Video Workflow Guide

A very simple checklist from ExposureWorks

1. Camera

GENERAL SETTINGS

- ☐ Check resolution (4K, HD) and frame rate (24p, 25p, 30p, 50p or more for slow-motion), check video system (PAL = 25 fps, NTSC = 30 fps).
- ☐ Check White Balance - don't leave it on AWB, 5600K for daylight, 3200K for tungsten, 4200K for mixed lighting.
- ☐ Check Picture Style / Picture Profile - by default select Neutral or Natural (no sharpening in camera). For the most flexibility in post choose a log profile if your camera has one (S-log for Sony, C-log for Canon, F-log for Fujifilm or look for names like "Cinelike").

EXPOSURE

- ☐ Shutter speed: default is 1/50 for 25 fps, 1/60 for 30 fps, 1/100 for 50 fps.
- ☐ ISO: keep it as low as possible. For most current cameras ISO 100-400 should give no to minimal noise. ISO 800 is generally still quite fine. In low-light environments try to stay at ISO 1600.
- ☐ Looking at the live histogram (or the waveform / zebra warnings) find an aperture so that your image wouldn't be overexposed. (Alternatively check the light meter to make sure that the 'needle' is in the middle.)
- ☐ If for any creative or technical reason you need/want a physically smaller aperture (larger number, increased depth-of-field) you will need to increase your ISO. One stop higher ISO = one stop smaller aperture.
- ☐ If you need/want a physically larger aperture (smaller number, smaller depth-of-field) you will need to decrease your ISO. If you're shooting outdoors and cannot go any lower with ISO, you will need an ND filter (Neutral Density) to control the amount of light entering the lens.

FOCUSING

- ☐ If you're focusing manually, zoom into the image digitally before the take to check your focus. Best with Cine-style lenses (lenses with focus marks and hard physical stops).
- ☐ If you're using auto-focus (AF) know your camera! Enable tracking and facial recognition and AF might help you track a person quite successfully. Hit and

miss. Best with lenses with fast internal focusing. Depending on your camera you may not have both object tracking and facial recognition available (or not at the same time).

- [ ] Use Peaking / Focus Assist if your camera is capable of it, if not, you can use an external LCD monitor with this feature.

2. Sound

PICK THE KIND OF MICROPHONE YOU WANT TO USE

- [ ] Shotgun mic: think of it as a telephoto lens, it's highly directional, records sounds from the direction you point it at. Also OK for an interview but point it at your subject from a close distance. Get an extension cable and you can place it on a small tripod in front of your subject.
- [ ] Lavalier mic: great for interviews. Use a wireless lav mic to give your subject and yourself the freedom to move around.
- [ ] External digital recorders: great for recording ambient sound and are capable of recording several audio channels. So you can e.g. use their built-in mics for recording ambient sound in stereo and the additional inputs for recording sound independently of your camera from a lav or a shotgun mic.

SET THE SOUND LEVEL

- [ ] By default you want to do as little amplification in camera as possible. Ideally it should be down to one notch above zero and if needed, amplification should be done with the mic (+10 or +20 dB) or your external digital recorder (e.g. Zoom H4n or Tascam DR-100).
- [ ] Sound level should ideally be between -12 dB and 0 dB, i.e. in the yellow range, not hitting the red marks.

3. Lights

WHEN IT COMES TO LIGHTING THINK ABOUT BOTH THE TECHNICAL ASPECT (QUANTITY) AND THE CREATIVE/AESTHETIC SIDE (QUALITY)

- [ ] Think about the direction and the height (horizontal and vertical angles relative to the camera) of your lighting, it should be motivated and obey the logic of the space you're shooting in.

- [ ] Think about using directional v. diffused light sources. Think about direct or indirect, bounced lighting (e.g. from a reflector, wall or ceiling).
- [ ] Consider if your light is the key light (the dominant light source) or if it is a secondary source (fill-in light).
- [ ] Think about the colour of your light, i.e. white balance and colour temperature. If you are mixing daylight coming through a window it might be best to set the WB of your lights at 5600K.
- [ ] When it comes to WB remember: a higher Kelvin number means a shift towards blue, a lower Kelvin number means a shift towards yellow/orange.