.4 million in damages after unanimously finding that Disney subsidiaries, ABC Television, Buena Vista Television, and Valley Crest Productions, Ltd. had breached their contract with Celador to share profits from the TV show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* by under-selling the network television rights to its affiliate, thereby creating a fictional deficit passed onto the participants on an otherwise long-running financially successful hit TV show.


- In 2001, *NYPD Blue* producer Steven Bochco and 20th Century Fox settled a 19-month-old legal dispute in which the TV producer claimed he was underpaid $61 million for reruns of his hit cop series when Fox licensed the reruns to related party FX network.

- In 1999, David Duchovny filed suit against Fox, alleging Fox intentionally undersold *The X-Files*’ rights to its own affiliates (such as reruns to its cable network FX and its local TV stations, as well as book rights to HarperCollins) by at

"The related party deals are complex, and the basic financial terms do not necessarily reflect an obvious diminution in value of the license."
At least $25 million, in an effort to fatten the corporate bottom line at the expense of all those with a percentage in the series. And in 1997, Alan Alda and Larry Gelbart filed suit against Fox, alleging that Fox licensed reruns of M*A*S*H to related party FX network for below market value without seeking competitive bids from other cable networks. The suit was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount.

At the heart of these cases are the effects on fair value from related party self-dealings that occurred through vertical integration between affiliates. In each of these cases, the studios did not place the license out to bid with third parties, nor did it engage in arms-length negotiations with its affiliated sister company. In the end, the settlements affirmed that the related party dealings significantly reduced the stated and conveyed value of licenses to the detriment of the profit participants.

The related party deals are complex, and the basic financial terms do not necessarily reflect an obvious diminution in value of the license. For instance, The X-Files license to FX network was reported to be one of the highest paid basic cable license fees of its time. However, through litigation it was found that there were other potential third-party buyers, such as USA Networks, who would have offered more if Fox had only extended the opportunity.

In addition, the dilution in value can be attributed to other non-financial terms such as the number of runs provided in the license. A related party deal may provide the affiliate with 40, or even unlimited runs during the term, while third-party deals will limit the runs to a much lower figure, such as three to five runs during the term of the license. This is what occurred in Alan Alda’s dispute with Fox over the license of M*A*S*H to Fox’s cable network affiliate. The number of runs provided was significantly more than fair value for the license fee, even though the license fee overall was the largest ever earned to date for the rerun broadcast rights of the series.

The related party license may also be, in substance, exclusive versus un-exclusive under third-party terms, because the studio never attempted to license the content to any other third parties during the term.

"Ultimately, the deals are orchestrated to provide the studio with optimal downstream value earned by broadcast of the content. Only third-party revenues represent actual cash gain to the studios."
“So how does one avoid, or minimize, related party devaluations? The best defense can be written into the profit participation definitions of your agreement.”

So what drives these related party deals?

Ultimately, the deals are orchestrated to provide the studio with optimal downstream value earned by broadcast of the content. Only third-party revenues represent actual cash gain to the studios. In financial terms, related party deals are Monopoly money to the studio; it’s the left hand paying the right. The revenues earned by a related party are fully offset by the cost to the licensing affiliate, and all profits are eliminated in the consolidated financials of the combined entities. The studios strive to create terms that allow the ultimate broadcast entity to generate the most income. Thus, providing unlimited runs to the affiliate allows that affiliate to fill more broadcast content hours, thus generating more income.

Quite often, the studios will use content to build equity in new network and exhibition start-ups. After all, the new start-ups require large amounts of content, at relatively low prices, so as to provide the best chance for profit and success associated with any cost intensive start-up venture. The studio under these circumstances may be inclined to cherry-pick the best available content under its regime and license it to the newly created entity at less than fair value. The cherry-picked content will be skewed to attain key demographic viewing to bolster ratings, and increase advertising rates. The studio will argue that the lower license fees reported under these arrangements are due to the smaller viewership of its newly created entity. But that’s logic in reverse. If that same deal had been struck with a third-party broadcaster, the studio would have little regard for how much the new unrelated broadcaster wanted to pay and would attempt to negotiate fees on par with historic performance of the content.

Any time one’s content has been licensed to an affiliate start-up, there is certain risk that the license values have been undersold.

In today’s market, start-ups include ad-supported and subscription Internet ventures. For instance, in early 2006, Time Warner’s AOL launched In2TV, which offered full episodes of some 100 old Warner Bros. television series free, online, with more than 4,800 episodes available the first year. Time Warner was so pleased with the impact on visitor growth to the newly-created content site that several corporate press releases were made during the subsequent years of the launch declaring its success to Wall Street.

Visitors to AOL’s content site would click on more than just the content. They clicked unrelated banner ads, checked email, read newlines, which all contributed to AOLs viewership and bolstered overall advertising rates for the site. However, under the terms of standard profit participation agreements, participants do not participate in the equity of the studio’s broadcast entities.

Lastly, there is the obvious consideration to limit the ultimate liability to profit participants. Studios know that by limiting the value of an affiliate license, they limit the ultimate liability to participants. The standard profit participation terms preclude the studios from having to report end use broadcast revenues to the participants, and limit reporting of gross receipts to the license fees between the studio and the network, thus cutting the participant out of the ultimate downstream profits. For practical business reasons, this would be a fair practice when dealing with third-party licenses. However, under-related party conditions, the studios can take advantage of this structure by purposely limiting the value conveyed between studio and affiliates. And self-dealing goes beyond network affiliates. It extends to any affiliate of the studios, whether engaged in the distribution of merchandising, online streaming, home video, and even publishing.

So how does one avoid, or minimize, related party devaluations? The best defense can be written into the profit participation definitions of your agreement.

First, define the studio distribution entity in the agreement. The standard studio agreements attempt to limit the defined distribution entity as narrowly confined to the main distribution legal entity “Studio Entertainment Inc.” and expressly omits affiliates and subsidiaries from the defined entity. The standard agreements go on to define “gross receipts” as that only of the defined entity.

The Fix: Opening this language to expressly include affiliates and subsidiaries, thus providing legal leverage that curtails the studios’ ability to hide revenues behind the curtains of related parties.

Secondly, the agreement should have language that expressly commits the studio to negotiating any related party deals on an arms-length basis. The legal protection here is obvious.

And lastly, when performing a profit participation audit, pay particular attention to any related party deals, particularly if the related party is a newly-created entity.

At this year’s Produced By Conference, a dream team of leading experts on profit participations, including Ken Ziffren, Steve Sills, and Michael Kump, will be conducting a panel to further educate PGA members on this valuable topic. David Robinson is a Senior Manager in the Motion Picture & Television Participation Services Group of Green Hasson Janks. David has more than 20 years of experience in filmed entertainment, having worked most of that time for the studios, and now using that experience to the benefit of producers in the performance of participation audits.
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We are proud to present the 4th Annual PGA Producers Showcase (ProShow). While our format has evolved in an exciting way, our mission remains facilitating the development and production of producers’ projects. As a Guild, we are dedicated to the success and welfare of our members — producers; ProShow is an event that helps producers meet potential partners and take concrete steps to turning their dreams into reality. This year, we are proud to introduce two new categories, Reality TV and Online Content, to accompany Feature Film. Most exciting of all, we have partnered with top production companies in each category to develop the winning projects (20th Century Fox International, Ryan Seacrest Productions, and Maker Studios). Please join me in congratulating these talented producers and 2013 ProShow finalists!

Stu Levy
Chair, PGA Producers Showcase

FINALISTS

MOTION PICTURES

Jim Brubaker
Jim Brubaker is an accomplished film producer and studio executive. He has produced some of the industry’s highest grossing films and, during his tenure as President of Physical Production at Universal Studios, supervised the production of more than 50 films in 14 countries with budgets totaling more than a billion dollars. Currently, Jim is currently in pre-production on Deerslayer, and serves as President of Physical Production at Aldamisa Entertainment. He is overseeing the production of several films including Sin City 2 and Machete Kills, directed by Robert Rodriguez. Past producer credits include Bruce Almighty, Dragonfly, The Nutty Professor and Nutty Professor II, Life, Gia (Directors Guild Outstanding Movie for Television) and Liar Liar.

Fool Me Twice
Written by Jane Paulson and Marcy Kelly
Fool Me Twice is an homage to the noir thrillers of years past. In it, a desperate woman, believing her wealthy twin sister is dead, switches identities only to learn that the sister is being investigated for her husband’s murder and had a lover who now threatens blackmail. Her life unravels further when she discovers the sister isn’t dead but survived the accident she caused. Will she be charged for the attempted murder of her sister or the murder of her brother-in-law?
Vera
Written by Lichelli Lazar Lea

All Jessica can remember from the night of the accident is that she was being chased from her plantation house by the two men she had flirted with. Her sister Vera died that night and now the ghost of the little girl appears in mirrors to blame Jessica for her death. But no one believes Jessica, and her psychiatrist has recommended she be institutionalized. To escape her fate, Jessica goes into hiding back at the house where the accident occurred. While she is there, the very real men who attempted to assault her return to ensure that she will never be able to identify them. A deadly game of cat and mouse ensues during which the ghost of Vera helps Jessica escape from her captors.

Lucy Mukerjee
BAFTA and PGA member Lucy Mukerjee has co-produced 15 movies and has more than 10 years of development experience. She’s also a programmer for several LGBTQ film festivals and an advocate for female filmmakers.

Jack of the Red Hearts
Written by Jennifer Deaton

A streetwise runaway cons her way into a suburban home as a live-in helper for a little girl with autism. She intends to exploit the family to serve her own agenda — proving herself a capable guardian for her own sister who is stuck in the foster-care system — but she ends up experiencing family in a way she never has before and making an impact on all of them … until she’s exposed as a fraud.

Noam Dromi
Noam Dromi is a writer/producer, marketing executive and digital media strategist specializing in cross-platform content development for corporations, brands & entertainment companies. He co-wrote the Warner Bros./Alcon Entertainment film Dolphin Tale, starring Morgan Freeman, Harry Connick Jr. and Ashley Judd. The film grossed $100 million at the worldwide box office. Noam is one of the co-founders of Disrupt Media Partners and has produced the films A Place to Live, Mad Skills and the new digital series Tainted Love on Machinima Prime. His current projects as producer include Hitsville (which he also co-wrote), Vera, The Plaintiff and Carlos Carrera.

Brandi Savitt
Founder of Senza Pictures, Savitt specializes in developing and producing feature films, online media content and European co-ventures. She works closely with filmmakers and leading production companies around the world, lending her production expertise to create and produce original content for numerous feature films. Her credits include The Great Gatsby, Men in Black 3, Avatar, The Dark Knight, X-Men 2, Titanic and Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.

Coming About
Written by Joyce Cox

Harry Frazer has invested everything he has into the design of a sailboat — a fast, sleek, speed-racing yacht. Now he needs to win the Three Bens, a three-day ocean race that culminates in a marathon run to the top of the highest mountain in the British Isles, Ben Nevis. Winning will mean financing to take his boat design into production. His dream and his beautiful speed racer collide with another ship in the Hebrides night. Fiona, a dark island beauty, and her force-of-nature father, Ewan, draw Harry into the search for truth behind death and illness plaguing island residents, the ferocious syndicate dumping toxic waste in remote waters, and perhaps to the truth under his own fears.

Joyce Cox
Joyce Cox began her career producing live action and post-production for commercial advertising. She moved into feature films in the mid-90s as the visual effects industry began its rapid evolution into its present role as a creative and technical cornerstone for filmmaking. Joyce has produced visual effects for numerous feature films. Her credits include The Great Gatsby, Men in Black 3, Avatar, The Dark Knight, X-Men 2, Titanic and Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.

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BY ANATOLY KOKUSH

Produced by
international audiences. Savitt began her career working as a production manager and line producer on feature films and music videos. Her feature film producing credits include *Our Italian Husband* and *Double Exile*.

Savitt has worked closely with dozens of writers and directors to develop and package their screenplays. She has produced more than a hundred music videos, commercials, and online media content, including the award-winning series of short films, *Home Sweet Cube*. She is also the co-founder of the online lifestyle magazine fabandfru.com. Savitt co-founded the U.S.–Norway Film Development Project in 2012 — a co-venture between the United States and Norway to develop, finance and produce feature films with international appeal.

**The Girl Who Owned a City**

Written by Mark Fergus and Hawk Ostby

Set in the near future, a virus has swept the Earth, sparing only children under the age of 15. Everywhere, kids struggle to survive in a world with no modern conveniences — and no parents. In the chaos and adventure of life with no adults, one girl rises as a fearless leader uniting her young neighbors together to create a new society and the hope for a better future for them all. More than a compelling tale of survival, *The Girl Who Owned a City* is the ultimate coming-of-age story.

**NON-FICTION TELEVISION**

**Darian Ward**

Darian Ward is a nationally recognized, Texas-based, television, radio and film devotee with a proven track record of success. The New York native has hosted shows on affiliates of CBS, NBC, FOX and BET along with BizRadio’s Strategies for Success and Houston Airports Today. She was consulting producer for *Keeping Up With the Jones*, on Centric/BET, was a NATPE/Strategies producer. Ward has written, produced and directed a number of films of various genres through his film production company, Floppy King Productions L.L.C. Some examples include psychological thriller (*Sticks & Stones*) and comedy (*Monster Job Hunter, Slim & Shorty vs. Evil*). Darian has served as a panelist for the South by Southwest Film Festival and also produced the comedy feature *The Sino Cone Stand Inc*, starring Tony Sirico (Paulie Walnuts of *The Sopranos*) and Morgan Fairchild. More recently, he was a producer on the television pilot *The Sinner* and the reality TV project *The Next Dragon*.

**Arnie Reyes**

Arnie Reyes is producer and an entertainment law attorney. He has been practicing entertainment law for 10 years and serves as legal and production counsel for several movie projects. He has written, produced and directed a number of films of various genres through his film production company, American Heroes. Some examples include psychological thriller (*Sticks & Stones*) and comedy (*Monster Job Hunter, Slim & Shorty vs. Evil*). Arnie has served as a panelist for the South by Southwest Film Festival and also produced the comedy feature *The Sino Cone Stand Inc*, starring Tony Sirico (Paulie Walnuts of *The Sopranos*) and Morgan Fairchild. More recently, he was a producer on the television pilot *The Sinner* and the reality TV project *The Next Dragon*.

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Chris Dupre
Producer, director and choreographer are all facets of Chris Payne Dupre’s professional career. He has worked as an associate producer on the feature film Sugar and in the Daniel Bedingfield music video Out of My Head, which he also choreographed. As supervising choreographer on NBC’s hit reality television show America’s Got Talent, Dupre worked to transform contestants weekly from rank amateurs to world-class entertainers. His choreography has also been featured on the television shows Take Me Out, Sister, Sister and HBO’s Arli$$.

Kelly McKendry
Kelly McKendry has extensive experience in story development, film and television sales, marketing, and domestic and international distribution. A former sales executive at Disney and ESPN Media Networks, Kelly has also worked analyzing projects for John Jacobs (Ted, Beverly Hills Chihuahua), Denise DiNovi (Crazy, Stupid, Love, The Lucky One), Fox Family Films and Phoenix Pictures. She has produced a short film and has developed several film and television projects. Kelly earned her bachelor of arts degree from Villanova University and studied at The Producers Program, Graduate School of Theatre, Film & Television at UCLA. She also studied acting in New York and Los Angeles at The Groundlings and Aaron Speiser. Kelly is passionate about creating quality programming and films for and about families. When she’s not developing new ideas and writing, she enjoys spending time with her husband and three young children.

Rotimi Rainwater
Rotimi Rainwater has been writing and directing in the film and television industry for the past 15 years. He got his start directing for cause-based projects such as “The Truth” Anti-Tobacco campaign and CDC’s VERB campaign, and then moved into writing and directing reality shows for E!, Fox Sports, and other networks. Rotimi moved into scripted projects, writing scripted television projects for Bob Teitel’s Statestreet Pictures, and adapting books for the big screen such as the biography for Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, It Doesn’t Take a Hero. Now being repped by William Morris Endeavor Entertainment and Intellectual Artists Management, Rotimi’s feature film debut, Sugar is set for an August 2013 theatrical release.

Cheryl Conway
Upon graduating from Villanova University, Cheryl Conway began working at Grey Advertising in New York. After a few years, she moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting and writing. While there, she wrote a screenplay, Trust Fund Baby, and she is currently finishing her second screenplay, The Internet Prophecy. Her unpublished novel, Does This Minivan Make My Butt Look Big? inspired a blog by the same name. Although her blog had to be taken down after it offended certain family members, it developed a cult-like following in the few months that it was up. Currently, Cheryl lives outside of Chicago with her husband and three kids who provide her with a treasure trove of comedic material on a daily basis.

Hollywood Moms
A look inside the lives of the women who’ve created some of today’s biggest Hollywood stars, their moms.

Online Content

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Hollywood Moms
A look inside the lives of the women who’ve created some of today’s biggest Hollywood stars, their moms.
Zach L. Wilson
Zach L. Wilson moved from the suburbs of New York City to Los Angeles in order to be a writer, producer, and Jewish stereotype. A graduate of Emerson College’s film program, he got his start writing transmedia stories for NBC’s Heroes and has been working as a writer and producer in new media ever since. His work includes independent YouTube channel “Viewers Like You,” Game Revolution/Grande Media’s award-winning Web show The Grid, and the development of Big Bad Tomato Interactive’s WonderGrove Kids. Through all these projects, Zach has become adept at bringing the most unexpected and experimental projects to life.

Double D Girls
Gaby, a 26-year-old comic book store owner who plays Dungeons & Dragons with her girlfriends, attempts to hash out her personal problems and maintain her femininity in a subculture that is anything but ladylike.

Evan Burse
Evan has been an animation professional for the past 10 years. He’s worked on such shows as Scooby-Doo, Batman: The Brave and the Bold, Black Panther and the upcoming Marvel’s Hulk and the Agents of S.M.A.S.H., an exciting part of Marvel’s new animated universe premiering soon on Disney XD.

Cartoon Block
Online Web series teaching kids and teens how to create and draw their favorite animated characters. Includes drawing contests and giveaways, interviews with professional animators and artists. Based on the current popular YouTube channel.

AJ Vargas
AJ Vargas is an animation producer and geek extraordinaire with 15+ years experience working in the superhero action-adventure animation genre. Beginning his career at Warner Bros. Animation, AJ has been involved in the production of popular animated hits such as Batman, Superman, Batman Beyond, Teen Titans, and Legion of Super Heroes. AJ has a passion for entertaining audiences with some our most beloved and iconic comic book heroes, action-packed stories and amazing animation. He is currently working at Marvel Animation Studios, steering production on Marvel’s upcoming Hulk and the Agents of S.M.A.S.H., an exciting part of Marvel’s new animated universe premiering soon on Disney XD.

S.M.A.S.H. In addition — for the past four years — Evan has been passionately teaching aspiring artists how to draw some of their favorite characters on his YouTube channel, Cartoon Block. The channel has 100,000 subscribers and 12 million video views. Evan enjoys sharing his passion for drawing with others and has the simple goal of inspiring creativity on a global scale.

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on location

Buenos Aires/Argentina

In this issue, Produced by is proud to premiere a new department, “On Location,” which will provide producers with essential information, both pro and con, regarding the experience of producing on location in both domestic and international venues.

Location, location, location — it is as true in motion pictures as it is in real estate.

Finding the right locations is painstaking, time-consuming work. Sometimes the ideal location creatively, is also the least feasible logistically or economically. It is a process where all of the stars need to align in terms of creative concerns, budget, access to resources — and weather!

As producers search for more cost-effective ways to realize their creative visions, they take care of everything. The editing suites were state-of-the-art, as stylish and comfortable as any you would find in Hollywood (I’m almost certain I saw Red Bull in the refrigerator), and there was a casual atmosphere sustained by an inherent professionalism and seriousness of intent.

Last June, I met some of the BAFC staff at the AFCI convention in Los Angeles, and we spoke again during my visit to Buenos Aires. They assist with everything production companies may need from the municipal government for filming in Buenos Aires. The office of the Director General was extremely helpful in making arrangements for facility tours and introductions, and later we had an opportunity to talk in more detail.

The BAFC acknowledges that while there are currently no tax credits for foreign productions, if a production company establishes an office in the Audiovisual District, they will be entitled to certain City tax exemptions for 10 years. As far as filming in other parts of Argentina, the national government entity is INCAA [National Institute of Film and Audiovisual Arts], which can assist producers with filming in other parts of the country.

The best way to ensure a positive experience, suggests the BAFC, would be to work with a local production company.

In Buenos Aires. While there are local crews available in most of the important cities of every province, the most experienced are in the capital. Typically, foreign productions work with a production company in Buenos Aires — and they take care of everything.

Whether your production requires a substantial amount of shooting or only a few scenes, there are production companies in Buenos Aires with experienced producers and first-class resources to ensure a high-quality, cost-effective positive production experience on location in Argentina.

K&S Films is a Buenos Aires production company with substantial international credits. They have produced a number of their own projects as well as provided production services for foreign clients across a wide range of budgets and scale. For the French film Lucky Luke [budget of $25 million], K&S Films provided production services over a six-month shooting schedule. On another high-profile project, they provided production services for just a few short scenes.

It was August 2010, and producer Charles Gillibert (MK2) was looking for a Buenos Aires/Argentina

Argentina has a long filmmaking history, dating back to the early 1900s. The country has twice won the foreign language Oscar, most recently for El secreto de sus ojos (The Secret in Their Eyes) in 2009.

At the center of the Argentine film industry is the city of Buenos Aires, a bustling metropolis with a strong European influence. Separated into distinct neighborhoods called barrios, Buenos Aires is celebrated by the Buenos Aires Film Commission (BAFC) as “one place, all places.”

The French and Italian architecture throughout Buenos Aires suggest obviously stand-visits for Paris or any number of cities in Italy. The upscale Puerto Madero could pass for many different waterfront metropolitan cities, including Los Angeles; El Caminito, the famous street in La Boca, with its bright colors and kitschy shops, could be Mexico or Puerto Rico. A few blocks away, La Boca begins to look more like the developing world, with buildings and streets in disrepair.

The key to unlocking the benefits of production in Argentina is working with one of the many qualified production services companies in Buenos Aires. Recognizing its increasing stature in the international film and television industry, the city of Buenos Aires has developed an “audiovisual district” — an official geographic area populated by local production companies. The government has also officially recognized audiovisual production as an “industry,” and provided some key tax exemptions for companies in the District.

These companies have access to experienced local crews, and the local producers know how to navigate the intricacies and bureaucratic requirements to maximum advantage. They can also negotiate favorable arrangements with the unions for talent and technicians, and with vendors for equipment, transportation and accommodations.

In January, I had an opportunity to tour some of the major production facilities in Buenos Aires, and it was immediately apparent that Argentina has the capacity and resources to handle even the most sophisticated, large-scale productions.

Las Minas and Lucero (C&L) in the Palermo barrio of Buenos Aires is one of the largest rental houses in South America, with an excellent selection of cameras, grip and electric equipment for any size production. I was impressed with the quality and maintenance of the equipment, the organization of the facility, and the knowledgeable staff, many of whom were bilingual. It was also almost impossibly clean! C&L has a small on-site stage (suitable for commercials and television), as well as an array of stages at an offsite location, the largest of which is more than 11,000 square feet.

I also toured Cinecolor Argentina, one of South America’s premiere post-production facilities. There I witnessed a coming together of traditional filmmaking and cutting-edge digital technology.

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It was August 2010, and producer Charles Gillibert (MK2) was looking for a
stand-in for Montana in winter. He was producing On the Road, directed by Walter Salles, and they needed mountains with snow. South America immediately became an option since it offers winter in August.

Salles was familiar with K&S Films, and the company was hired to provide production services. It was a quick five-day shoot with only 20 days lead time, but La Angostura in Patagonia, with its perennial snow-capped mountains, was a perfect match for the terrain that was required.

“Most of the crew were from Argentina,” says Gillibert, “and there was a high level of professionalism.”

As with many productions filming during the winter, the weather didn’t always cooperate.

“The first day was a driving scene,” Gillibert recalls, “and it was windy and raining, which was OK for the script. We shot all the scenes, but the last day leaving La Angostura there was still no snow. We were disappointed that we did all that traveling and didn’t find snow.”

As is often the case with weather, things somehow worked out in the end.

“We were making a company move,” Gillibert continues, “it was raining — and then suddenly, it started snowing. The snow began and in 10 minutes everything was white. It was amazing!”

Gillibert recommends Argentina as an excellent option for producers looking for a wide variety of locations, professional crew and cooperative government agencies. He also noted that it is less expensive than filming in Canada or the United States. “In Argentina, you go there and trust the country and people you work with and everything is easy with administration. There is great support at every stage.”

The shoot for On the Road posed some other challenges in addition to the weather. High-profile actors (Kristen Stewart and Garrett Hedlund) were traveling with the company. They also needed to find a 1950s car. “This was only possible,” Gillibert said, “because there was somebody we trust, a true professional, in Argentina.”

For those key scenes in On the Road, that professional was producer Matías Mosteirin of K&S Films. I talked to Matías about On the Road and other aspects of filming in Argentina at K&S’s impressive offices in downtown Buenos Aires. The space was upscale modern, with keycard entry and minimalist décor. Matías made himself available on short notice and was refreshingly candid about the process of filming in Argentina.

I proposed to him that the only element missing to make Argentina a superior option as a filming location was some form of tax incentives for foreign productions. He was not optimistic about this possibility. “The government,” he said, “while helpful and supportive of the motion picture industry, would be reluctant to favor the industry over other industries where taxes are concerned.”

Matías also cautioned against choosing a location purely for economic advantage. “Argentina is a great option for shooting,” he said, “because there are wonderful, experienced crew, good locations, good producers, it’s easy to travel, good communication, and it’s cheaper than shooting in the States. But the most important reason to

Andes mountains in Mendoza.
come is because the story requires the locations. Cost should not be the only reason.

“That being said,” he added, “Argentina can match many locations around the world.”

Buenos Aires is also a hub for Latin American as well as international television production and documentaries. In 2008, Ginger Gentile (a native New Yorker) and Gabriel Balanovsky took their years of experience working in the Argentine audiovisual industry and founded San Telmo Productions. They sought to create a company run by creative artists and technicians, where projects could be developed on an individualized and personal level.

“A lot of business is done in person,” said Gentile, so the personal contacts of an Argentina-based producer are extremely important. “For example,” she added, “many of the rental houses will only rent to local production companies.”

Gentile and Balanovsky explained that one of the reasons Argentina has such a highly-skilled crew is because students come from all over Latin America to study at Argentine film schools, and there are real mentoring programs to provide a continuity of professionalism for the next generation of filmmakers.

“What Argentina offers,” said Balanovsky, “is best value and a 100-year history of making movies.” It is also, somewhat surprisingly, the fourth largest exporter of audiovisual content in the world.

San Telmo just finished a feature-length documentary called Goals for Girls, a group of girls from the slums of Buenos Aires who dream of playing organized football (soccer). As a local production company, they received funding from INCAA, the national film board.

Gentile suggested that an excellent way for U.S. producers to enhance the benefits of filming in Argentina would be to enter into a co-production with a local production company. Co-productions are becoming increasingly more common, and while the subsidies from INCAA are modest by U.S. major motion picture studio standards, the U.S. dollar goes a lot further in Argentina than it does in Hollywood. As an example, the Oscar-winning The Secret in Their Eyes, considered a major Argentine production with recognizable stars, was produced for approximately US $3.5M.

In addition to production, San Telmo’s services include research, casting, scouting and post. Short of filming inside the Casa Rosada with 20 minutes’ notice, or sending a car over the Iguazu Falls (both actual requests they have received), Gentile and Balanovsky are confident San Telmo can meet most any challenge and deliver a first-class production for their overseas and U.S. clients.

Whether you are a feature producer looking for a stand-in location or a non-fiction television producer with specific geographic needs, your project requires locations that are actually in or can be reproduced effectively in Argentina, the first step is to research and choose an experienced Buenos Aires production services company. Then, with assistance from BAFC and possibly even co-production subsidies from INCAA, you will be well on your way to shooting on location in Buenos Aires/Argentina.

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The Producers Guild and the PGA Green Initiative are pleased to introduce you to the tablet and smartphone application version of their signature Green Production Guide. The successful, Web-based Green Production Guide was first developed to help integrate sustainable practices into the production process and now the corresponding mobile version, now available for free download on the iTunes Store and Google Play, will make this information even more accessible to members of the entertainment industry. Studio partners aligned with PGA’s sustainability initiatives include Paramount Pictures, DreamWorks Studios, Disney, Fox, NBCUniversal, Sony Pictures Entertainment and Warner Bros.

“With the continued success of the Green Production Guide website, making these resources available in a convenient app format will go a long way in ensuring that sustainable practices remain universal in the entertainment industry,” says PGA President Mark Gordon.

Providing the production community with tools to operate more sustainably. The Green Production Guide mobile app incorporates the website’s database of over 2,000 vendors offering environmentally-sensitive products and services nationwide, with the option to locate and contact green vendors nearby. The “PGA Green Unified Best Practices” guide provides entertainment professionals with best practices for sustainable film and television production and offers case studies. The Green Production Guide website additionally offers a “Carbon Calculator” tool which enables production staff to quantify the carbon emissions of their production.

The Web-based Green Production Guide (www.greenproductionguide.com), which initially launched in August 2010 as part of the PGA Green Initiative, was developed to further its goal of integrating sustainable practices into its operations and reducing the environmental footprint within the production process. Upcoming productions that have utilized the Green Production Guide include Delivery Man and Need for Speed from DreamWorks Studios, Oblivion and Fast & Furious 6 from NBCUniversal, The Amazing Spider-Man 2 from Sony Pictures Entertainment and The Wolverine and Trance from Fox.

The PGA also recently launched the Green Vendor Widget, a tool that gives local film commissions and other entities the ability to embed customized versions of the Green Production Guide within their own digital properties. Film commissions who have already committed to installing the Green Vendor Widget include California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon and Pennsylvania. The goal is to have the widget installed in the official websites of all film commissions and other entities across the country.

To download the Green Production Guide tablet and smartphone app from the iTunes Store and Google Play, please visit www.greenproductionguide.com/app. The Green Production Guide is also accessible via a “resources” link on www.PGAgreen.org.
This year, the Producers Guild of America launched its first Studio and Network Initiative. The program is designed to connect PGA members on each lot so they have friends and associates to network with and hire. It also provides the PGA with a more viable presence at each studio, creating a well-networked community that includes all members of the producing team.

The initiative was the brainchild of PGA members Karen Covell and Jethro Rothe-Kushel. The very first PGA Studio Initiative lunch was held for PGA members working for the Walt Disney Company at their studio lot in Burbank, California. Thanks to Vice President of Digital Media Studio, Disney/ABC Television Group Chris Thomes, the event reached producers from divisions all over the Walt Disney Company including Television, Motion Pictures, Interactive and Imagineering. The second lunch was held in March at the Sunset Bronson Studio lot, with 13 of the 23 known PGA members on the lot attending. In April, the third such event was held at Paramount Pictures, bringing over 30 attendees together from numerous companies across the Paramount lot.

“It can be hard to find other PGA members on the lot. Building these powerful networks within the PGA has helped members network and get jobs,” observes Rothe-Kushel. Future delegations are in the process of being organized at CBS, ABC, Fox, Universal, WB, Sony Pictures, Jim Henson Company, DreamWorks, Culver Studios, NBC, KTLA, and Pixar. If you work on a studio or network lot and would like to organize a lunch through the Initiative, please contact Karen Covell at karen@karencovell.com or Jethro Rothe-Kushel at jrothe-kushel@scenario-la.com.

Guild Launches Studio and Network Initiative

Ouch!
We always strive for accuracy at Produced by, and when we make a mistake, it stings. But it hurts extra bad when you mis-identify a person who literally set himself on fire for the Guild. The stunt talent featured in the Guild’s high frame rate 3D promo shoot and in the photo above (“They Want to Take You Higher,” from our recent March-April 2013 issue) is not, in fact, John Medlen, but Chip Mefford. Our sincere apologies to Mr. Mefford; for a guy on fire, he was pretty cool about it.
Member Benefits

- Discounted registration for Produced By Conference
- Access to all-new PGA Job Board, online résumé search, employment tools and job forums
- Vote on Producers Guild Awards and receive discount tickets to the event, as well as DVD screeners for awards consideration
- Full access to PGA website including events, calendar, social networking tools
- Eligibility for individual, family and small business healthcare options through Producers Health Insurance Agency
- Participation in the Motion Picture Industry Health, Welfare & Pension Plan
- Eligibility for PGA Mentoring Program
- Listing of contact and credit information in searchable online roster
- Admission to special PGA pre-release screenings and Q&A events
- Free attendance at PGA seminars
- Arbitration of credit disputes
- Wide variety of discounts on events, merchandise, travel
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by Dan Halperin

Three or four times a year, the PGA Mentoring Committee hosts “Morning Mentors,” an intimate, solution-oriented breakfast discussion where a small group of PGA members have the chance to meet and pose questions to some of the industry’s most respected professionals. Participants gain valuable insights into the industry and “insider tips” to help them navigate the layers of film and television production. It’s an arrangement that’s in many ways analogous to the Mentoring Roundtables that have become a regular (and popular) feature of the Produced By Conference.

Last year, a dozen PGA members had the pleasure of meeting informally with producer Brian Falk, partner in the American Film Company (AFC), at one of the early-morning roundtable breakfast gatherings. AFC focuses primarily on projects pertaining to American history and literature, reflecting the interests of Brian and his financial partner, John Ricketts.

Brian had recently relocated from New York, and he was very eager to share his experiences. He told us his history in the industry, starting as a PA, then his life as an itinerant documentary field producer, leading up to the lessons learned in production and in post on the Robert Redford-directed feature The Conspirator.

Always very candid, Brian provided a clear-eyed view of the financial, marketing and creative challenges that go into adapting, producing and marketing a historical project like The Conspirator. He dissected the current state of the historical movie, as well as how AFC is differentiating itself from the rest of the pack. His knowledge and attention to detail were inspirational to everyone.

Acknowledging that 25 to 34 year olds make up 25% of the theater-going audience, AFC has begun to develop historical stories with strong sub-genre themes that might appeal specifically to that younger audience. They still read scripts based upon great American classics, but they are also looking for stories that have a twist. And if the original classic doesn’t, they might add a new element. For example, if they were to adapt a Hemingway novel, they may consider “adding characters from a Twilight-type cast into the mix.”

Brian openly fielded questions from the group, with answers that were honest, informative and insightful. Post-production producer Caroline Stack: “As a history buff, I appreciate that Brian is making movies based on history. Brian gave me valuable insight into what it takes to make worthwhile stories speak to a wider audience.”

Producer Tara Pinkley: “Learning how the American Film Company was formed makes me hopeful that more unique partnerships like this are possible, and could enable producers to provide audiences with more diverse and compelling films.”

Committee intern Kristen Carlson asked what advice he had for an intern just starting out in the business. Brian shared his own intern experiences and spoke of the benefit of immersing oneself in the industry. However, the real “aha” moment came when he said, “You need to get your hands on a camera and just go shoot something.” It was raw and unbelievably motivating. “These words continue to inspire me.” In closing, Brian poignantly, yet with wry humor, shared some of his list of “things in this business I won’t do again.” But we hope he can share more of his experiences at another Morning Mentor discussion.
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