

# DP Bradford Lipson shoots "In the Dark" Season 2 for The CW Network : Shot on VENICE

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By: Jeff Berlin

Season 2 of “In the Dark” premiered April 16, 2020 on The CW Network. SonyCine.com recently sat down with series DP Bradford Lipson to discuss his approach to photographing the show and his journey from gaffer to cinematographer.

About “In the Dark”:

A flawed and irreverent blind woman is the only “witness” to the murder of her drug-dealing friend. After the police dismiss her story, she sets out with her dog, Pretzel, to find the killer while also managing her colorful dating life and the job she hates at the guide dog school owned by her overprotective parents.

Synopses of the first two episodes of Season 2:

"All About the Benjamin"

IN IT TOGETHER - Murphy (Perry Mattfeld) is on the mend from her terrifying encounter with Dean (Rich Sommer), but Nia’s (guest star Nicki Micheaux) visit spurs her into action. Murphy, Jess (Brooke Markham) and Felix (Morgan Krantz) must act quickly to devise a plan that will keep them out of Nia’s crosshairs and, possibly, save Guiding Hope in the process. Also starring Keston John. John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein directed the episode written by Corinne Kingsbury.

"Cross My Heart and Hope to Lie"

LOST AND FOUND – Murphy (Perry Mattfeld) gets a surprise visit while the Guiding Hope team – Felix (Morgan Krantz), Jess (Brooke Markham) and Murphy — work on a plan to cover up their new “business.” Darnell’s (Keston John) visit to Nia (Nicki Micheaux) takes an unexpected turn and Dean (Rich Sommer) gets a new mission. Also starring Casey Deidrick. Brian Dannelly directed the episode written by Yael Zinkow.

Jeff Berlin: How did you get started as a DP?

Bradford Lipson: I was a gaffer for 20-some years. My goal was always to become a cinematographer. I started to make the move while I was working on “The Office,” and right about that time a friend of mine offered me a show to shoot, a little half hour comedy, that would also give me an opportunity to get into Local 600. After that, any time I'd get offered a show as a gaffer, I would ask the director of photography if there was any opportunity for me to shoot.

I was very fortunate because all the DPs that I worked with were incredibly supportive. A DP friend of mine got the last five episodes of “Ugly Betty” before it moved to New York,” and I got to shoot some of the double up days. I then went on to a Bruckheimer show called “The Forgotten” with DP David Stockton, ASC, and I ended up shooting three episodes there. “Heart of Dixie” with DP Bob Gantz was next. Bob said, “When I scout, you’re going to shoot,” and that further opened the door for me, as I shot two episodes of that series. I got offered the show, “Wilfred,” which was for FX. After season two, I submitted some work to the ASC awards, got nominated and ended up winning Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography in Half-Hour Episodic Television Series, which was such a fantastic experience and honor.

Jeff: Tell me about “The Wedding Ringer,” how that came about.

Bradford: It just so happens it’s thanks to the lead actor on “Wilfred” who introduced me to a director who had a small pilot he wanted to shoot. This director and I met for coffee and we hit it off. He was warm and gracious and I loved his energy so I agreed to shoot it with little money or budget.

We shot this pilot during a two week hiatus in the middle of “Wilfred.” It was just three days of shooting, a half hour comedy. The director was Jeremy Garelick. A couple weeks after the shoot he ended up calling me to tell me how much he loved working with me, he was also impressed with how good the pilot looked considering the lack of time or funds. I was excited to hear this as I absolutely loved working with him and was looking forward to our paths crossing some day. He then told me he wanted to send me a script for a feature film. He wanted me to read it and see what I thought. He sent me a script called “Best Man, Inc.” It was an absolutely hilarious and cleverly written script. It eventually was renamed “The Wedding Ringer.”



*Bradford Lipson shooting "The Wedding Ringer" on the Sony F65*

I ended up shooting that movie for him with Screen Gems. That was my first substantial feature credit as a cinematographer.

Jeff: Let's discuss "In the Dark."

Bradford: This all can be traced back to a show I did called "Finding Carter," which was a one hour drama on MTV. I was brought in to shoot the last half of Season 2. On a TV series, the great thing is, you get to work with many directors. So, one of the directors, Brian Dannelly, and I just hit it off right from the get go. His episode was somewhat challenging with a lot of night exterior work. My approach was, to work off of as much practical lighting as we can, when we can. Augment when we need to, but then to make it look really tasty by designing lighting elements into the shots as opposed to having to light every single set up.

After that, Brian asked me about a couple other projects but the timing just wasn't working out. Then he called me about "In the Dark." He got hired on as executive producer and one of the directors of the show. He called and said, "Hey, I got this pilot. You'd be perfect for it. I want you to watch it and see what you think." As I watched the pilot, my wife Ginny, who was working at her desk nearby me got drawn into the show. By the end she said, "You got to shoot this show." I agreed as I was really blown away by the acting, writing and concept of the show. I took the meeting and got the job.

Jeff: On the first season, what kind of camera package were you using?

Bradford: I was using ARRI Alexa minis with Leica Summilux-C prime lenses and some Fujinon zooms. This was a very similar lens package to what I used for "The Wedding Ringer," that I shot with the Sony F55 and F65. They're beautiful lenses and the Fujinon zooms cut nicely with the Leicas.

Jeff: So you shot the first season and got renewed. What predicated your move to VENICE? How did that spark happen?

Bradford: I had heard rumors about the Sony VENICE having Dual Base ISO and how great it performed in low light. In the TV series, "In the Dark," our main character Murphy is blind. One of the things I was intrigued with and wanted to capture, is the darkness around her, and that she wouldn't necessarily have lights on in her apartment unless her roommate was there, who's not blind. In Murphy's bedroom we had no practicals, so if she was in there at night, the only light sources were coming from either the other room in the apartment or from the windows.

For Season 2, I wanted to explore that even more, and since the story arc was going to be darker for Season 2, I wanted to get into darker lighting and darker frames. That was at the top of the list of what drew me to the VENICE, the low light performance. Also very attractive is the color science, which is phenomenal. I love the wider color gamut as well. And I was also really interested in the Rialto extension system. We did some really fun things with the Rialto, which just opens up the creative doors. That was super exciting to me. And then after that, the built-in ND filters, where you have eight stops of filtration by one-stop increments.

That to me was a huge thing because with the Alexa, that's always an issue. I'm often already using two filters in front of the glass, so having those ND filters behind the glass is a godsend. When shooting exteriors, to be able to very quickly change your NDs to accommodate the exposure situation, that's huge and saves time which equates to saving money on set.



Jeff: What other filtration are you using?

Bradford: When we did our camera test at the Sony DMPC in Los Angeles, I ended up falling in love with Tiffen Black Diffusion/FX filters. They're really beautiful because they don't lift the blacks too much. They create a nice diffusion and don't ghost as much as some other filters. I really enjoyed using those this season, and they were used extensively. I use a variety of filters but I'm most often playing one-stop polarizers, even on interiors along with the diffusion.

Jeff: How did the test go at the DMPC?

Bradford: I contacted Dan Perry of Sony and told him I was very interested in using the VENICE for Season 2, and that I wanted to do a test and would love to show the producers what the camera could do.

Dan and Laura Pursley were supportive so we set it up. I needed a stand-in and was wanting someone who looked as close to Perry Mattfield as possible. On a whim I reached out to her. I really only wanted to find out if she knew anybody in L.A. that she's worked with who could perhaps come in for this test. Her response was, "Well, wouldn't it be better if I was there?" I said, "Yes, it'd be awesome, but I don't expect that." She replied, "I know, but I want to do it," and she did.

My friend David Stockton, ASC joined us since he was also interested in looking at the camera, as well as our executive producer, Brian Dannelly.

We created a variety of different lighting setups. I tried to replicate how I would do something back in Toronto in the apartment set. Even though the spaces were aesthetically very different. I played a lot with color contrast and exposure contrast, pushing the highlights and shadows. We shot a variety of focal lengths on our Leica Summilux lenses, and I tried the Thalia large format lenses as well. We also tested filters at the same time to check diffusion and see how things highlighted and flared - kicks, ghosting, all that good stuff. And then we set up for low light to test Dual Base ISO.

For one test we set the camera to its 2500 ISO base and then set ISO at 800, 1200, 1600 and 2500. We had Perry walk through different lighting situations. In one scene, we had her passing through almost entire darkness. We had two practicals on and a very small bounce at about .5 f-stop. As she walked closer to the camera she passed by two table practicals and as she came into her close up she took out her cell phone, which was nearly all the light exposing her at that point. That's when I was really blown away by how beautiful it looked.

We then downloaded the files and went to the DMPC's color suite. When we started playing around with the files in DaVinci Resolve, I kept getting more and more excited. The blacks are just solid. They're rich, beautiful, and I also couldn't believe how much detail we could see in the shadows.



*Frame grab from DMPC test*

At this point I knew this camera was the best choice for our series. Our executive producer, Brian Dannelly, watched us work with the footage and said, "Oh my, this is beautiful, it's going to be amazing." So he was sold. It was an easy decision to use the Sony VENICE for Season 2.

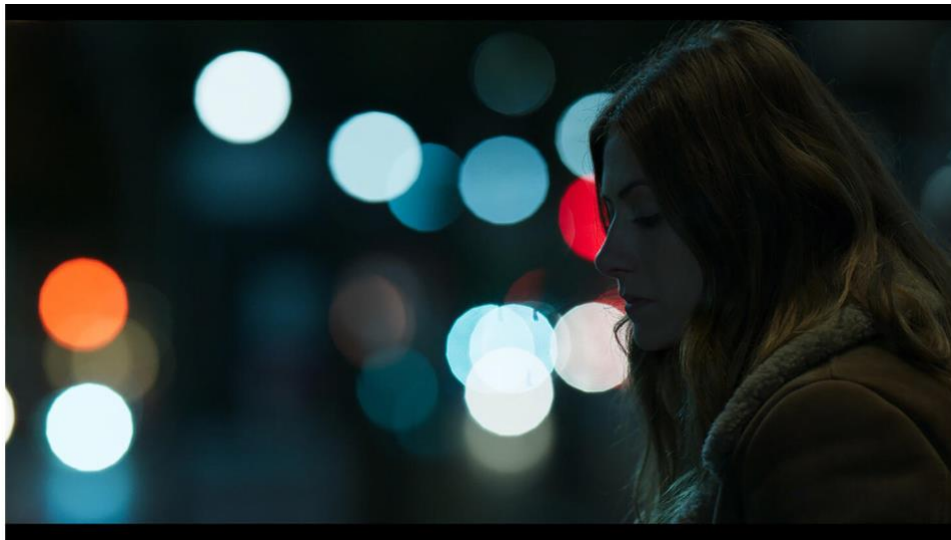
Jeff: How are you exposing for low light scenes?

Bradford: In low light levels, we found that with the camera set to its 2500 base and then set to 800 ISO, that was sufficient to be able to light and shoot at really low light levels, although there were a few times we shot at 1200 and 1600 ISO. The first time we were lighting, my gaffer and I both set our meters to 800 ISO. We'd light and then go back to the monitors and it all looked way too bright. We quickly surmised that you really just need to keep the meter at 2500 ISO no matter what. And then everything fell into place.

Jeff: So to be clear, camera was set to 2500 base, you dialed the ISO down to 800, and you kept your meter at 2500.

Bradford: Yes. Once we were doing that, our light values were properly exposed and we didn't have to do too much adjusting. I could just go back to the monitor and it always looked representative of what I was seeing and how it should be exposing.

For some street scenes we shot, I really took advantage of the low light capability of the camera. There were many times we were outside at night, and we were at this higher ISO and man, it's beautiful. It's rich and looks amazing.



Jeff: You're not shooting for HDR, but you are using ACES?

Bradford: Yes, that is correct. My DIT, Dwain Barrick was running Livegrade for the monitor feed. When we're looking at the image and I'm lighting, it's all through Livegrade. I'll make quick decisions like dialing down the blacks or rolling the highlights up or down a little, or pushing some more blue in the shadows, as an example. I will preface this by saying, I always try to do as much as I can in camera with lighting and color to keep from having to do too much



manipulation in the grade. I would much rather try to get it as close as I can on set, looking at it with a Rec.709 LUT as my starting point and then going from there.

There are particular situations where we want a particular look. For instance we have a lot of scenes in a prison. Our show creator, Corinne Kingsbury, had asked me to give it a harsher look, different than Season 1, so for that I wanted to drive certain colors in certain directions and do a bleach bypass look. That was specific, so I had my DIT work on that while we were lighting. After the scene is shot, he ingests the footage and puts it through DaVinci Resolve, matching what we did in Livegrade. And it's at that point that he's putting it into ACES. From there we make dailies and the files go to Los Angeles where Level 3 gets them for posting.

Jeff: Cool, so what do you like about ACES?

Bradford: What I like is that it creates a very stable workflow. The colors and exposure, no matter what platform you're looking at them on, are going to match. When the editor is looking at it on his Avid and Level 3 is looking at it on their platform, which happens to be DaVinci Resolve, no matter where it goes, everybody's going to see it the same way. So it insures me that everyone will be looking at the dailies the way they were shot. It also eliminates the colorist in L.A. wondering exactly what I was trying to do in Toronto for a particular scene.

He understands, since it's ACES, that he's seeing it as intended, as opposed to trying to interpret it wondering, "Did Brad really want this blue, or this red, or whatever."

Jeff: Which codec did you use?

Bradford: X-OCN ST.



*Photo Jeff Berlin*

Jeff: How do you like working with the 16 bit files?

Bradford: Oh, I love it. There is so much color there to work with, so much depth. It gives me so much opportunity to have the image be exactly how I want it.

I'll give you an example of something that happened way after we wrapped and I was back in Los Angeles. During production we had shot a particular scene on a bar set, and it was supposed to be 3:00, 4:00 in the morning. I had a warm apricot sodium vapor light coming in through the front windows and door, shafting through the space, and we had atmosphere in the air. When I was back in Los Angeles color grading at Level 3, I saw they cut this scene with another scene where the characters end up going from inside to outside, where it's morning. The challenge was, can we change this particular interior scene that had been shot night so it doesn't look like all the other scenes that were at night, and also make sense and not be jarring when they head outside into the morning light? We were able to do that because there was so much latitude in the file. Our colorist, Michael Levy did an amazing job taking the highlights through the windows from a sodium look to more of a cool blue look. He was able to make it look like morning light as opposed to nighttime. So there's a great deal of latitude to play with. And I'll mention the color gamut again - between the color space and the 16 bit depth file, you can't go wrong.

Jeff: Will you be shooting Season 3 on VENICE again?

Bradford: Absolutely. I'm going with the same package I had last year.

Jeff: So this is interesting. You're shooting VENICE, which is a full frame sensor, but you're shooting on Leica Summilux lenses, which are Super 35. What do you love about those lenses? What do you love about that combination that you keep going back to it?

Bradford: There's something I can't quite place my finger on that is just so pleasing to me, and the images I get are exactly what I'm looking for. They are a sharp lens, but there's still a creaminess to the colors that I like. It's a very nice camera / lens combination. I also like the low light capabilities of the lenses, they're T1.4s. On the show, we do a lot of visual language with depth of field. So for one character there will be more depth of field when we're with them, where I'll be stopped down to a T2.8 or a T4. Then when we're with Murphy, our main character, we'll open up to a T1.4 so her world falls off more quickly around her and is more out of focus compared to everybody else. It's a subtle visual language, but I think it helps with the storytelling.

Jeff Berlin: What sensor setting were you on with those lenses?

Bradford: 4K 17x9

Jeff: How many cameras are you shooting with on the show?

Bradford: We were normally a two-camera show. I always had a third VENICE that was built out for a Ronin 2 and that was always ready to go. And then we certainly would have three-camera days, so it just depended on the situation.





Jeff: What tips would you have for up and coming DPs?

Bradford: I think it's really important to learn lighting and understand what it can do for you. It's important to know what the tools are and how they work. Equally important is knowing how to adhere to a budget. Producers expect DPs to be highly involved in the decision making that keeps the show within budget. If you have an idea for how you want something to look, you better know what tools are going to give you that look.

Knowing what it takes to execute a lighting set up, what you're asking of your crew, is very important because there are times when you will have to make a split-second decision and that decision can either sink or swim part, or all, of your day.

You also, don't want to paint yourself into a corner with lighting. You want to be able to light so that you can turn around and not have to relight the entire set for the turn around. That's why I think lighting is probably the top of the list. And then there's composition, but with that you can even go out with a still camera and practice. You should be looking at images from other photographers, cinematographers and works of art and thinking, "Okay, I like this particular composition. What do I like about it?" I think there are more ways to practice composition and lensing than there are with lighting. So finding ways to learn and practice lighting is probably one of the best things a new DP can do.

Jeff: How did your camera assistants like working with the VENICE?

Bradford: They loved it. The camera is so user friendly and a joy to work with. My A camera First, Pierre Branconnier said "One thing that I enjoyed working with the Sony VENICE was the

dual display for menu control on both sides of the camera that allowed me to adjust the shutter angle, ISO, ND selection, white balance, and frame rate”.

Jeff: Menus easier to navigate?

Bradford: Menus are easier to navigate. From a technical standpoint regarding the camera systems, I think everybody enjoyed working with the VENICE. What I love about my camera department, as well as my gaffer and key grip on the show, is they're just as excited as I am. When they're looking at the images on the monitor and saying, "Wow! These images are beautiful." It really motivated everyone to bring their A game to work every day. I think we can all be proud of the work we did this season.

Bradford can be found on Instagram at [@brad\\_lipsondop](#).





*Photo: Ben Mark Holzberg/The CW*



# Bradford Lipson Discusses Cinematography on The Wedding Ringer

## [ProductionHUB](#)

Cinematographer Bradford Lipson is best known for his television work, including the FX show WILFRED, which earned him the American Society of Cinematographer's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography. Lipson brings extensive lighting experience and a keen eye to his cinematography. His recent feature, THE WEDDING RINGER, shows healthy doses of both as he challenged some of the conventional wisdom about shooting comedy. In this interview with CW Sonderoptic's Seth Emmons, Lipson elaborates on the challenges, techniques and creative choices that influenced this production.

\* Seth Emmons: The first thing I noticed about THE WEDDING RINGER is that the look and feel is somewhat different from most comedies. How did you arrive at the look for this film?

\* Bradford Lipson: From my earliest discussions with Jeremy Garelick, director and co-writer of the film, we knew that it would be based and shot in Los Angeles. That helped us arrive at the look in a number of different ways. Firstly, Jeremy wanted the city to be one of the characters in the film. To that end we found some great locations that would allow us to show off the city. Secondly, even though THE WEDDING RINGER was a relatively small budget film, we wanted to go for a big budget look. And thirdly, we wanted to try and limit the size and scope of our lighting package so we could maximize our time at locations through shorter setup and strike times, and avoiding generators and long cable runs when possible. I also discussed with Jeremy about not going with a high-key look, which is common with comedies. I took the opportunities where it made sense to give the scenes some nice texture with color contrast and lighting. A few examples would be Jimmy's (Kevin Hart) office, and especially the scene on that set where Doris (Jenifer Lewis) and Jimmy have a heart-to-heart moment. Another would be a night scene where I motivated the light from the pool when Jimmy and Doug (Josh Gad) open up to each other. I also chose to often shoot at shallow stops, so there was nice fall off. This was especially pleasing on the smaller scenes between two characters. The scene when Jimmy drops Doug off at his condo at night and we cut to Jimmy in his car, there is beautiful bokeh behind him. That entire scene was shot on the Leica Summicron-C lenses at a T2.0.

\* What were some of your favorite locations?

\* One would be the scene in the Crystal Ballroom at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel. We shot some master angles from the balcony overlooking the whole room that are big and beautiful. The art direction for that ballroom scene was phenomenal; the reception looked rich and elegant. Another would be the rooftop of the Los Angeles Athletic Club where we first meet Jimmy. We took a crane up there to get that big wide shot and show off the view of Los Angeles. We wanted to get the most out of each location and tried to find the best angles to do that. Doug's condo also stands out, especially the scene we shot as the sun was setting and they are in silhouette on the balcony.

\* You mentioned the choice to limit your lighting options. How did that decision come about?

\* It actually all started with a conversation about cameras and lenses before I even got the job. After Jeremy and I finished a pilot called GOD BROTHERS, he sent me the script for THE WEDDING RINGER and introduced me to Glenn Gainer at Screen Gems. I sat down with Glenn, who is familiar with current camera technology, and we had an in-depth conversation about the benefits and limitations of technology on filmmaking today. That conversation got me even more interested in the project.

\* How so? What did you guys talk about?

\* We started talking about the Sony F65 and F55 cameras, which are both quite sensitive in regards to ISO and latitude. Glenn's theory is that with more sensitive cameras, you can use less firepower when lighting. Note that he wasn't saying you don't have to light, just that the size of the fixtures could hypothetically be smaller wattage. And that brings a number of other benefits with it that were appealing.

Smaller fixtures means a smaller physical footprint, both on set and in trucks parked outside locations. It also means less power needed and possibly even avoiding a generator altogether in some situations. Since we knew we'd be shooting a lot in downtown Los Angeles, a small footprint on the street would give us greater access to the locations and we could stay there longer without impacting the neighborhood as much.

Theoretically it made sense, but I was curious to see how it would play out in reality. I decided to embrace it as a challenge to myself and see how we could elevate the look of the film without bringing out all the big fixtures and condors. Part of that was the sensitivity of the cameras. Part of it was my choice of lenses. Sometimes you want a big fixture, not necessarily for the wattage but for the spread and the quality of the light, such as an 18k or 20k Fresnel. I had to let go of that temptation; in the end it was a lot of fun.

\* How did you decide what lenses to use for this film?

\* For some time now I've worked with (LA rental house) Otto Nemenz and I did on this film as well. They had shown me the Leica Summilux-C lenses before and I fell in love with them. This was the first opportunity I had to work with the Leica lenses and I chose them for a couple of reasons. Mainly it was the look these lenses capture. They have a really nice, present-day, natural appearance that doesn't add any look other than what I can see with my own eyes. They're great at capturing colors and skin tones.

The speed of the Summilux-C lenses was also important for this project. Being able to open up to T1.4 meant I had even more flexibility in low light and could light the scenes exactly how I wanted. My testing at Otto's showed me that in combination with the Sony cameras, the lenses would allow me to dig into the blacks in a very pleasing manner. I knew they'd capture everything I wanted in the way I had envisioned.



Most comedy is shot wide, and if there are two people in a scene you get them both in the shot. I wanted to use depth-of-field more than is traditional in comedy. When we got into coverage, I chose to shoot more wide open and let the background fall off. My camera assistants often thought it was crazy, but I wanted it to have some texture and for the image to be rich and not be overly lit. This was part of that elevated look we were going for. My 1st ACs, including Mariana Sánchez de Antuñano on A Camera, did an amazing job.

One scene that would have been traditionally shot at a really deep stop, like T4 or T5.6, is when all the groomsmen are in the van being chased by the police. I wanted to use a shallow depth-of-field to isolate the characters so we racked focus with the beats from one character to another in a way that made the scene more dramatic and exciting.

\* What was your camera setup like?

\* We almost always shot with three cameras. The Sony F65s were A and C cameras. My B camera was the Sony F55 which was also converted into Steadicam mode when needed. Coming out of WILFRED, which was three-camera and often cross covering with opposing angles, I felt comfortable going down that road and it worked out great for getting multiple angles of scenes where the actors were improvising. Often, due to set constraints, I couldn't shoot opposing angles so we'd do a 60/40 master and an over or a tighter shot. Then the third camera would get a clean single or reaction shots from other people in the scene.

There is one series of scenes that comes to mind and encompasses everything we've been talking about: the scaled-back lighting, the cameras and the lenses. It takes place in Doug's condo in downtown Los Angeles with this gorgeous view of the L.A. skyline from the fourteenth floor. We were shooting day interiors, then sundown into almost night, then back then next day for a morning scene.

Between the performance of the cameras and lenses, I was confident I could shoot the day interiors without the windows completely blowing out. My biggest light was a 4000W HMI plus some smaller HMIs, Jo-lekos and a couple of Cineo HS TruColor fixtures. In total it was a little over 100 amps and we did a tie-in directly in the apartment and completely avoided a long cable run and a generator parked on the street. The scenes came out just as we'd foreseen them.

We then switched to a scene to be shot in real time as the sun goes down and segues into nighttime. One of the cameras was locked off inside the condo, looking out onto the balcony and the beautiful downtown skyline. The other two cameras were cross-covering Jimmy and Doug. I had a 4K HMI on Doug as fill, because the sun was behind him and Jimmy was lit by the sun. As it got darker I kept the Leica Summilux-C lens wide open and scrimmed down the 4K before eventually panning it off completely. Then, we jumped inside for a night scene with the locked off camera using one of the Leica primes at a T2, which held the whole skyline beautifully.

In the film, this night scene dissolves into the next morning, so we left the locked off camera and came back early the next day. When I walked in the following morning, the sun was coming in low and looked stunning. I told Jeremy we could shoot immediately and asked the AD how quickly we could get Kevin and Josh upstairs so we could start. By this point I had learned to



trust the cameras and lenses to capture what I saw. We didn't put up a single light for that morning scene and it came out beautifully.

## **Deep Fried Interview: The Wedding Ringer cinematographer Bradford Lipson**

January 16, 2015

When *The Wedding Ringer* hits wide release today, it will conclude a long, detour-laden journey to the altar. Miramax's Dimension label bought the film under the title *The Golden Tux* back in 2002 and nearly made it with Vince Vaughn in the lead, but Vaughn opted for *Wedding Crashers* instead and by the time Disney sold off Miramax to a consortium in 2010, *The Golden Tux* was just one of more than 600 unproduced scripts included in the sale.

Producer Adam Fields rescued the script from limbo, brought back on original co-writer Jeremy Garelick to direct and sold the film to Screen Gems, who will release it in more than 3,000 theaters this weekend.

The film marks the first theatrical feature shot by cinematographer [Bradford Lipson](#), who also had a long journey to *The Wedding Ringer*. Lipson started out as an electrician in the early 1980s, climbed the ladder to gaffer in the 1990s and graduated to Direct of Photography on series television in the aughts – a run topped by an American Society of Cinematographers award for his work on FX's *Wilfred*.

Lipson spoke to Deep Fried Movies about using Sony's F65 and F55, shooting in Los Angeles and how his introduction to the world of entertainment was literally magic.

**The Plot:** With ten days to go before his wedding and no groomsmen to stand by his side, a loner (Josh Gad) turns to a Best Man-for-hire (Kevin Hart) to throw together a last-minute group of bros.

***Every interview I've read with you mentions your love of magic growing up. You were out there making a few bucks as a working magician at 13-years-old. What was your act like?***

I worked at a Shakey's Pizza Parlor in Denver, Colorado where I grew up and on Friday and Saturday nights, I would (do my act) there. I would walk around Shakey's doing close-up magic and balloon animals for all the kids, and then I would do one stage show where I would do things like turn candles into silks and make doves appear. For the big finale, I would take this platter and put Plaster of Paris and all of these really terrible ingredients on it. Then I'd put a match in there, you'd see this big flash and I'd put the lid over the platter. When I'd lift the lid off, it was a big pizza. We'd pass out the pizza, and that was the big closer at Shakey's Pizza. (laughs)

***Where you a movie fanatic as a kid as well?***

I loved movies. The *James Bond* movies, *The Pink Panther* movies with Peter Sellers, I loved those films. I also remember the phenomenal impact *2001: A Space Odyssey* had on me. My parents took us to see that when I was pretty little and I just sat there in awe. I didn't understand the movie because I was too young, but the images always stayed with me. It was a real formidable experience for me.

***Moving into *The Wedding Ringer*, what did you shoot the film with?***

I had two Sony F65s and one F55.



***What were the factors behind that choice? *The Wedding Ringer* is a Screen Gems release, which is owned by Sony. Did that play a part?***

That was a large part of it. They're very much into using their own technology. I think if I felt completely uncomfortable with that I could have talked to them about it. But I really liked the images their cameras created, so I was happy to work with them. For lenses, I used Leica Summilux prime lenses and then I had Angenieux 12-to-1 (zoom lenses) and Fujinon short zooms. We shot raw SLog2 and captured in 8K on the F65 and 4K on the F55. Storage was not an issue as Sony handled all the digital workflow as the cards were taken out of the camera. I was really impressed with the wide color gamut the cameras offer. Color rendition was beautiful and we were able to take full advantage of practical light on our night exteriors.

***What types of situations called for pulling out the zooms?***

I tried to use the primes for as many masters as I could. The low-light level situations and night exteriors called for the Leicas. I would use the zooms if I were in situations where we were working with the actors and I knew the director (Jeremy Garelick) wanted to keep rolling and just be able to tighten up the frame really quickly. Then there were times when we were really

down on the long end of the lens and I was way past what my prime lenses could (reach). My longest prime lens was 135mm and sometimes we wanted to hit 290mm.



*The Wedding Ringer was initially set in Chicago, but that locale shifted to Los Angeles when the film was awarded a substantial tax credit to shoot in California. What are your thoughts on getting to shoot in L.A.?*

I felt very fortunate that my first feature film was shot in my hometown on a number of levels. For one, I got to go home at night and share the experience with my family. It was nice to make a movie in L.A. and I feel like we did a great job of making the city a character in the film. It was also nice to be where the greatest infrastructure in the business exists. If there was any particular tool we needed, I didn't have to worry about shipping it in.

*Bradford walks us through a few shots and scenes from The Wedding Ringer.*



***The Scene: Hart’s cover story is that he’s an army veteran/priest named “Bic Mitchum.” In this scene, Gad and Hart talk strategy before a brunch with the family of Gad’s fiancée (Big Bang Theory’s Kaley Cuoco-Sweeting). When they exit the car, there’s a cut to a wide shot in which it’s revealed that Hart is wearing a clerical collar AND camo pants.***

When we shot that scene, we were laughing. But I don’t think we realized how big of a laugh it would get. When I went to the first test screening and that moment happened, it got such a big laugh. We were pleasantly surprised that people found it THAT funny.

Jeremy and I blocked every scene meticulously (beforehand). We would meet every weekend to go over the next week, and then at night (after wrap) we’d go over the next day. We always had a shot list and we often talked about how tight or how wide (we wanted to be) or how we wanted to cover a scene. Jeremy is amazing with comedy and he knew exactly where the beats were and what he wanted to get.





*The Scene: Gad comes to Hart's office, located in the basement of a batting cage.*

This was our one and only set and it was a lot of fun to work with the production designer, Chris Cornwell. This was supposed to appear to be in a basement. Chris came up with the idea of those vented windows, as part of the structure was above ground. He said, "How about if I put these vents in that are just above (Kevin's desk) and let daylight in?" and I was all over that. I love to create color contrast and those vents gave us (cool) daylight coming in (to contrast with) the warm interior lights.



***The Scene: Gad's father-in-law invites the motley crew of groomsmen to a not-so-friendly game of "touch" football.***

That was three days of shooting and we had five cameras going. We went through a lot of prep for it. That scene was heavily storyboarded and choreographed. We had a football coach working with the stunt guys and the actors so the plays were meticulously planned out.

Even with all that prep, we realized early on that the way we planned to cover a lot of the pieces of the scene wasn't necessarily going to work for a variety of reasons. We planned to do more handheld work – but the mud was too hard for the operators to move around in. We opted to use more dollies, so we had a Telescoping Camera Crane and 100 feet of dolly track on one side of the field to follow the action back and forth. A funny bit of trivia about this scene is it was originally written to be raining the entire time. The final decision was it would be too costly and difficult to shoot in the allotted three days. When we all showed up on day one of three for the scene, it was raining. Jeremy was ecstatic that it was raining, but being Southern California and the fact it never rains in October, I knew it would only last a short time and it ended up causing some issues with keeping the look consistent.





***The Scene: Gad's groomsmen kidnap him from work for his bachelor party. There's an amazing stunt in the scene where Gad's double – with a hood over his head and his hands tied behind his back – trips over the curb and face plants onto the street. It's done in an unbroken wide shot. How did you pull off that shot without that stuntman losing most of his teeth?***

That whole scene was a blast to shoot and I think it fell together really nicely, no pun intended. The stuntman was just amazing. He had on a full helmet over his face (underneath the hood). I don't know how he did it. We had three cameras rolling and I think we actually did two takes.



***The Scene: The wedding and reception for the climactic Gad/Cuoco-Sweeting nuptials. How did you approach lighting this cavernous space?***

For the church scene, we had five LED Mactech lights on one side to create the daylight key. We also had one helium balloon over the back for more ambient light. Beyond that, I lit the coverage with a 12×12 light grid and a couple large Chimeras.

One of the things I had envisioned for the reception scene that follows was some kind of practical lighting on each table. Production designer Chris Cornwell and set decorator Dena Roth came up with these great chandelier floral pieces that were beautiful. It gave the reception the big, rich look we were going for. And right off the top, that gave us a base exposure and helped the whole room out. Then I had two tungsten helium balloons – one on each end – so everybody had a soft edge (regardless) of which side of the reception hall they were on.

We also had lights ready to go up on some of the balconies. I placed 12×12's with light grid and 5k's, set up so I could get a nice soft edge, a nice key light or some fill, depending on which angle we were at. Then behind the band, I had the gaffer put CYC strips down low behind the band and uplit the whole wall. I always had three cameras running because we had so much to shoot.



***The Scene: Following the bachelor party, Gad and his groomsmen lead an LA cop on a high-speed chase that ends with the gang's Roto-Rooter van leaping from one side of an unfinished overpass to the other.***

Again, it was all storyboarded. My A-camera operator Phil Lee was also the 2nd Unit director of photography and he did a fantastic job. He did all the location work, the exteriors where you see the van driving and hitting things and doing the jump. (Lee) mounted two (Sony) F5s inside the stunt van – one behind the stunt driver looking out the front window and one camera mounted in the back to look out the back window, which was mostly for plate shots. He had three or four cameras outside and he created a plan for quick camera placement with the second unit director, Eddie Yansick, to be able to execute the chase from beginning to end. Phil had nine cameras total to get this scene shot – one F65, two F55s, two F5s and four GoPros. We also had a Pursuit arm with a remote head. While Phil was doing that, I was shooting all the comedy beats with the actors (inside on a soundstage) with the van on a gimbal system and greenscreen around it. I think Phil had the more fun part with doing the jump.



***How much of that jump is practical and how much is post effects?***

The jump itself was practically shot by 2<sup>nd</sup> unit. I think it was shot with five (exterior) cameras (in addition) to the two inside the van. It was shot on the 4th Street Bridge in downtown Los Angeles. They did the jump and then used digital effects to make it look like the bridge was torn apart and missing a section.

A few more frame grabs from *The Wedding Ringer*...













### [Energy in Motion Podcast, Episode 22:](#)

Bradford Lipson: Cinematographer. Director. Magician.

In Bradford's interview, he shares his journey into the intricate world of lighting, which drove him to discover his passion for magic and how he brought that magic into his work environment. You can currently experience his work on the CW's "In The Dark".

### [CineAlta Magazine Issue 4, p. 116-129](#)

“A Perfect Match for the *Wedding Ringer*”

## This guy figured out how to shoot a whole TV series with a DSLR

[Les Shu](#) February 4, 2013



There is the cliché that there's a bit of magic that goes into filmmaking. In [Bradford Lipson](#)'s case, it truly was magic that landed him in the business. Like many children, Lipson was fascinated by the slight of hand, but whereas most kids would eventually grow tired of pulling a card, any card out of a deck, Lipson continued to study the craft, where he realized there is a connection between magic and film. Naturally, a career in filmmaking soon followed, starting out as a gaffer doing lighting work.



**Jason Gann and Elijah Wood, stars of “Wilfred.” (Image via FX Networks)**

Fast-forward to present day, Lipson, 52, is a Denver-born cinematographer based in Los Angeles. His current project is “[Wilfred](#),” a black comedy starring Elijah Wood as a depressed young man named Ryan who sees his neighbor’s dog (portrayed by series co-creator Jason Gann) as a man wearing a dog suit. (The critically praised show on FX was adapted from the original Australian series, also co-created by Gann.) What’s unique about this eccentric “man’s best friend” series is that it is shot entirely with a DSLR camera.

We caught up with Lipson to talk a bit more about his career, why the “Wilfred” production crew uses a DSLR (and how the use of it has affected the industry, in general), and teaches us how we to put some of that magic into our home movies.

### **You’ve been in the filmmaking business for 30 years. What first drew you to it?**

When I was a kid I was really into magic. I actually was making money as a magician at the age of 13. I was also studying stage magic, which relies on many optical illusions. I had somehow made a correlation between magic, movies, and photography. To me film is magical, just the chemical process that occurs when exposing film seemed like an amazing magic trick. Movies are merely an optical illusion: individual still images running through a projector at 24 frames per second, creating the illusion of movement.

During high school I took an intense film class taught by a retired documentary filmmaker; we were shooting 16mm all the time. I realized I had a passion for creating images and



working with cameras. I began to understand just how important lighting is when it comes to the quality and emotion of an image and decided I wanted to become a director of photography (DP).

**In your words, what is the role of the DP? Every DP has his/her own style – describe yours.**

To me, a DP's role is to help create the director's vision in order to tell the story. It's my job to facilitate getting the right shots and getting what the director wants. It's also my job to bring ideas to the table. The DP's job is also to suggest ways to adjust blocking [deciding where the actors will be on set and the first camera position] to save setups and, therefore, time. On a TV series the DP keeps the look and tone of the show consistent, as various directors come to direct. And, of course, the DP's job is to create the look of project, which is a combination of many technical choices along with the knowledge and creativity to light the frame.

I can't say I have a particular style – each show demands a different look. I wouldn't want to use the same look on every single project. However, the style in which I like to work is consistent from show to show: Respect the director's vision, treat the crew with great respect, and work in excellence every day.

**How did you end up on the set of “Wilfred?”**

I met Randall Einhorn (executive producer and director of “Wilfred”) when he was working as the DP on “The Office.” He hired me as his gaffer. As the first few seasons rolled by he was directing more and more. Simultaneously, I was working toward full-time DP work; I left “The Office” to shoot a little show that got me into Local 600 as a DP. Randall and I kept in touch and from time to time he would be directing an episode of a show I was working on.

One day I got a phone call from him, asking if I would please come work on reshoots of a pilot he did, called “Wilfred.” He sent me the cut and I had to watch it more than once – it was so crazy funny, dark, creative, and way out there. I did the reshoots, but, technically, I was the gaffer and Randall was the DP, (but) he was so busy with directing I took it upon myself to work more in the capacity of the DP. About a month later Randall called me and told me the show had been picked up. He had liked the way the reshoots went and looked, so he offered me the opportunity to DP the show.

What initially drew me to the project was the opportunity to shoot a very interesting and visually compelling comedy like no other. The subject matter was too good to pass up. I saw great potential with this show: The opportunity to work with Randall, who is an incredibly talented director; David Zucker, who is a brilliant writer; and Jason Gann, Elijah Wood, and the rest of the cast was an opportunity I couldn't turn down.



**Bradford Lipson with a Nikon D800 DSLR, which is used to shoot entire episodes of the series “Wilfred.”**

**Compared to other works you have done, is there anything unique about “Wilfred,” in terms of how the crew approaches the material?**

First off, Randall had a vision for the show during the pilot (which I didn’t shoot). He chose to shoot on DSLRs as a means of getting the large, full-frame sensor and wide-open aperture to create that amazing shallow depth of field. It is the main reason why the show isn’t shot on a traditional production camera. That has been an important element to the look of the show and the way the relationship between Ryan and Wilfred is portrayed, since its inception.

We shoot three cameras simultaneously. Most single camera shows use two cameras: one will get the master and the other will get a medium shot or another angle if possible. We use three cameras to get the master and coverage from both sides at the same time, which can be very difficult. One thing that I have tried to do since day one is to always light the off-camera side, which is often challenging with the three-camera setup.

Another way I like to light is to have a hot down-light bounce off a surface that is in the shot, illuminating Ryan and Wilfred – you will see this often in the basement in night scenes. It creates such an interesting look and it’s something we can get away with on this show. I don’t ever try to force backlights – I work to create separation with color, light and shadows or practicals in the background.



### **You shoot “Wilfred” entirely with the Nikon D800. Why this camera in particular?**

When we got word of what the D800 had to offer, Randall and I were very interested in trying it out. The fact that we can access an uncompressed HD signal through the HDMI-out is a fantastic help; also, [the ability to go from a FX frame size to DX](#) [big to small] is advantageous for our show. What I came to learn is just how sensitive the sensor is. It performs wonderfully in the shadows and blacks. I also like how there is not a native ISO so I don't get forced into staying at particular ISO increments. When I got into color timing I found the colors to be rich and I was pleased at how the camera handled the mixture of color temps that I use.

### **How has DSLR filmmaking changed the industry? What are the pros and cons?**

DSLRs are showing up on TV series production sets more and more. They usually aren't the workhorse cameras, but it's the camera to use in tight quarters and to get the difficult, odd placement type of shot. It takes much less “rigging” time than if you were using a larger production camera, and time equals money. I also see the camera enabling more young filmmakers to go out and shoot their film at a quality that, before, was never accessible or possible at such a low cost. The con: It seems like it's hard to find the one rig that supports DSLRs perfectly. There are so many choices, some good, some not so good. Also, viewfinders: When there are camera operators coming off of a show with high-end viewfinders, it's hard for them to adjust to the ones typically used with these cameras. I'm hopeful there is some new technology in this area on the horizon.



A rig setup with a Nikon D800 DSLR on a location shoot of "Wilfred."

**More and more cameras now have Full HD 1080p recording. For the general user who would like to dabble in videography with their DSLR or point-and-shoot, what are a few tips you can offer to get started or to improve their shoots?**

The first thing is to have fun with it and not get caught up with worrying about right or wrong. If what you are doing works for you, then keep doing it – if it doesn't work, experiment with something else. Learn what the latitude and exposure limitations are with the camera being used – once you get this you can stay within the ratios and create pleasing images.

Another big thing is to not get into the game of thinking it's all about the gear – it's what you do with what you have. Some of the best creative moments occur because you don't have a particular piece of gear, so you are forced to think outside the box and create something you might not have otherwise. Be aware and observe how light is working in various environments and how it looks on people; when you see something you like, memorize it so you can recreate it when you are shooting.

Back in the old days when you shot something on film, you had to wait and see how it came out. Now it's instant playback and the ability to make adjustments (whenever) you want, so be bold – the worst thing that (could happen) is you erase the file and start over.

Want to get into DSLR videography? Lipson explains how

- It would be worthwhile investing in some lighting classes if you are new to this.
- There are so many rigs you can purchase to make the DSLR a production camera you really have to do your homework. It would be wise to decide the style you will be shooting – by this I mean handheld or on a dolly or sticks and a head (tripod). If it's all of the above, then the rig will have to be flexible and give you all those capabilities.
- A good viewfinder and/or monitor are lifesavers. A good solid focusing system that is consistently reliable will save you lots of frustration, as well. A lighting kit that allows you to shoot day and night interiors, and can be used as hard light sources and soft light sources are important. Also, a good gel selection and a good understanding of Kelvin temperature in relationship to white balance will help give you dynamic images.
- (One product) that I find very flexible and pleasing with lighting and that is the FJ Westcott TD5 fixtures with their 12 x 50-inch soft box. These are incredibly flexible and easy to work with.
- Lastly, a DSLR that will give you the most dynamic range and most pleasing images.

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# finding ACES

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Cinematographer Brad Lipson initiates an ACES workflow  
for MTV's popular new "Atlanta-shot" series, *Finding Carter*

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by DEBRA KAUFMAN / All Frame Pulls Courtesy of MTV



IN MTV'S ONE-HOUR DRAMA *FINDING CARTER*, TEENAGER CARTER STEVENS (PLAYED BY KATHRYN PRESCOTT) HAS A PERFECT LIFE WITH HER SINGLE MOM LORI UNTIL SHE LEARNS THAT LORI KIDNAPPED HER AS A 3-YEAR-OLD FROM HER BIOLOGICAL FAMILY. SHE'S RETURNED TO THEM AND HAS TO DEAL WITH THE STRESS OF GETTING TO KNOW HER BIOLOGICAL PARENTS AND SIBLINGS, JUST AS THEY HAVE TO ADAPT TO HER RETURN.



*Finding Carter* Associate Producer Ashley Glazier notes that because Lipson wouldn't be able to come to Los Angeles to supervise color sessions, "we liked the idea that [with ACES] Brad could set a look on stage, and go to dailies, and they'd be exactly what he wanted all the way to final color."

When cinematographer Bradford Lipson was asked to join the production for the last 13 episodes of the second season, he immediately thought about his experience with ACES when he shot *The Wedding Ringer*, a Screen Gems/Sony film. "Sony was very involved in the implementation of ACES, and it was just part of the workflow for *The Wedding Ringer*," he says. "So I knew what ACES was all about. The dailies looked like what we shot, and the color grade was rock solid."

What made him appreciate the ACES workflow even more was another project he shot after *Wedding Ringers* without an ACES workflow: dailies didn't match the CDL and nothing matched in post. *Finding Carter* was a perfect candidate for an ACES workflow, thought Lipson, not just because he wanted the reliability he could achieve from camera to final grade, but because the show shot in Atlanta and then edited and finished in Los Angeles. He brought the idea to the show's producers.

**Ashley Glazier, Associate Producer for POPfilms**, which produces the show for MTV, thought it was a good idea. "Especially because Brad wouldn't be able to come to Los Angeles to supervise color sessions, we liked the idea that he could set a look on stage, and go to dailies, and they'd be exactly what he wanted all the way to final color," she says. "At the end, when we send Brad a color pass to approve, he should have minimal notes." The show, which shoots with ARRI Alexas ProRes 444 Log C, does its dailies at Bling Atlanta and its final color grade at Chainsaw, both SIM Group companies.

In pre-production Lipson worked with D.I.T. Nick Hiltgen to figure out the workflow for the on-set portion of the ACES workflow, while Bling director of workflow

services Jesse Korosi in Los Angeles and Bling Atlanta workflow producer Alex Brownley put together the post workflow.

The chance to work with Lipson and his first ACES show were huge selling points, says Hiltgen. "I had just finished a Local 600 workshop on monitor calibration they did in Atlanta, and I learned the concept behind ACES," he says. "Implementing it was the exciting part for me." He had been using Pomfort LiveGrade on set, with the beta .7 version of ACES software.

To his surprise, Hiltgen found that there was actually very little change to his traditional workflow — except for one thing. "All the fallbacks I used to have to do are now just ancillary," he says. "Yes, I'll still take a still and send it with the footage, but there's never been a need for it." He did have to adjust to a couple of differences. "When I was doing my normal CDL workflow, a millimeter one direction or another would result in a slight hue or color shift," he says. "In ACES, it's more pronounced. If I edge a little bit blue, I get more. I'm using just such a small amount of the space, but it's applying it into the ACES color space, which is so much bigger."

He notes that in the CDL workflow, every manufacturer had a different way of reading the values. "The technical accuracy of ACES is wonderful," he says. "Most D.I.T.'s won't have any issues in transferring over from a CDL or LUT-based workflow into ACES," he says. "The idea of ACES standardizing the entire workflow from beginning to end should make every D.I.T. breathe a sigh of relief."

**Monitors can be the weak link in any production/post workflow**, and Lipson says one of the first things



***“[Production designer] Jeffrey [Gordon] and I are on the exact same page. Shiny surfaces, color, reflections - eye candy in every direction,” Lipson declares. “With ACES, I can rest at ease knowing it’ll look the same from dailies all the way to finishing.”***

they did was to make sure the Sony OLED on-set monitors matched the dailies facilities monitors. “Once we were confident those were matching, we did our camera test, taking frame grabs from the raw footage and then with the ACES applied for references,” he says. “Then we sent those to Bling Atlanta and they ran the files through, creating dailies, and we found they were an exact match.”

On set, Lipson worked very closely with production designer Jeffrey Gordon, who created a new set: a bar where Carter works. “Every chance Jeffrey and I had to be together, we talked about the practicals,” says Lipson. “He and I are on exactly the same page with regard to the visual aspects – shiny surfaces, color, reflections. It’s a DP’s dream come true, eye candy in every direction. On every wall are these industrial pipe fixtures with Edison bulbs with really thick filaments that glow amber. And of course, there’s neon. Every surface has a sheen.”

“All the colors are amazing,” Lipson continues. “And in the back of my mind, while I’m shooting, I can rest at ease knowing that we’re running ACES and that it’ll look the same from dailies all the way to when it goes to Chainsaw for finishing. Before ACES, it was the constant

refrain of how to keep things consistent. With ACES, both Jeffrey and I have confidence.”

At Bling in Los Angeles, Korosi was responsible for making sure that the workflow in Atlanta, headed by Brownley, would follow the entire post-production pipeline including editorial, VFX and finishing at Chainsaw. “It’s easy to say, let’s do ACES because the cinematographer wants to,” says Korosi. “But you need to find out if all the departments are on board, which can save a lot of headaches down the road.”

The key players, says Korosi, are D.I.T., dailies lab, VFX and final color and, when appropriate, 3D. Although ACES 1.0 had just debuted, Pomfort hadn’t yet upgraded LiveGrade. That sealed the decision to stick with the beta version that would ensure consistency with all the gear. Working with VFX in the ACES workflow can be tricky, but *Finding Carter* has so few visual effects that, says Korosi, “it wasn’t a big deal.”

In the pre-production period, the SIM Group companies tested the entire pipeline. “We took a signal from a test shoot done in camera prep and pushed it through the whole chain to make sure it worked,” Korosi





***“All the fallbacks I used to have to do are now just ancillary [using ACES]. Yes, I’ll still take a still and send it with the footage, but there’s never been a need for it.”***

{ FINDING CARTER’S D.I.T. NICK HILTGEN }

explains. “We looked at it in LiveGrade and put it into Colorfront Express dailies, matching and checking both through the scopes. They matched, so we checked that off the list. Then, if you have VFX, you go from dailies to VFX to check if that matches. From there, we go out to online, and see if those files match the master files. The final check is in final color. We pull up the dailies and make sure it matches perfectly with what was in the lab and on set.”

In Atlanta, Brownley notes that the process took some tweaking to get right. “Since the ACES workflow is constantly evolving and not all software companies are on the same page all the time, it took quite a bit of mixing and matching software to find a solid pipeline all the way through,” he says. But he believes the next ACES project will take even less time. “It would be a totally different test but a quicker, easier testing process because all the software has become so much more mature, even in a couple of months,” he says.

**At the end of the chain, Chainsaw colorist Santa Cruz** describes how ACES has impacted his job. “As they’re finishing up shooting an episode, we receive the footage on a drive, and continue to ship drives back and forth,” he says. “We’re hand-in-hand with Bling, and [producer] Ashley [Glazier] is here, so we keep all the information here and accessible.”

“When they lock the episode, I get a bin, and from that bin we create an AAF, which tells the Baselight which media to look at,” he continues. “We grab the original camera masters and put all the camera media in a workspace, and the Baselight conforms the media. When I have the locked sequence in my Baselight, I take an EDL, which has all the color decisions from the DIT, and apply that to the media, so I have the look that’s already been established. That’s my starting point, and I go through and use Ashley’s notes to warm or darken a scene.”

“It definitely makes the process much more efficient,” says Santa Cruz. “I like it because I get to see the cinematographer’s vision, what he was going for. When they’re shooting one episode and I’m coloring an earlier one, I usually just get written notes from the cinematographer. I usually can get pretty close to the intention, but I’m a lot closer with the ACES workflow. This way, I’m seeing exactly what he was going for, so it’s improved the process a lot.”

Now that he’s into the process, cinematographer Lipson feels his expectations from what he’d get with ACES have been met. “I’ve heard only great things from all the technical people,” he says. “Without ACES, we’d be equally enthused, but to actually know we’ll consistently keep what we’re shooting makes it much more exciting.” 🍷