

FULL TEAM AHEAD

So you're the director. In Hollywood, directors make the decisions because they're the experts. At your house, you're the director because you've got the camera. But that's no reason to hog all the fun. If you don't let the other kids share the pleasure, you'll end up videotaping the flowers out back. All alone.

Like most of us, you probably have one or three friends to shoot with. That means people will be doing double duty behind the camera (*crew*) and in front of the camera (*talent*). Since everyone can't hold the camera, you'd better know what other jobs to offer instead.

One Live Crew

Here's a list of essential roles for making a video. Sometimes just a few people do everything. And if you're going to do everything, you might as well find out what you're called.



WRITER - in charge of the story

DIRECTOR - the visionary who controls and manages the movie's creation

CAMERA OPERATOR - sets up, operates, and deals with the camera

SOUND PERSON - deals with all aspects of microphones and capturing sound

GAFFER - in charge of the lighting and related visual solutions

GRIP - in charge of sets, main props; sometimes helps the camera operator

STYLIST - in charge of costumes, makeup, actors' props

TALENT - those who work in front of the camera

EFFECTS - creates and executes the special effects

EDITOR - puts all the pieces together at the end

PRODUCER - supervisor, also known as "a responsible adult"

CATERER - see Producer

TRANSPORTATION - see Producer

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER - a producer who provides funds or very good food

STUDIO CHIEF - the owner of the camcorder

TIP

Everyone in your movie should know they're in your movie. No hidden cameras! Get people's permission before you videotape them.

GOING SOLO

What's that? Your crew is home doing homework? Relax, Hitchcock ... solo projects don't have to make you psycho:

Keep it simple. Don't bite off more than you can shoot.

Plan ahead. Plan ahead. Plan ahead. Plan ahead.

Travel light. All you really need is a camera, a blank videotape, charged batteries, a charger (just in case), a camera bag to keep things safe, and a shot list in case you want to know what you're doing.

Non-fiction videos especially lend themselves to solo shooting: interviews, events, and nature videos.

If you've got fiction on your mind, puppets, dolls, and hands make surprisingly well-behaved actors. You'll have to do the talking, though. Or, set up the camera somewhere stable and strut your stuff onscreen.

The Talent

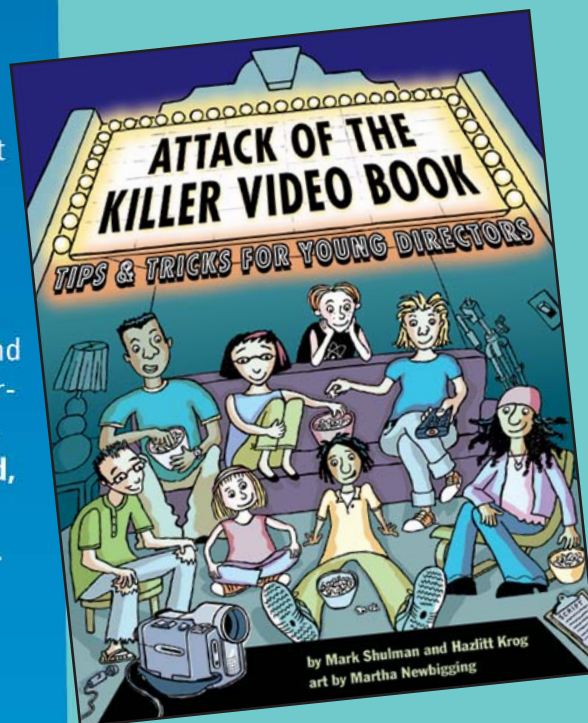
Who's the biggest ham on camera? The actors are called talent, but that's no guarantee of actual talent.

Casting means choosing the right actor for each part. If there are only two of you, it also helps to be a master of disguise. If your video has a script, encourage your actors to memorize their lines before the shoot. It's all right if they change their lines if the changes make sense for the movie.

Enough Reading! Let's Make a Video!

Ready? Get set ... grab your camera! Get a videotape that fits in the slot. Find the red REC button. Aim the camera at something. Sooner or later hit the REC button again to stop taping. Rewind. Match the colors on your audio/video cord plugs with the colors of the jacks on your TV or VCR. Figure out how to get video to play on the TV. Sit and watch. Cool, huh?

Go ahead and satisfy that itchy recording finger. Let practice make perfect, then come back to the book for your next steps up the video ladder.



“DIY Video: Solo & Team Work”
an excerpt from the book

**ATTACK OF THE KILLER
VIDEO BOOK: Tips & Tricks
for Young Directors**
by Mark Shulman and Hazlitt Krog

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ASSIGNMENT

Team Video Project

Divide your classroom into 5-person teams. Assign each person to one of these 5 jobs:

- Writer
- Actor
- Director
- Set Person
- Camera Operator

In addition, every team has a Producer (*a responsible adult*) who supervises the film shoot (and catering). That adult could be a parent or a teacher or a librarian or the person you borrowed the camera from. NOTE: If you can't round up a 5-person team, you can assign two or more jobs to one person.

Your assignment is to videotape a simple process. Here are some examples:

- making a sandwich
- mowing the lawn
- washing the dog
- giving a wet dog a sandwich on the lawn

Your team has 10 minutes to make a movie.

The Writer decides what simple process to shoot and what the actor will do.

The Director gives everyone their assignment, keeps track of the time, and tells the camera operator what to do.

The Set Person makes suggestions for locations or props—should we move the desk?

The Actor decides how to show the process being demonstrated—play it for laughs or play it straight? **The Camera Operator** has *one minute* to tape. If you have time left, you can do a “second take” and tape the process one more time—but only for *one minute*.

The Director is in charge of saying “ROLL” to start the taping and saying “CUT!” after 60 seconds of taping.

Next, everyone changes jobs and does it again: you have 10 minutes to make a movie. Then everyone changes jobs until you've had all 5 jobs. In 50 minutes, you make 5 movies and try 5 jobs. Not bad for a one hour class!

TIP: Let the action happen on its own, so it seems as natural as possible.

You can let the camera stay in one place or try close-ups, wide shots, and different angles to help tell your story.

The simpler and shorter the process you tape, the better. Here's what you can accidentally learn by making simple process videos:

- how to show the individual steps of doing something
- how to capture a series of nice-looking shots
- how an actor can change the mood of a scene
- how a writer can script action, not just dialogue
- how to work with sets and talent (even wet, hungry dogs)

When you are done, you will have told a short story on video. Elsewhere in our book, we talk about storytelling. For now, just get the feeling. Then plug it in, watch the results, and on each video, notice:

- who is the director?
- how does the camera move?
- what is the actor's best moment?
- how does the action tell a story or set a mood?
- how do the set and props add to the video?

Ready for more? Power down the camera and read up.

QUIZ

NOTE: *Quiz answers are available at the end of this document.*

1) MATCHING

Match the Jobs (numbers) with the Job Descriptions (letters). Put the correct letter next to each number. I'll spot you the first one:

Sample: 1. Studio Chief *goes with* B. owner of the video camera

Jobs:

1. Studio Chief
2. Camera Operator
3. Gaffer
4. Director
5. Sound Person
6. Grip

Job Descriptions:

- A. In charge of lighting
- B. Owner of the video camera
- C. Sets up and runs the camera
- D. Deals with the microphones
- E. Manages the movie's creation
- F. In charge of sets and props

2) MULTIPLE CHOICE

What does the term "second take" mean?

- A. You tried twice to get the camera away from your friend.
- B. You filmed the same thing twice, in case you flubbed it the first time.
- C. You got second pick from the sandwich tray on break.

3) For each person listed below, write whether they are "talent" or "crew":

1. A dog doing a dance for the camera.
2. The person looking for the battery charger.
3. Your friend doing a dance for the camera.
4. The person fixing lunch for everyone.
5. The dog that just ruined the shot of your friend dancing.

4) MULTIPLE CHOICE

What does "casting" mean in moviemaking?

- A. Making a cast of an actor so they can remember where they stood.
- B. Asking the crew for ideas about what you should do next.
- C. Matching an actor to each role in the movie.

5) MULTIPLE CHOICE

Besides a working video camera, what is the one thing you must have to make a video?

- A. A microphone.
- B. A big investor.
- C. A video tape.

• How does working with a team make moviemaking easier? How does it make it harder?

DISCUSSION

- How is solo moviemaking easier than team moviemaking? How is it harder?
- Watch the video of LIVEbrary author Shari Graydon—it's in the LIVEbrary or on YouTube—and discuss it. It's only 2 minutes long. Do you notice anything about the lighting? The sound? The set or props? Does the camera ever go “in” for a close-up or “out” for a wide shot?
- Who are Mark Shulman and Hazlitt Krog? Use the ASK.com search engine to check them out. Series Librarian Gary Price will be giving ASK.com demonstrations before each weekly chat.
- Prepare questions for author Mark Shulman for the live Skype Chat on Thursday, October 18, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. ET. You can post questions on the LIVEbrary Blog, send them via email to LIVEbrary@annickpress.com, or ask your questions live during the chat program. Advance registration is required to chat.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1) MATCHING

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Jobs:

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- F. In charge of sets and props

Answer:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Studio Chief | B. Owner of the video camera |
| 2. Camera Operator | C. Sets up and runs the camera |
| 3. Gaffer | A. In charge of lighting |
| 4. Director | E. Manages the movie's creation |
| 5. Sound Person | D. Deals with the microphones |
| 6. Grip | F. In charge of sets and props |

2) MULTIPLE CHOICE

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Answer:

B. You filmed the same thing twice, in case you flubbed it the first time.

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2. The person looking for the battery charger.
3. Your friend doing a dance for the camera.
4. The person fixing lunch for everyone.
5. The dog that just ruined the shot of your friend dancing.

Answer:

1-talent, 2-crew, 3-talent, 4-crew, 5-talent

4) MULTIPLE CHOICE

What does “casting” mean in moviemaking?

- A. Making a cast of an actor so they can remember where they stood.
- B. Asking the crew for ideas about what you should do next.
- C. Matching an actor to each role in the movie.

Answer:

C. Matching an actor to each role in the movie.

5) MULTIPLE CHOICE

Besides a working video camera, what is the one thing you must have to make a video?

- A. A microphone.
- B. A big investor.
- C. A video tape.

Answer:

C. A video tape.