

18

The Director in Preproduction

As a *director* you need to tell—direct—talent and the entire production team what to do before, during, and after the production. But before you can tell them what to do, you obviously need a clear idea of what the program should look like and how to get from the idea to the television image.

More specifically, as a director you must be able to translate an idea, a script, or an actual event (such as an interview, parade, or tennis match) into effective television pictures and sound. What you do is translate the defined *process message* (the defined outcome of the program) into the various medium requirements and then combine them through the production process into a specific television program. You must decide on the people (talent and crew) and the technical production elements (cameras, mics, sets, lighting, and so forth) that will produce the intended effect—the process message—and coordinate all these elements with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. And you must do so with style.

Section 18.1, How a Director Prepares, looks at the director's roles and specific preproduction activities. Section 18.2, Moving from Script to Screen, offers some guidelines on image visualization and sequencing and on how to analyze a script. The director's activities in the production and postproduction phases are the focus of chapter 19.

KEY TERMS

fact sheet Lists the items to be shown on-camera and their main features. May contain suggestions of what to say about the product. Also called *rundown sheet*.

fully scripted show format Same as *fully scripted*. A script that contains complete dialogue or narration and major visualization cues.

looking-in An especially vivid mental image—visual or aural—during script analysis that determines the subsequent visualizations and sequencing.

script Written document that tells what the program is about, who is in it, what is supposed to happen, and how the audience shall see and hear the event.

semiscripted show format Partial script that indicates major video cues in the left column and partial dialogue and major audio cues in the right column. Used to describe a show for which the dialogue is indicated but not completely written out.

sequencing The control and structuring of a shot sequence during editing.

show format Lists the show segments in order of appearance. Used in routine shows, such as daily game or interview shows.

storyboard A series of sketches of the key visualization points of an event, with the corresponding audio information.

visualization Mentally converting a scene into a number of key television images. The mental image of a shot. The images do not need to be sequenced at this time.

18.1

How a Director Prepares

As a television director, you are expected to be an artist who can translate ideas into effective pictures and sounds, a psychologist who can encourage people to give their best, a technical adviser who can solve problems the engineers would rather give up on, and a coordinator and a stickler for detail who leaves nothing unchecked. Not an easy job by any means! Although some directors think that their profession requires a divine gift, most good directors acquired and honed their skills through painstaking study and practice.

► THE DIRECTOR'S ROLES

Artist, psychologist, technical adviser, and coordinator

► PREPRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

Process message, production method, production team and communication, scheduling, script formats, script marking, floor plan and location sketch, and facilities request

► SUPPORT STAFF

Floor manager, assistant director, and production assistant

THE DIRECTOR'S ROLES

The various roles you must assume as a director are not as clear-cut as you will see them described in this section. They frequently overlap, and you may have to switch from one to another several times just in the first five minutes of rehearsal. Even when pressed for time and pressured by people with a variety of problems, always pay full attention to the task at hand before moving on to the next.

Director as Artist

In the role of an artist, a director is expected to produce pictures and sound that not only convey the intended message clearly and effectively but which do so with style. You need to know how to look at an event or a script, quickly recognize its essential quality, and select and order those elements that help clarify, intensify, and interpret it for a specific audience. Style enters when you do all these things with a personal touch; when, for example, you shoot a certain scene very tightly to heighten its energy or when you select background music that helps convey mood. But unlike the painter, who can wait for inspiration and can retouch the painting over and over until it is finally right, the television director is expected

to be creative by a specific clock time and to make the right decisions the first time around.

Director as Psychologist

Because you must deal with a variety of people who approach television production from different perspectives, you need to also assume the role of psychologist. For example, in a single production you may have to communicate with a producer who worries about the budget, technicians who are primarily concerned with the technical quality of pictures and sound, temperamental talent, a designer who has strong ideas about the set, and the mother of a child actor, who thinks your close-ups of her daughter are not tight enough.

Not only must you get everyone to perform at a consistently high level, you also have to get them to work as a team. Although there is no formula for directing a team of such diverse individuals, there are some basic guidelines that will help you exercise the necessary leadership.

- Be well prepared and know what you want to accomplish. You cannot possibly get people to work for a common goal if you do not know what it is.

- Know the specific functions of each team member. Explain to all the individuals what you want them to do before holding them accountable for their work.

- Be precise about what you want the talent to do. Do not be vague with your instructions or intimidated by a celebrity. The more professional the talent, the more readily they will follow your direction.

- Project a secure attitude. Be firm but not harsh when giving instructions. Listen to recommendations from other production staff, but do not yield your decision making to them.

- Do not ridicule someone for making a mistake. Point out the problems and suggest solutions. Keep the overall goal in mind.

- Treat the talent and all members of the production team with respect and compassion.

Director as Technical Adviser

Although you do not have to be an expert in operating the technical equipment, as a director you should still be

able to give the crew helpful instructions on how to use it to achieve your communication goal. In the role of technical adviser, you are acting much like a conductor of a symphony orchestra. The conductor may not be able to play all the instruments in the orchestra, but he or she certainly knows the sounds the various instruments can generate and how they ought to be played to produce good music. The preceding chapters were designed to give you a solid background in technical production.

Director as Coordinator

In addition to your artistic, psychological, and technical skills, you must be able to coordinate a great many production details and processes. The role of coordinator goes beyond directing in the traditional sense, which generally means blocking the talent and helping them give peak performances. Especially when directing nondramatic shows, you must expend most of your effort on cuing members of the production team (both technical and nontechnical) to initiate certain video and audio functions, such as getting appropriate camera shots, rolling VTRs, riding audio levels, switching among cameras and special video effects, retrieving electronically generated graphics, and switching to remote feeds. You still need to pay attention to the performers, who sometimes (and rightly so) feel that they play second fiddle to the television machine. You also need to coordinate productions within a rigid time frame in which every second has a price tag attached. Such coordinating needs practice, and you should not expect to be a competent director immediately after reading this chapter.

PREPRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

As with producing, the more effort you spend on preproduction planning, the easier, more efficient, and especially more reliable your directing will be in the actual production phase. Specifically, you need to focus on the following major preproduction points and activities: (1) process message, (2) production method, (3) production team and communication, (4) scheduling, (5) script formats, (6) script marking, (7) floor plan and location sketch, and (8) facilities request.

Process Message

Before you do anything, revisit the *process message*—the purpose of the show and its intended effect on a specific audience (see chapter 17). If you are not quite sure what the show is to accomplish, check with the producer. Only then can you make all other personnel understand what the show is about and the expected outcome of the production. An early agreement between producer and director about specific communication goals and production type and scope can prevent many frustrating arguments and costly mistakes. Keep the producer abreast of your plans, even if you have been given responsibility for all creative decisions. Keep a record of telephone calls, save your e-mail, and follow up on major verbal decisions with memorandums.

Production Method

If you thoroughly understand the process message, the most appropriate production method becomes clear—that is, whether the show is best done in the studio or in the field, live or on videotape, single-camera or multi-camera, in sequential or nonsequential event order. If, for example, the process message is to help the viewer participate in the excitement of watching a Thanksgiving parade, you need to do a live, multicamera remote in the field. A traffic safety segment on observing stop signs may require a single-camera approach and plenty of postproduction time. To help the audience gain a deeper insight into the thinking and work habits of a famous painter, you might observe the painter in her studio over several days with a small, single camcorder and then edit the videotaped material in postproduction. If the viewer is to share the excitement of the participants in a new game show and is encouraged to call in while the game is in process, the show must obviously be a live, multicamera studio production.

Production Team and Communication

The producer is generally responsible for identifying and organizing the nontechnical and technical production teams. If you are a staff director in a station or large production company, the production teams are assigned to you according to scheduling convenience rather than individual skills of the team members. If, however, you can select your team members, you obviously pick those people who can do the best job for the specific production at hand. Note that one floor manager may be excellent in the studio but not in the field, or that a superb ENG/EFP

camera operator may perform quite poorly when asked to handle a heavy studio camera. Check with the producer on all your decisions, and get his or her approval for your choices. Don't leave anything to chance, and don't assume that someone else will take care of a production detail. The producer should be in constant contact with you during the entire preproduction phase. If you think the producer should have contacted you, don't just sit back and wait—pick up the phone and contact the producer.

Once you know your team, establish procedures to facilitate your supervision of the preproduction activities. For example, have the art director call or e-mail you when the tentative floor plan is ready, or request that the talent notify you when they receive the script. Brief production meetings promote efficient communication among key team members, assuming you have invited them and they are all in attendance.

When working with freelancers, you need to know where to reach them and they need to know how best to contact you. Give all team members a printout of your production personnel database (see figure 17.5). Keep all contact information readily on hand. It is often quicker to locate a telephone number in a regular card file than to fire up a computer. *READY ZW 1*

Scheduling

Prepare a detailed schedule for preproduction activities that is based on the producer's master production schedule. This will help you keep track of who is supposed to do what, and when an assignment should be done. Scheduling software can make it relatively easy to cross-check the activities of the various team members. *READY ZW 2*

Script Formats

Your most important preproduction element is the script. A good *script* tells you what the program is about, who is in it, what is supposed to happen, and how the audience shall see and hear the event. It also gives you specific clues as to the necessary preproduction, production, and postproduction activities. Even if you are not a writer, you need to be thoroughly familiar with the various script formats: the full, or complete, script; the partial script; the show format; and the fact, or rundown, sheet.

The fully scripted format—the complete script The complete script includes every word that is to be spoken during a show as well as detailed audio and video instructions. Dramatic shows, comedy skits, news shows, and most major commercials use the *fully scripted show format*. *SEE 18.1*

SCENE 6

A FEW DAYS LATER. INTERIOR. CITY HOSPITAL EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM. LATE EVENING.

YOLANDA is anxiously PACING back and forth in the hospital hallway in front of the emergency room. She has come straight from her job to the hospital. We see the typical hospital traffic in an emergency room. A DOCTOR (friend of CHUCK'S) PUSHES CARRIE in a wheelchair down the hall toward YOLANDA.

CARRIE

(in wheelchair, but rather cheerful)

Hi, Mom!

YOLANDA

(anxious and worried)

Carrie—are you all right? What happened?

CARRIE

I'm OK. I just slipped.

DOCTOR (simultaneously)

She has a sprained right wrist. Nothing serious....

CARRIE

Why is everybody making such a big deal out of it?

YOLANDA

(cutting into both CARRIE'S and DOCTOR'S lines)


Does it hurt? Did you break your arm?

18.1 DRAMA SCRIPT

The fully scripted drama contains every word of the dialogue and descriptions of primary character action. It gives minimal visualization and sequencing instructions.

There are advantages and disadvantages to directing a fully scripted show. You have the advantages of visualizing the individual shots and sequencing them before going into rehearsal. You also have definite cue lines and instructions for what shots the cameras are to get. The disadvantages are that you must catch every spoken word of the dialogue. If the actor or performer forgets the exact text and begins to ad-lib, your shooting procedure may be seriously affected. As you will see, the last few words of an actor's speech may trigger a number of technical operations, and if these important words aren't uttered, you must stop down (interrupt the videotaping) and retake the scene.

News casts are always fully scripted. **SEE 18.2** They include every word the news anchors speak and instructions for what visuals the director must call up at a particular time. As a director you have little room to be creative; you follow the script and call up the various video and audio segments in the right order at the right time. As you recall, the computer connected to the robotic camera pedestals, mounting heads, and zoom lenses selects and executes camera shots. The computer program could just as easily take over the news directing, or rather coordinating, function by following and executing the various cues of a fully scripted news routine. But, at least so far, the computer cannot react creatively when a script must be changed because of a breaking story or when something goes wrong, such as the prompting system breaking down or the anchor missing an important cue.

Documentaries or documentary-type shows are frequently fully scripted. Because a documentary is intended to record an event rather than reconstruct one, scripts are often written after the production. Documentary scripts, therefore, guide the postproduction phase, rather than the actual production. The script will often indicate which video or sound bites to use, or dictate the voice-over segments by the off-camera narrator. Normally, the major video and action cues are listed in the video column, and all spoken words and sound effects are listed in the audio column. **SEE 18.3 REJOY ZW** 

The semiscripted format—the partial script The *semiscripted show format* indicates only a partial dialogue. In general, the opening and closing remarks are fully scripted, but the bulk of what people say

is only alluded to, such as: "DR. HYDE TALKS ABOUT NEW EDUCATIONAL IDEAS. DR. SEEL REPLIES." This kind of script is almost always used for interviews, product demonstrations, educational programs, variety shows, and other program types that feature a great amount of ad-lib commentary or discussion.

In a semiscripted format, it is important to indicate specific cue lines that tell the director when to roll a videotape, key a C.G. title, or break the cameras to another set area. **SEE 18.4**

The show format The *show format* lists only the order of particular show segments, such as "Interview from Washington," "commercial 2," or "book review." It also lists the major set areas in which the action takes place, or other points of origination, as well as major clock and running times for the segments. A show format is frequently used in studio productions that have established performance routines, such as a daily morning show, a panel show, or a quiz show. **SEE 18.5**

The fact, or rundown, sheet A *fact sheet*, or *rundown sheet*, lists the items that are to be shown on-camera and indicates roughly what should be said. **SEE 18.6** No specific video or audio instructions are given. The fact sheet is usually supplied by a manufacturer or advertiser who wants a particular performer to ad-lib about a particular item.

If the demonstration of the item is somewhat complicated, the director may rewrite the fact sheet and indicate key camera shots to help coordinate the talent's and director's actions. Unless the demonstration is extremely simple, such as holding up a book by a famous novelist, directing solely from a fact sheet is not recommended. Ad-libbing by both director and talent rarely works out satisfactorily, even if the videotaping is intended for postproduction editing.

There is software available that will help you format a script, or change quickly and effortlessly from one format to another. Some of the more sophisticated software programs can also reformat a script that was originally created by a word processing program.

Script Marking

Proper marking of a script will aid you greatly in directing from the control room or on location. In control room

Open Studios. Marin County. Noon News 04/20

Diana:
Key Box

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED JUST WHERE AND HOW THE TOP PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS CREATE THEIR ART? WELL, YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF ALL DAY TOMORROW DURING OPEN HOUSE OF THE WEST MARIN ART SOCIETY.

VTR 2 (VO) (:10)

THE SMALL TOWNS ALONG SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BOULEVARD IN MARIN COUNTY ARE THE NEW RETREAT FOR ARTISTS WHO FLED THE NOISE AND HUSTLE OF THE CITY.

Diana:

WHAT IS IT THAT ATTRACTS SO MANY ARTISTS TO THIS AREA? JOYCE LIVINGSTON, A FIRST-CLASS PAINTER, SAYS IT'S NOT JUST THE LANDSCAPE.

VTR 4 SOT (:20)

In-cue: "It's the people..."

Out-cue: "...think of a better place to work."

Diana:

ALLIE HYDE, A PRIZE-WINNING SCULPTOR, GETS HER CREATIVE ENERGY FROM THE GIANT REDWOODS.

VTR 5 SOT (:12)

In-cue: "The trees..."

Out-cue: "...spiritual energy."

Diana:

ERIKA BRIAN PAID A VISIT TO THE INNERNESS STUDIO OF PAINTER JOYCE LIVINGSTON. HERE IS HER STORY.

VTR 6 SOT (1:15)

In-cue: "Have you ever..."

Out-cue: "...back to you, Diana."

BUMPER (:05)

COMMERCIAL BREAK 1

more...more...more...

18.2 NEWS SCRIPT

The news script contains every word spoken by the newscaster (except for the occasional chit-chat) and all major video sources used.

18.3 FULLY SCRIPTED DOCUMENTARY

In this script, the video and audio information is in two columns. The video information is usually page-left, and the audio information, page-right.

VIDEO	AUDIO
Effects	
Wipe to: VTR (SOT)	AUDIO IN-CUE: "ALL THE PAINTINGS
(Showing a series	WERE DONE BY ONE ARTIST . . .
of paintings	PICASSO"
from realism to	
expressionism)	
	OUT-CUE: ". . . PHENOMENAL
	CREATIVE FORCE"
MS Barbara by	BARBARA: But even Picasso must have
the easel	had some bad days and painted some bad
	pictures. Take a look. The woman's hands
	are obviously not right. Did Picasso
	deliberately distort the hands to make a
	point? I don't think so.
CU of painting	Look at the outline. He obviously
	struggled. The line is unsure, and
Key effects	he painted this section over at least
	three times. Because the rest of the
	painting is so realistically done, the
	distorted hands seem out of place.
	This is quite different from his later
	period, when he distorted images to
	intensify the event.
VTR SOT	IN-CUE: "DISTORTION MEANS POWER. THIS
	COULD HAVE BEEN PICASSO'S FORMULA . . ."
	OUT-CUE: ". . . EXPRESSIVE POWER THROUGH
	DISTORTION IN HIS LATER PAINTINGS."
CU Barbara	BARBARA: But the formula "distortion
	means power" does not always apply. Here
	again it seems to weaken the event. Take
	a look at . . .

VIDEO	AUDIO
CU of Katy	KATY:
	But the debate about forest fires is still
	going on. If we let the fire burn itself
	out, we lose valuable timber and kill
	countless animals, not to speak of the
	danger to property and the people who live
	there. Where do you stand, Dr. Hough?
	DR. HOUGH:
	(SAYS THAT THIS IS QUITE TRUE, BUT THAT
	THE ANIMALS USUALLY GET OUT UNHARMED AND
	THAT THE BURNED UNDERBUSH STIMULATES NEW
	GROWTH.)
Cut to	KATY:
Dr. Hough	Couldn't this be done through controlled
	burning?
	DR. HOUGH:
	(SAYS YES, BUT THAT IT WOULD COST TOO MUCH
	AND THAT THERE WOULD STILL BE FOREST FIRES
	TO CONTEND WITH.)
Cut to	
two-shot	

18.4 SEMISCRIPED FORMAT, OR PARTIAL SCRIPT

This script shows the video information in the left column but only partial dialogue in the audio column. The questions of the host are usually fully scripted, but the answers are only briefly described.

directing, you need to coordinate many people and machines within a continuous time frame. The marked script becomes a road map that guides you through the intricacies of a production. Although there is no single correct way of marking a script, certain conventions and standards have been developed. Obviously, a fully scripted show requires more, and more-precise, cueing than an interview that is directed from a show format. Live or live-on-tape productions directed from the control room in a continuous time frame need more, and more-precise, script markings than do scripts used in discontinuous, single-camera studio or field productions, where you stop and reset between takes or small series of takes. But even

in discontinuous, single-camera productions, a well-marked script will help you remember various camera and talent positions and make your directing less arbitrary.

Script marking for instantaneous editing (switching) Whatever script marking you may choose or develop, it must be clear, readable, and, above all, consistent. Once you arrive at a working system, stick with it. As in musical notation, where you can perceive whole passages without reading each individual note, the script-marking system permits you to interpret and react to the written cues without having to consciously read each one. The following three figures provide examples

PEOPLE, PLACES, POLITICS SHOW FORMAT (Script attached)

VTR DATE: 2/3
AIR DATE: 2/17
DIRECTOR: Whitney

FACILITIES REQUEST: BECA 415
RUNNING TIME: 25:30
HOST: Kipper

OPEN

VIDEO AUDIO

STANDARD OPENING/VTR SOT
EFFECTS #117

ANNOUNCER: The Television Center of the Broadcast and Electronic Communication Arts Department, San Francisco State University, presents "People, Places, Politics" --a new perspective on global events.

KEY C.G. TOPIC TITLE Today's topic is:

VTR #: PSAs 1 & 2

OPENING STUDIO SHOT PHIL INTRODUCES GUESTS

KEY C.G. NAMES OF GUESTS

CUS OF GUESTS GUESTS DISCUSS TOPICS

CU OF Phil CLOSES SHOW

VTR #: PSAs 3 & 4

CLOSE

KEY C.G. ADDRESS ANNOUNCER: To obtain a copy of today's program, write to "People, Places, Politics," BECA Dept., San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA 94132
E-mail: BECA@sfu.edu

KEY C.G. NEXT WEEK Tune in next week when we present: "Television and Democracy."

THEME MUSIC UP AND OUT

18.5 SHOW FORMAT
The show format contains only essential video information in the left (video) column, and the standard opening and closing announcements in the right (audio) column.

VIDEO PRO CD-ROM COMMERCIAL

SHOW:
DATE:

PROPS:
Desktop computer running Zettl's Videolab 2.1, Triple-I Web page.
Video Pro poster and multimedia awards in background.
Video Pro package with disc as hand props.

1. New multimedia product by Image, Imagination, Incorporated.
2. Sensational success. Best Triple-I product yet.
3. Won several awards for excellence, including the prestigious Invision Gold Medal.
4. Designed for the production novice and video professional.
5. Truly interactive. Provides you with a video studio in your home. Easy to use.
6. You can proceed at your own speed and test your progress after each exercise.
7. Will operate on Windows or Macintosh platforms.
8. Special introductory offer. Expires Oct. 20. Hurry. Available in all major software stores. For more information or the dealer near you, visit Triple-I's Web page at <http://www.iii.net>.

18.6 FACT, OR RUNDOWN, SHEET

The fact sheet, or rundown sheet, lists the major points of the product to be demonstrated. No specific video or audio information is given. The talent adlibs the demonstration, and the director follows the talent's action with the camera.

of various kinds of script marking. **SEE 18.7-18.9** Take a look at the markings in figure 18.7 and compare them with those in figures 18.8 and 18.9. Which script seems cleaner and more readable to you?

The first script (figure 18.7) shows information that is more confusing than helpful. By the time you have read all the cue instructions, you will certainly have missed part or all of the action and perhaps even half of the talent's commentary. You do not have to mark all stand-by cues or any other obvious cues that are already implied. For example, "ready" cues are always given before a cue; therefore, they need not be spelled out.

In contrast, the markings in figures 18.8 and 18.9 are clean and simple. They are kept to a minimum, and there is little writing. You are able to grasp all the cues quickly without actually reading each word. As you can see, the cues in figure 18.8 provide the same information as those

in figure 18.7, but allow you to keep track of the narration, look ahead at upcoming cues, and especially watch the action on the preview monitors. Let us now highlight some of qualities of a well-marked script from a director's point of view (refer to figure 18.8).

- All action cues are placed *before* the desired action.
- If the shots or camera actions are clearly described in the video column (page-left), or the audio cues in the audio column (page-right), simply underline or circle the printed instructions. This keeps the script clean and uncluttered. But if the printed instructions are hard to read, do not hesitate to repeat them with your own symbols.
- If the script does not indicate a particular transition from one video source to another, it is always a cut. A large handwritten 2 next to a cue line means that the upcoming

18.7 BAD SCRIPT MARKING

This script is marked with too much unnecessary information that makes it hard to read.

VIDEO	AUDIO
Effects	
Wipe to: VTR (SOT) (showing a series of paintings from realism to expressionism)	AUDIO IN-CUE: "ALL THE PAINTINGS WERE DONE BY ONE ARTIST . . . PICASSO"
MS Barbara by the easel	OUT-CUE: ". . . PHENOMENAL CREATIVE FORCE"
CU of painting	But even Picasso must have had some bad days and painted some bad pictures. Take a look. The woman's hands are obviously not right. Did Picasso deliberately distort the hands to make a point? I don't think so. <i>Ready camera 3 on the easel - closeup</i> Look at the outline. He obviously struggled. The line is unsure, and he painted this section over at least three times. Because the rest of the painting is so realistically done, the distorted hands seem out of place. This is quite different from his later period, when he distorted images to intensify the event.
Key effects	
VTR SOT <i>Insert Time</i> 4:27 min	IN-CUE: "DISTORTION MEANS POWER. THIS COULD HAVE BEEN PICASSO'S FORMULA . . ."
CU Barbara	OUT-CUE: ". . . EXPRESSIVE POWER THROUGH DISTORTION IN HIS LATER PAINTINGS."
	But the formula "distortion means power" does not always apply. Here again it seems to weaken the event. Take a look at . . .

*Ready on effects
Take effects
Ready to wipe to VTR
Roll VTR and
take VTR 4
Track up on VTR 4
Ready camera 2
Cue Barbara and
take camera 2
Ready to roll VTR 4
Segment 2
Roll VTR 4 and
take VTR 4
Ready camera 2
Cue Barbara and
take camera 2*

18.8 GOOD SCRIPT MARKING

This script is clearly marked and can be read easily by the director.

VIDEO	AUDIO
Effects	
Wipe to: VTR (SOT) (showing a series of paintings from realism to expressionism)	AUDIO IN-CUE: "ALL THE PAINTINGS WERE DONE BY ONE ARTIST . . . PICASSO"
MS Barbara by the easel	OUT-CUE: ". . . PHENOMENAL CREATIVE FORCE"
CU of painting	But even Picasso must have had some bad days and painted some bad pictures. Take a look. The woman's hands are obviously not right. Did Picasso deliberately distort the hands to make a point? I don't think so.
Key effects	
VTR SOT 4:27	IN-CUE: "DISTORTION MEANS POWER. THIS COULD HAVE BEEN PICASSO'S FORMULA . . ."
CU Barbara	OUT-CUE: ". . . EXPRESSIVE POWER THROUGH DISTORTION IN HIS LATER PAINTINGS."
	But the formula "distortion means power" does not always apply. Here again it seems to weaken the event. Take a look at . . .

*SFX 14
VTR 4 SOT*

2

3

*VTR 4 SOT
4:27*

2

SCENE 6
A FEW DAYS LATER. INTERIOR. CITY HOSPITAL
EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM. LATE EVENING.

YOLANDA is anxiously **PACING** back and forth in the hospital hallway in front of the emergency room. She has come straight from her job to the hospital. We see the typical hospital traffic. **An** emergency room. **A DOCTOR** (friend of **CHUCK'S**) **PUSHES** **CARRIE** in a wheelchair down the hall toward **YOLANDA**.

CARRIE
(in wheelchair, but rather cheerful)

Hi, Mom!

YOLANDA
(anxious and worried)

CARRIE
Carrie—are you all right? What happened?

CARRIE
I'm OK. I just slipped.

DOCTOR (simultaneously)
She has a sprained right wrist. Nothing serious...

CARRIE
Why is everybody making such a big deal out of it?

YOLANDA
(cutting into both **CARRIE'S** and **DOCTOR'S** lines)
Does it hurt? Did you break your arm?

Handwritten notes:
3 X doc
X Carrie
Yol
V2
89 Q Doc + Carrie
90 CU Yol
91 2-5 Doc + Carrie
92 CU Carrie
93 CU Yol
94 O/S Yol

18.9 DRAMA SCRIPT: MARKED
This multicamera dramatic script shows the camera used, the shot number, the type of shot, and the major actions. Note the blocking sketch at the beginning of this scene.

transition is a cut to camera 2. It also implies a "ready 2" before the "take 2" call.

- If the show requires rehearsals, do preliminary script marking in pencil so you can make quick changes without creating a messy or illegible script. Once you are ready for the dress rehearsal, however, you should have marked the script in bold letters. Have the AD (assistant, or associate, director) and floor manager copy your markings on their own scripts.
- Mark the cameras by circled numbers and all in one row. This allows you to see quickly which camera needs to be readied for the next shot.
- Number each shot in consecutive order, starting with 1, regardless of the camera you use for the shot. These numbers will not only help you ready the various shots for each camera, but also make it easy to delete a shot during rehearsal. All you need to do is say "delete shot 85," and camera 1 will skip the XS (cross-shot) of Susan. **SEE 18.10**

- You may want to devise a symbol that signifies action, such as someone coming through the door, walking over to the map, sitting down, or getting up. In figure 18.9 this cue is a handwritten arrow (→).

- If there are several moves by the talent, draw little maps of these moves (see figure 18.9). Such blocking sketches are usually more helpful to recall talent moves, camera positions, and traffic than are storyboard sketches of shot compositions.

Script marking for postproduction editing

The marking of the script for discontinuous takes consists of a careful breakdown and indication of the various scenes, their locations (restaurant, front entrance), and principal visualizations (camera point of view, field of view). You then number the shots in the proposed production sequence. Thus, you end up with a list of shots that refers to the original script by page number. Here is an example:

LOCATION	SCENE	TAKE	SCRIPT PAGE
Restaurant	2	14	28
		15	31
		16	36
Restaurant entrance	6	17	61
		18	72
		19	162
		20	165

Camera 2	
Shot #	Hospital scene 6
89	MS Yolanda
91	2-Shot Carrie & Doctor
95	CU Carrie

18.10 SHOT SHEET

Each camera has its own shot sheet, indicating the location of the scene, the shot number, the type of shot, and the subject or person(s) to be in it.

In the script itself, you are free to use whatever markings you prefer. When videotaping discontinuous takes for postproduction, you obviously have more time to consult your script than during a live or live-on-tape production. For discontinuous taping it may help to mark the talent movements on the script as well as draw next to the dialogue small storyboard sketches that show unusual shot framings. Such sketches assist in recalling what you had in mind when preparing the script. Many film directors storyboard every shot of the entire movie before ever shooting a single frame of film.¹ Once again, a variety of software packages will assist you in producing storyboards. Some of these programs contain standard shots of streets, interiors, and so forth in which you can paste the characters and then move them around until they are in the desired positions.

Floor Plan and Location Sketch

Unless you direct a routine studio production that occurs in the same set, such as a news, interview, or game show,

1. See Stephen Katz, *Film Directing Shot by Shot* (Studio City, Calif.: Michael Wise Productions, 1991), pp. 23-84.

you need a floor plan for preproduction. As explained in chapter 15, the *floor plan* shows the location of the scenery and set properties relative to a grid pattern and the available action areas. Like the script, the floor plan helps you visualize various shots and interpret them into major camera positions and camera traffic (movements of various cameras). It also influences, and sometimes dictates, how you block the talent.

With some practice you can do almost all the talent blocking and camera positioning simply by looking at the floor plan. You will also be able to spot potential blocking, lighting, audio, and camera problems. For example, if “active” furniture (that which is used by talent) is too close to the scenery, you will have problems with back lighting. Or if there is a rug on the floor, a camera may not be able to dolly all the way into the set. Interpreting a floor plan to visualize shots and spot potential problems is discussed in section 18.2.

ENG When the production takes place in the field, you need an accurate *location sketch*, which represents a “field floor plan” showing the major elements of the production environment. For example, if the single-camera production takes place inside a painter’s studio, you need to know the location of the door, tables, easels, cabinets, and, especially, the windows. **SEE 18.11** If the event happens outdoors, the location sketch should show the street, major buildings, driveways, and so forth (see figure 18.19). Even if a field production happens in an actual field, make a sketch so that the crew knows which field it is and how best to get there.

Facilities Request

The *facilities request* is usually not prepared by the director, but by some other member of the production team (producer, AD, or technical director). If someone else originates the facilities request, you need to examine it carefully to see that the equipment requested is sufficient and appropriate for the planned production. For example, a single P2M microphone or three table mics may give you a much better audio pickup during a panel discussion than six lavalières. Or you may prefer two camcorders for your EFP pickup rather than a remote truck. List all special requests as well, such as a working television receiver in the living room set or working phones for actors who are talking to each other in a live-on-tape scene. Check beforehand that the requested equipment will actually be available at the scheduled time.

Generally, the more time and effort you devote to preproduction, the less time and effort you will have to spend during the production. Production efficiency does not mean to hurry through a production regardless of quality; rather, it means extensive preproduction. Preproduction planning will provide you with the information necessary for properly directing the show, help you eliminate most of the production problems, and alert you to the few remaining ones. Most important, preproduction planning provides you with the confidence necessary to make correct judgments quickly and reliably.

SUPPORT STAFF

Your immediate support staff consists of the floor manager, the PA (production assistant), and, in larger operations, the AD.

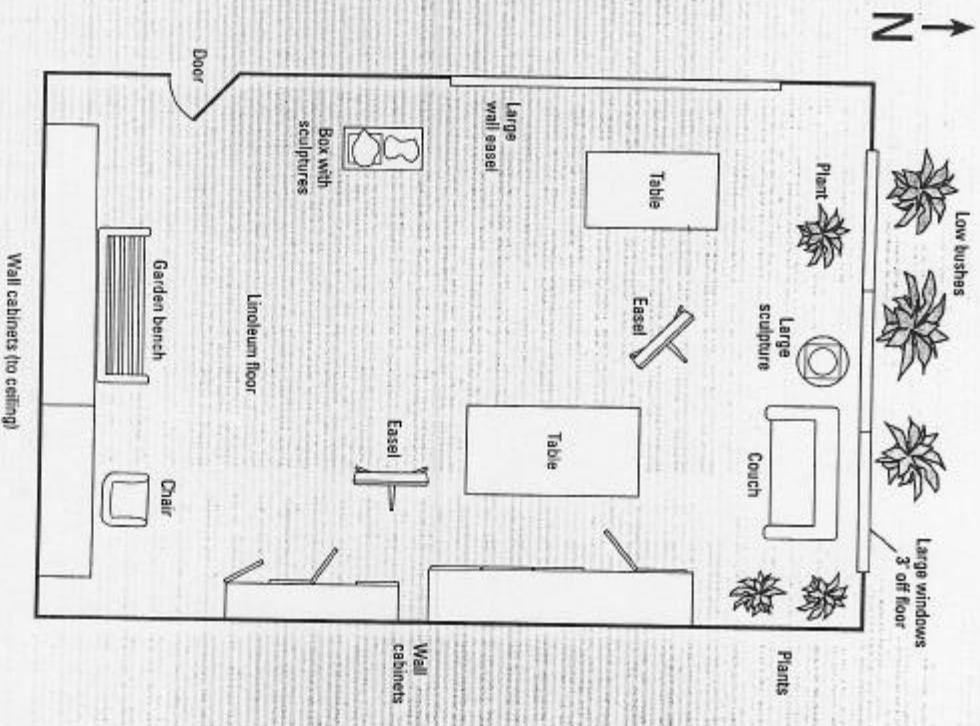
Floor Manager

The *floor manager* is also called the floor director, stage manager, or unit manager, even though the unit manager functions more like a production manager, who takes care of the daily production and budgetary details. As a floor manager, your primary functions are to coordinate all activities on the “floor” (studio or on-location site) and relay the cues from the director to the talent.

Before the production, you need to oversee and help the floor crew in setting up scenery, placing set and hand props, dressing the set, and putting up displays. During rehearsals and the production, you must coordinate the floor crew and talent and relay the director’s talent cues. After the production, you are responsible for striking the set and props, or restoring the remote production site to its original condition.

Here are some points to keep in mind when managing the floor:

- Unless you are doing a routine show that is produced in a “permanent” set (one that is not struck after each show), you need to obtain a detailed floor plan and prop list. Check with the art director and director about any special features or changes. Get a marked script from the director so that you can anticipate talent and camera traffic. Have the director look at the set before fine-tuning the lighting. Once the lighting is complete, even minor set changes can require major lighting adjustments. Once



18.11 LOCATION SKETCH: ARTIST'S STUDIO
This location sketch of an artist's studio shows the major dimensions, doors, windows, and furnishings.

the set is put up and dressed, take a Polaroid picture of it. Such a record is more accessible than a videotape.

■ You are responsible for having all hand props on the set and in operating condition. For example, if the show involves a demonstration of a new CD-ROM, run the computer program a few times to see how it works. Hard-to-open jars or bottles are a constant challenge to the performer. Twist the lid of a jar slightly or loosen the bottle cap so the talent can remove it without a struggle. This small courtesy can prevent many rakes and frayed nerves.

■ Check that the teleprompter works.

■ If you use an on-camera slate in the field, have it ready and filled out with the essential information. Have several pens available and a rag to erase the writing.

■ For complex productions study the marked script before the rehearsal and write in your own cues, such as talent entrances and exits and prop, costume, or set changes. In case of doubt, ask the director for clarification.

■ Introduce yourself to the talent and guests, and have a designated place for them to sit while waiting in the studio. Because most production people are quite busy (including the director and producer), you are the one who must establish and maintain a rapport with the talent and guests throughout the production. Ask them periodically whether they would like some water or a cup of coffee, whether they are comfortable, and whether you can be of any help to them. When working with outside talent, review your major cues with them (see chapter 19). When using a teleprompter, ask the performers whether the font size is big enough and whether the distance from camera to performer is tolerable.

■ During the rehearsal of a fully scripted show, follow the script as much as possible and anticipate the director's cues. If hand props are used, return them to their original positions after each take. Keep notes on especially difficult camera travels or talent actions. If the production is shot in segments for postproduction editing, pay particular attention to continuity of the talent's appearance, positions, and major moves.

■ Always carry a pen or pencil, a broad marking pen, a roll of masking and gaffer's tape, and a piece of chalk (for taping down props and equipment or spiking—marking—talent and camera positions). Also have a large pad ready so you can write out messages for the talent in case the I.F.B. system breaks down or is not used.

■ During rehearsal deliver all cues as though you were on the air, even if the director stands right next to you. When cuing, you do not always have to remain next to the camera. As much as possible, position yourself so that you can see the talent's eyes.

■ During the show do not cue on your own, even if you think the director has missed a cue. Rather, ask the director on the intercom whether you should give the cue as marked and rehearsed. If there are interruptions in the videotaping because some technical problems are being discussed in the control room, inform the talent about what is going on. Tell them that they did a good job but that the director has to work out a few technical details. Invite the talent during extended problem-solving interruptions to get out from under the lights and relax in the small studio area you have set up for them—but don't let them wander off.

■ After the show thank the talent or guests and help them out of the studio. You then need to supervise the strike of the set in the studio or of the items set up on location. Be careful not to drag scenery or prop carts across cables that might still be on the studio floor. Locate objects that were brought in by a guest, such as a precious statue, books, or the latest computer model, and see to it that they are returned. If you shot indoors on location, put things back. A small location sketch or photo will be of great help when trying to return things to the way they were. When shooting on location, remember that you are a guest operating in someone else's space.

Assistant, or Associate, Director

As an *assistant*, or *associate*, *director* (*AD*), you mainly assist the director in the production phase—the rehearsals and on-the-air performance or taping sessions. In complex studio shows, a director may have you give all standby cues (for example: "Ready to cue Mary, ready 2 CU of John") and preset the cameras by telling the camera operators on the intercom the upcoming shots or camera moves. This frees the director somewhat from the script in order to concentrate more on the preview monitors. Once preset by you, the director then initiates the action by the various action cues: "Ready 2, take 2." You activated a cut from Mary to John.

In elaborate field productions, the AD may direct the *run-throughs* (rehearsals) for each take, which enables the director to stand back and observe the action on the field (line) monitor.

As an AD you are also responsible for the timing of the show segments and the overall show during rehearsals as well as during the actual production. Even in studio productions, be prepared to take over and direct the show or portions of it during rehearsal. This gives the director a chance to see how the shots look and, especially, how the show flows.

Production Assistant

As a *production assistant* (*PA*), you must be prepared to do a variety of jobs, from duplicating and distributing the script, looking for a specific prop, and welcoming the talent, to calling a cab, getting coffee, and taking notes for the producer and the director (unless the AD is taking notes). Usually, note taking is the PA's most important assignment. You simply follow the producer and/or director with a pad and pen and record everything they tell you to write down or mumble to themselves. During the "note" breaks, you simply read back your notes item by item. When in the field, you will also keep a *field log* of all the production takes, which helps the postproduction editor locate shots on the source tapes. **READY 2? 4**

Before you engage in some visualization exercises and learn some on-the-air directing skills, let's summarize the major preproduction issues just discussed. Directing means, essentially, the effective communication of your intentions to a diverse production team. Be sure to honor this commitment. You need to establish and use well-defined channels of communication among all members of the team, and send precise messages through these channels. This means that you must have a clear idea of what you want to do and convey that intention effectively to everyone involved.

MAIN POINTS

- ◆ A television director must be an artist who can translate a script or an event into effective television pictures and sound, a psychologist who can work with people of different temperaments and skills, a technical adviser who knows the potentials and limitations of the equipment, and a coordinator who can initiate and keep track of myriad production processes.
- ◆ A clear understanding of the process message (desired effect) will help the director decide on the most appropriate type of production (single-camera or multicamera, studio or field, live or live-on-tape, or continuous or discontinuous takes for postproduction).
- ◆ There needs to be effective and frequent communication among the director, the talent, and all members of the production team.
- ◆ The schedule should be realistic and fit into the master production schedule of the station or production company.
- ◆ The various script formats are the fully scripted show format, the semiscrited show format, the show format, and the fact sheet or rundown sheet.
- ◆ Precise and easy-to-read script markings help the director and other key production personnel anticipate and execute a great variety of cues.
- ◆ The floor plan or location sketch enables the director to plan major camera and talent positions and traffic.
- ◆ The facilities request is an essential communications device for procuring the necessary equipment and properties.
- ◆ The director's immediate support staff are the floor manager, the AD (assistant, or associate, director), and the PA (production assistant).

18.2

Moving from Script to Screen

Now that you know the basics of directing, including script formats and how to mark them, you need to learn how to translate the words of the script into effective pictures and sound. This translation process is called *visualization*—seeing the script in pictures and hearing the accompanying sounds. Yes, *visualization* refers not only to the mental imaging of pictures, but also of sound. There are no sure-fire formulas for this translation process; what it requires is a certain amount of imagination, artistic sensitivity, and, once again, lots of practice. The best way to practice is to carefully observe the events around you—how people behave in a classroom or restaurant, or on a bus or airplane—and mentally note what makes one event so different from others. When you read a newspaper, magazine, or novel, try to visualize what is being described as screen images and sound.

This section will help you with these visualization processes—the translation of the various script formats into picture and sound images and sequences.

► VISUALIZATION AND SEQUENCING

Formulating the process message, medium requirements, and interpreting the floor plan and location sketch

► SCRIPT ANALYSIS

Looking-in point and translation, and the storyboard

VISUALIZATION AND SEQUENCING

Directing starts with the visualization of the key images. Because we see only what the camera sees, you need to carry the initial visualization further and translate it into such directing detail as where people and things should be placed relative to the camera and where the camera should be positioned relative to the event (people and things). You must then consider the *sequencing* of the portions of this visualized event through postproduction editing or switching (instantaneous editing). Concurrently, you must *hear* the individual shots and the sequence. In television, “hearing” a particular picture or picture sequence can be as important as seeing it in your mind.

As mentioned, a carefully defined process message facilitates the visualization process and, especially, makes it more precise. After having decided on what the target audience is to see, hear, feel, or do, you can follow the effect-to-cause model and determine just how the key shots should look and how to accomplish them.

Here is an example: You are to direct three segments of a program series on teenage driving safety. The first assignment is an interview, consisting of a female interviewer who regularly hosts the weekly half-hour community service show, a male police officer who heads the municipal traffic safety program, and a female student representative of the local high school. The second assignment is an interview with a male high school student who has been confined to a wheelchair since a serious car accident. The third is a demonstration of some potential dangers of running a stop sign.

The scripts available to you at this point are very sketchy and resemble more brief rundown sheets than partial script formats. **SEE 18.12-18.14**

Because the producer has an unusually tight deadline for the completion of the series, she asks that you get started with the preproduction planning despite the lack of more-detailed scripts. She can give you only a rough idea of what each show is supposed to accomplish: Segment 1 should inform the audience (high-school and college students) of the ongoing efforts by the police department to cooperate with schools to teach traffic safety to young drivers; segment 2 should shock the viewers into an awareness of the consequences of careless driving; segment 3 should make the audience aware of the potential dangers of running a stop sign.

Let's apply the effect-to-cause model and see how these scripts can be translated into video programs. **READY? GO!**

Formulating the Process Message

Despite the sketchy scripts and process messages, many images have probably entered your head already: the police officer in his blue uniform sitting next to the high-school student; a young man straining to move his wheelchair up a ramp to his front door; a car almost hit in an intersection by another car running a stop sign. Before going any further, however, you may want to define more-precise process messages.

Process message 1 *The interview with the traffic safety officer and the student representative should demonstrate to high-school and college students a ten-point traffic safety program to help teenagers become responsible drivers. It should also demonstrate how police and students can cooperate in this effort.*

Process message 2 *The interview with the student in the wheelchair should make viewers (of the desired target*

audience) gain a deeper insight into his feelings and attitudes since his accident and empathize with him.

Process message 3 *The program should show viewers at least four different accidents caused by running a stop sign and demonstrate how to avoid them.*

A careful reading of these process messages should make your visualization a little more precise. For example, just how do you see the three people (host, police officer, and high-school student) interact in the interview? What shots and shot sequences do you feel would best communicate the interview to the audience? Do you visualize a different approach to the interview with the student in the wheelchair? The demonstration of running a stop sign probably triggers some stereotypical Hollywood video and audio images, such as glass shattering, tires squealing, and cars spinning and crashing into each other.

Medium Requirements

Without trying to be too specific, you can now proceed from some general visualizations to the *medium requirements*: production method (multicamera studio show or single-camera EFP), certain key visualizations and sequencing, necessary equipment, and specific production procedures (when to do what).

Here is how you might arrive at specific medium requirements for each segment (process message).

Segment 1 The interview is strictly informational. What the people say is more important than getting to know them. The high-school student may not always agree with the police officer's views, so the two may not only answer the interviewer but also talk to each other.

The sequencing will probably show the three people in three shots (host and two guests), two shots (host and guest, two guests talking), and individual close-ups. These shots can best be accomplished by having the guests sit together across from the interviewer. **SEE 18.16** According to the sketchy script, the officer's ten-point program on traffic safety and other items should be shown on-screen as C.G. graphics, unless he brings an easel cart. The show is obviously best done live-on-tape in the studio. There you can put them in a neutral environment, have good control over the lighting and audio, switch among multiple cameras, and use the C.G.

Now you can become more specific about the medium requirements: set, cameras, microphones,

TRAFFIC SAFETY SERIES

Program No: 2 Interview (Length: 26:30)

VTR Date: Saturday, March 16, 4:00-5:00 P.M. STUDIO 2

Air Date: Tuesday, March 19

Host:

Yvette Sharp

Guests:

Lt. John Hewitt, traffic safety program,

City Police Department

Rebecca Child, senior and student representative,

Central High School

Video

STANDARD OPENING

CU of Hostess

faces camera

2-shot of guests

CU of host

INTRODUCES SHOW

INTRODUCES GUESTS

FIRST QUESTION

INTERVIEW: Lieutenant John Hewitt is the officer in charge of the traffic safety program. Is a twenty-year veteran of the City Police Department. Has been in traffic safety for the past eight years.

NOTE: HE WILL REFER TO A TEN-POINT PROGRAM (DISPLAY VIA C.G.).

Rebecca Child is the student representative of Central High. She is an A student, on the debate team, and on the champion volleyball team. She is very much in favor of an effective traffic safety program but believes that the city police are especially tough on high-school students and are out to get them.

STANDARD CLOSE

CU of host CLOSING REMARKS

LS of host and guests THEME

CG credits

18.12 TRAFFIC SAFETY STUDIO INTERVIEW

This script for a studio interview on traffic safety is written in the semiscripted format. Note that this script gives some information on the guests appearing on the show.

TRAFFIC SAFETY SERIES

Program No: 5 Location Interview (Length: 26:30)

EFP Date: Friday, March 29, 9:00 A.M.-all day

Postproduction to be scheduled

Air Date: Tuesday, April 9

Interviewer: Yvette Sharp

Interviewee: Jack Armstrong

Address: 49 Baranca Road, South City

Tel.: 990 999-9990

OPENING AND CLOSING ARE TO BE DONE ON LOCATION

Jack is a high-school senior. He has been confined to a wheelchair since he was hit by a car running a stop sign. The other driver was from his high school. Jack was an outstanding tennis player and is proud of the several trophies he won in important tournaments. He is a good student and coping very well. He is eager to participate in the traffic safety program.

NOTE: EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON JACK. GET GOOD CUS.

18.13 TRAFFIC SAFETY FIELD INTERVIEW

Again, this location interview is written in the semiscripted format and gives information about the guest to be interviewed.

TRAFFIC SAFETY SERIES

Program No: 6 Running Stop Signs (Length: 26:30)

EFP Date: Sunday, April 7, 7:00 A.M.—all day

VTR Date: Tuesday, April 9, 4:00 P.M.—4:30 P.M.

Postproduction to be scheduled

Air Date: Saturday, April 16

EFP Location: Intersection of West Spring Street and Taraval Court

Contact: Lt. John Hewitt, traffic safety program,
City Police Department
Tel.: 990 888-8888

OPENING AND CLOSING (YVETTE) ARE TO BE DONE ON LOCATION

EFP: Program should show car running a stop sign at intersection and the consequences: almost hitting a pedestrian, jogger, bicyclist; running into another car, etc. Detailed script will follow.

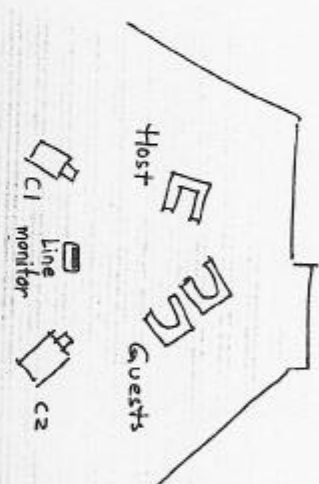
STUDIO: Lt. Hewitt will briefly demonstrate some typical accidents with toy cars on a magnetic board.

NOTE: LT. HEWITT WILL PROVIDE ALL VEHICLES AND DRIVERS AS WELL AS TALENT. HE WILL TAKE CARE OF ALL TRAFFIC CONTROL, VEHICLE PARKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS. CONFIRM EFP APRIL 5.

ALTERNATE POLICE CONTACT: Sgt. Fenton McKenna (same telephone)

18.14 TRAFFIC SAFETY STOP SIGN EPISODE

This semiscripted format for a field production contains information about the major events the program is to show.



18.15 TRAFFIC SAFETY INTERVIEW: ROUGH SKETCH

This rough sketch for a studio interview set shows the approximate locations of the chairs and cameras.

lighting, and additional equipment. Because the participants do not move around, the host and guests can wear lavalier mics for the audio pickup. The lighting should be normal; that is, fairly high-key, slow-falloff lighting so the viewer can see everyone well. There is no need for dramatic shadows. Perhaps you can persuade the police officer to take off his cap to avoid annoying shadows on his face. How about cameras? Three or two? Even a lively exchange of ideas between the officer and the high-school student will not require terribly fast cutting. Assuming that the host and guests sit across from each other, you really need only two cameras (see figure 18.15).

Camera 2 can get the opening and closing shots, but is otherwise assigned to the host. Camera 1 can get two shots and CUs of the guests, as well as over-the-shoulder (of the host) three-shots. Besides the normal control room and studio facilities, you will need to request a VTR and tape (don't forget to request the appropriate tape), the C.G., and a limited amount of postproduction time, just in case you need to stop the tape for some reason during the interview. Unless you have teleprompters to show the ten-point traffic program, you need a line monitor that all talent can see.

Segment 2 In contrast to segment 1, the segment 2 interview is much more private. Its primary purpose is not to communicate specific information but to create an emotional impact on the audience. The communication is intimate and personal; viewers should strongly

empathize with the young man in the wheelchair. These aspects of the process message suggest quite readily that we should visit the student in his own environment—his home—and that, except for the opening shots, we should see the student primarily in close-ups and extreme close-ups rather than in less intense medium and long shots. Again, you will inevitably visualize certain key shots that you have called up from your personal visual reservoir. Your task now is to interpret these images and all other aspects of the process message into a specific production approach and medium requirements.

Considering the major aspects of the process message (revealing the student's feelings and thoughts, intimacy with and emotional impact on the audience), the general production type and specific medium requirements become fairly apparent. It is best done single-camera style in the student's home. First, the single camera and associated equipment (lights and mics) cause a minimum intrusion into the environment. Second, the interview itself can be unhurried and stretch over a considerable period of time. Third, the interview does not have to be continuous; it can slow down, be briefly interrupted, or be stopped and then picked up at any time. The production can be out of sequence. You may want to start with videotaping the actual interview and then tape the opening shots of the student moving up the ramp in his wheelchair and the reaction shots of the interviewer. If the student happens to refer to his athletic trophies, you can videotape them (and other significant items in the house) after the interview and then assemble all the segments in postproduction editing.

Here are some of the specific (and modest) medium requirements: camcorder, videotapes, batteries, tripod, playback monitor, two lavalier mics, portable lighting kit, shotgun mic, small audio mixer, miscellaneous production items (extension cords, portable slate, and so forth), and good postproduction facilities. Compared with segment 1, this production needs considerably more editing time. To facilitate your visualization and sequencing, try to visit the student in his home prior to the videotaping. Meeting the student and getting to know him in his home will give you a sense of the whole atmosphere, help you plan your shots more specifically, and help determine more accurately the medium requirements.

Segment 3 This production is by far the most demanding of you as a director. It requires the coordination of different people, locations, and actions. Start with some key visualizations. Running a stop sign is

obviously best shown by having a car actually do it. To demonstrate the consequences of such an offense, you may need to show the car going through the stop sign, barely missing a pedestrian or bicyclist who happens to be in the intersection or even crashing into another car.

Now is the time to contact the producer again and ask her some important questions: Who will provide the vehicles for this demonstration? Who drives them? What about insurance? You may not need Hollywood stunt drivers for these demonstrations, but in no way should you have students perform these feats. Perhaps the police can assist you and the producer by furnishing both cars and experienced drivers. Who will be the harassed bicyclist and the pedestrian? Is there adequate insurance for all actors and extras involved? Will the police close portions of the street and the intersection for the shoot? For how long?

If the segment involves choreographing actual stunts, you would need a fire engine and ambulance standing by, just in case the stunt does not go exactly as planned. You had better abandon the project right at this point and ask the producer to pass it on to a more experienced director.

You could, however, suggest *simulating* these close-call actions through extensive video and audio postproduction. Assuming that the producer likes your alternate approach and that the police department will furnish cars, drivers, extras, and all necessary traffic control during the shoot, how would you carry out this directing assignment?

The key word in the process message is *demonstrate*. You need to show what is happening rather than merely talk about it. The demonstration obviously takes you on location—an actual street corner. The officer's later use of toy cars and a magnetic board to demonstrate a typical intersection accident and how to avoid it can best be done in the studio and integrated into the show in postproduction editing (see figure 18.14).

Considering the complexity of the action and the limited production time available to you (the intersection can be blocked for only brief periods), you should use several camcorders that cover the action simultaneously from different angles and fields of view. You can then have the camcorders synchronize the start of the time codes to expedite the extensive (AB-roll) postproduction editing. You can do the studio portion live-on-tape with a simple two-camera setup (one for a cover shot and the other for close-ups).

To ensure maximum safety for all concerned, first shoot those scenes that involve the car running the stop sign and then move to the scenes of the frightened pedestrian jumping back onto the curb and the bicyclist trying to get out of the way (of the imagined oncoming car). To simulate the sight and sound of crashing into another car, simply show the pedestrian's frightened face

and then, later, go to a junkyard for a shot of a badly damaged car. By editing the two shots together and adding familiar crashing sounds, you can simulate the crash quite convincingly without endangering anyone or wrecking any cars. You might think of using a "subjective camera" that shows going through the intersection from the driver's point of view. The camera operator can simply sit in the backseat and have the camera look past the driver through the windshield. For additional subjective camera shots, mount the camcorder on the hood of the car with the help of a bean bag (see chapter 5).

A fast zoom-in on the car while it is moving toward the camera will definitely lead to an intensification of the shot and to an exciting sequence when intercut with progressively closer shots of the pedestrian's frightened face. Be sure to get enough cutaways so that you can maintain the continuity of motion vectors during editing.

Whatever key visualizations and sequencing you choose, they will probably require the same basic field equipment: two or three camcorders, special mounting equipment (bean bags, clothesline, tape, camera braces), battery-powered monitor for replay, two or three shotgun mics and fishpoles, audio mixer, two or three reflectors (for CUs of talent), and other standard production items such as slate, videotape, headsets for the audio operator, and walkie-talkies for the field intercom.

The major part of this production will be taken up by off- and on-line editing. The simulation of near misses requires extensive video and audio postproduction. The audio portion is, therefore, especially important, because sounds intensify scenes and help elicit mental images of unseen action. Such standard sound effects as the squealing of tires, crash sounds, and a police siren will certainly intensify the scene and make the simulated crash believable. You may also want to include voice-over narration by the series host.

Don't forget to copy and carefully log the field footage. If you have a nonlinear system, digitize the takes (unless you shot with a digital camera), put them in the right "bins" (files), and start with the off-line editing.

Interpreting the Floor Plan and Location Sketch

Let's go back to the first segment—the studio interview with the police officer and the high-school representative—and assume that the novice art director took your rough sketch of the interview setup (figure 18.15) and worked up the floor plan and prop list as shown in the next figure. **SEE 18.16** What do you think about the floor plan? Would you give your go-ahead to have the scenery set up accordingly?

Take another look at the floor plan and try to visualize some of the key shots, such as opening and closing three-shots, two-shots of the guests talking to the host and to each other, and individual CUs of the three people. Visualize the foreground as well as the background of the shots, because the camera sees both. There are some definite camera problems with this floor plan.

■ Given the way the chairs are placed, an opening three-shot would be difficult to achieve. If camera 2 shoots from straight on, the chairs are much too far apart. At best, the host and the guests would seem glued to the screen edges, placing undue emphasis on the painting in the middle. Also, you would probably overshoot the set on both ends. The guests would certainly block each other in this shot.

■ If you shoot from the extreme left (camera 1) to get an over-the-shoulder shot from the host to the guests, you will overshoot the set. On a close-up, you would run the

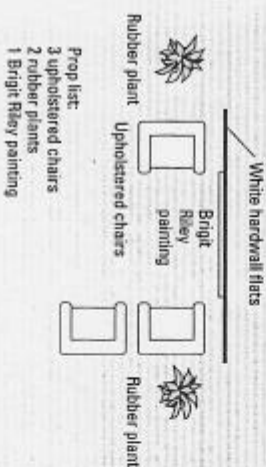
risk of the rubber plant seeming to grow out of the guest's head. **SEE 18.17**

■ If you cross-shoot with camera 2, you will again overshoot the set, and the second rubber plant would most likely appear to grow out of the host's head (see figure 18.17).

■ If you pulled the cameras more toward the center to avoid overshooting, you would get nothing but profiles.

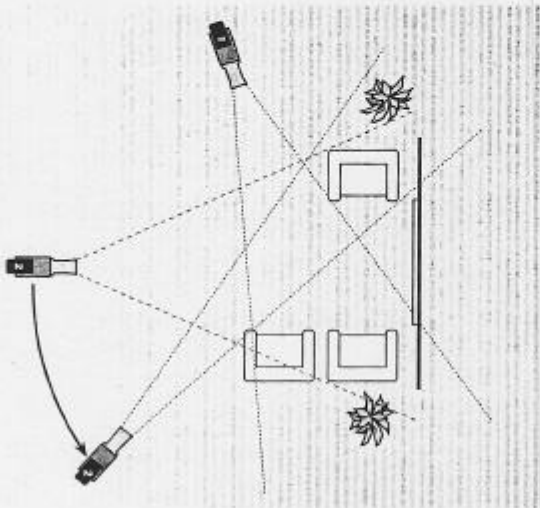
Aside from problems with camera shots, there are additional production problems:

■ White hardwall panels hardly create the most interesting background. The surface is too plain, and its color is too bright for the foreground scene, rendering skin tones unusually dark. Because the host is an African American woman, the contrast problem with the white background is even more extreme. You cannot correct the problem by getting more light on her.



18.16 INTERVIEW SET: FLOOR PLAN AND PROP LIST

This floor plan and prop list, based on the rough sketch of an interview set, reveal serious production problems.



18.17 INTERVIEW SET: CAMERA POSITIONS

The camera positions reveal some of the production problems caused by this setup.

- See how close the chairs are to the background flats? Any key light and fill light will inevitably strike the background too, adding to the silhouette effect. The back lights would also function as front (key) lights, causing fast falloff (dense attached shadows) toward the camera side. If you were now to lighten up the shadows on the faces with additional fill light coming from the front of the set (roughly from camera 2's position), it would inevitably hit the white flats, once again contributing to the silhouette effect.
- The acoustics may also prove to be less than desirable, because the microphones are very close to the sound-reflecting hardwall flats.
- The prop list signals yet more problems. The large, upholstered chairs are definitely not appropriate for an interview. They look too pompous and would practically engulf their occupants.
- Because most of the setup requires cross-shooting from extreme angles, the painting is utterly useless. If you want to break up some of the plain background with a picture, hang it so that it serves as a background in most of the shots. If you happen to know something about art history, you may suspect that the tight, contrasting patterns of the Bright Riley painting would cause a *morté* effect.

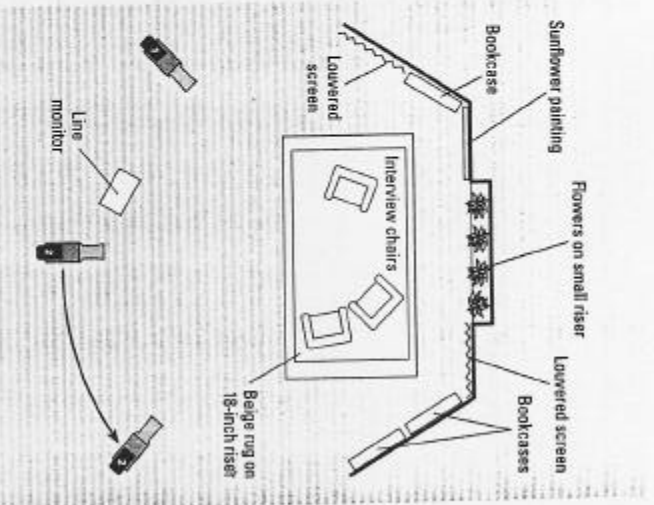
■ Finally, with the chairs directly on the studio floor, either the cameras would have to look down on the performers, or the camera operators would have to pedestal all the way down and stoop for the entering interview.

As you can see, even this simple floor plan and prop list reveal important clues to a variety of potential production problems. You should now talk to the novice art director, point out the potential problems, and suggest some ways the floor plan could be revised. **SEE 18.18**

■ Enlarge the background so that it provides cover even for extreme cross-shooting angles. Use flats of a different color and texture (such as a medium-dark wood panel pattern). Perhaps break up the background with a window flat or a few narrow flats to give it a more three-dimensional feel.

■ Place pictures or bookcases where they will be seen in the most frequent camera shots. Do not let a corner of a picture appear to grow out of the talent's head.

■ Use simple chairs that are comfortable yet will not swallow the occupants, put them on a riser, and position



18.18 REVISED INTERVIEW SET
The revised floor plan for the interview provides for adequate background cover and interesting shots.

them at least 6 feet from the background (which will improve back lighting).

■ Turn the chairs outward somewhat (swivel them to face the center camera position) so that the cameras will not have to cross-shoot from such extreme angles.

■ Get rid of the rubber plants. Although rubber plants on a set look great to the naked eye, they become compositional hazards on-camera.

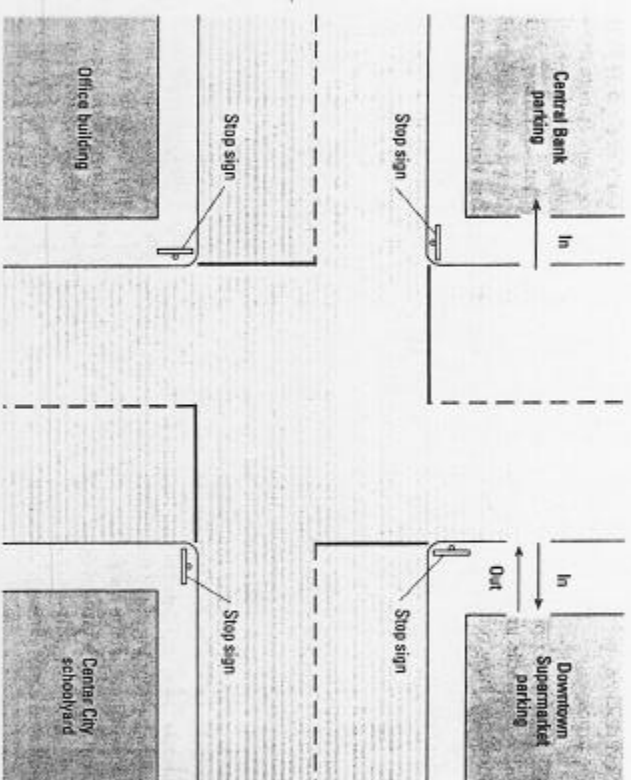
This is much better, but there is no time for resting on your laurels. The AD has just come back from a location survey for the segment on running the stop sign and shows you her location sketch. **SEE 18.19** She feels that there may be several potential production problems. Look at the sketch and see if you agree with her.

Yes, there certainly are a few serious problems that beg for immediate attention.

■ The intersection is obviously downtown. You can therefore expect a great deal of traffic to pass through, and

18.19 LOCATION SKETCH FOR STOP-SIGN SEGMENT

This location sketch points to several major problems that make the field production unfeasible.



the police would not close this intersection for anything but a real accident.

■ Even if the intersection were not in the middle of downtown, the proximity of the bank and the supermarket would make closing the intersection, even for a little while, unfeasible.

■ A schoolyard is very noisy during recess. Unless you do not mind the laughing and yelling of children during the production, every school recess means a forced recess for your production crew.

■ The four-way stop signs make the intersection less hazardous, even if someone runs one of them. The demonstration is much more effective if one of the streets has through traffic.

The solution to these problems is relatively simple: Have the producer contact the police department and find a two-way-stop intersection in a quiet neighborhood that has very little traffic. There should be sufficient alternate routes so that a temporary closure of the intersection will not cause any traffic delays or prevent neighbors from getting to and from their homes.

SCRIPT ANALYSIS

To explain all the intricacies of analyzing and interpreting nondramatic and dramatic scripts would go far beyond the scope of this book. The importance of translating a process message into medium requirements has already been noted. Translating a script into various directing requirements calls for a similar process. The following list offers some basic guidelines on reading a script as a director.

Locking-In Point and Translation

Locking-in means that you conjure up a vivid visual or aural image while reading the script. This locking-in may well occur at the very opening scene, at the closing scene, or at any particularly striking scene somewhere in the middle. Do not try to force this locking-in process. It may well occur as an audio, rather than video, image. If the script is good, the locking-in is almost inevitable.²

² See Tony Barr, *Acting for the Camera*, rev. ed. (New York: HarperPerennial, 1997), pp. 171–224. See also Katz, *Film Directing: Shot by Shot*, and Michael Rabiger, *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics*, 2d ed. (Boston: Focal Press, 1997), pp. 161–236.

Nevertheless, there are a few steps that will expedite the process.

- Read the script carefully—do not just glance at it. The video and audio information provide an overview of the show and how complex the production will be. Try to isolate the basic idea behind the show. Better yet, try to formulate an appropriate process message.

- Try to lock-in on a key shot, key action, or some key technical maneuver. For example, you may lock-in on the part in a script on water conservation where a bucket is put into a shower to catch some of the runoff water. How exactly do you see it? As a close-up of feet with the bucket next to them and water spraying all over? Through the glass door? From this lock-in point, you can work backward to the actions that precede it (a woman putting a bucket into the shower) and forward to the ones that follow it (stepping out of the shower with the full bucket). You will find that the images now start to make sense and seem to follow a rather logical sequence. The locking-in point has not only helped get you started, but also indicated a particular visualization.

- You can now begin to translate the images into concrete production requirements, such as camera positions, specific lighting and audio setups, videotape recording, and postproduction activities.

Analyzing a dramatic script is, of course, quite a bit more complicated than translating the video and audio instructions of a nondramatic script into the director's production requirements. A good dramatic script operates on many conscious and unconscious levels, all of which need to be interpreted and made explicit. Above all, you should be able to define the theme of the play (the basic idea—what the story is all about), the plot (how the story moves forward and develops), the characters (how one person differs from the others and

how each one reacts to the situation at hand), and the environment (where the action takes place). In general, television drama emphasizes theme and character rather than plot, and inner, rather than outer, environment.

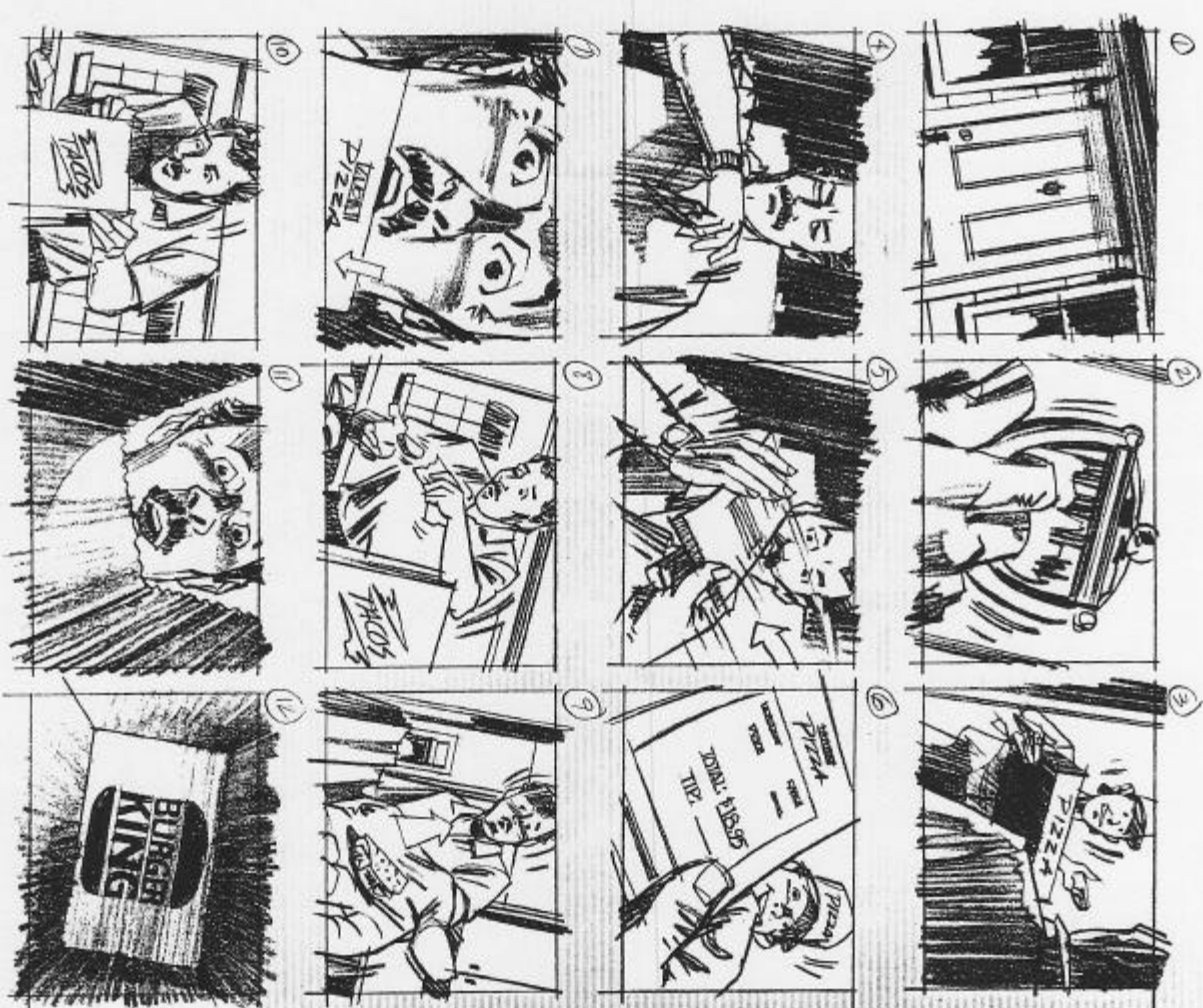
After the locking-in, further analysis depends greatly on what production method you choose: whether you shoot the play in sequence with multiple cameras and a switcher, or with a single camera in discontinuous, out-of-sequence takes.

The Storyboard

Once you have successfully locked-in and begun to visualize the various takes and scenes, you may want to make rough sketches of, or otherwise record, these visualizations so you won't forget them. A sequence of visualized shots is called a *storyboard*. It contains key visualization points and audio information. **SEE 18.20** It is usually drawn on preprinted storyboard paper, which has areas that represent the television screen and for audio and other information, or created by computer. Storyboard software programs offer a great many stock images (houses, streets, highways, cars, living rooms, kitchens) into which you can place figures and move them into various positions in the storyboard frame. **SEE 18.21**

Most commercials are carefully storyboarded shot-by-shot before they ever go into production. Storyboards help people who make decisions about the commercial see the individual shots and imagine them in sequence.

Storyboards are also used for other types of single-camera productions that contain a great number of especially complicated discontinuous shots or shot sequences. A good storyboard offers immediate clues to certain production requirements, such as general location, camera position, approximate focal length of the lens, method of audio pickup, amount and type of postproduction, talent actions, set design, and hand props. Some movie directors have every shot storyboarded before they shoot a single frame of film.



18.20 HAND-DRAWN STORYBOARD
The hand-drawn storyboard shows the major visualization points and sometimes lists the key audio sections or the shot sequence.



18.2.1 COMPUTER-GENERATED STORYBOARD

The computer-generated storyboard uses standard images that can be used to create a variety of exterior and interior scenes, in which images of people can be placed and moved about. Note the two-track audio information.

MAIN POINTS

- For the director preproduction starts with visualizing the key images, which means interpreting the individual shots as television images. These visualized images must then be perceived in a certain order, a process called sequencing.
- A properly stated process message will give important clues to visualization and sequencing and, consequently, to the production method and medium requirements.
- Visualizing and sequencing give the director a sense of camera and talent positions and traffic (movements).
- A careful study of the floor plan or location sketch and the prop list helps in planning equipment and talent traffic and reveals potential production problems.
- Script analysis should lead to a locking-in point (an especially vivid visual or sound image) that determines the subsequent visualizations and sequencing.
- The storyboard shows key visualization points of an event with accompanying audio information as well as the proper sequencing of the shots.

ZETTLE'S VIDEO LAB 2.1

Although you have already gone through most of the information in the *process* monitor, you may now rerun some of the tapes to look at them from a director's point of view.

RUN ZVL 1



Click on the **process** monitor and run tape 7 **People**. Before you can establish an effective production team and communicate your ideas to them, you need to know the functions of each team member. Tape 7 shows what jobs the technical and nontechnical production people normally perform.

RUN ZVL 2



Run tape 2 **Phases**. Pay particular attention to the production schedule.

RUN ZVL 3



Run tape 4 **Ideas**. Click on module 3 **Scripts**. Check carefully the two-column script format. Many nondramatic shows are formatted this way.

RUN ZVL 4



Click on the **editing** monitor and run tape 5 **Location Procedures**. Click on module 1 **Basics**. Although you are told that the field log is normally kept by the script continuity person, in smaller productions it is often the PA who takes care of this important field activity.

RUN ZVL 5



Click on the **process** monitor and run tape 3 **Effect-to-Cause**. Before you read about specific applications of the effect-to-cause model, you may want to acquaint yourself once more with its major elements. Watch all four modules: **Basic idea**, **Desired effect**, **Cause**, and **Actual effect**.