VISUAL JOURNALISM

CONSTANTIN TROFIN

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1: VJ as a language. Elements of the Grammar of Visual Journalism

Introduction

Books need writers who understand the magic of words. Visual Journalism— and television news — need writers who understand the much larger magic of words, images, and sound that work to stir the soul and the imagination in ways words alone seldom match. Writing for television is an encompassing and evolving discipline, in which sets of instructions are written for translation into visual images and a sound track that can communicate complex, often abstract, ideas to viewers.

VIDEO IS A LANGUAGE

Video is a language apart from the words that help guide its content. Television uses words, but its primary content lies in the visual images that unfold upon one of the most powerful communications tools ever devised: the television screen. Since its infancy, television has distinguished itself as a medium that works best when it communicates visually. In a word-oriented society, television has its detractors, chiefly those who fail to understand the television screen's ability to impart ideas and to make those ideas stick in other people's minds.

The detractor's observations have become cliches: "If you printed the average script for a television news show, you couldn't fill half the front page of the *New York Times"* or "In television, all your time is spent setting the stage to look at pictures, not getting to content" or "If you eliminated the visual side of the average television newscast, you'd have about the same content as the average five-minute newscast." Such comments imply that visual imagery is somehow an invalid form of communication.

Words are essential guides, but they are not the medium's essence.Today those who use the medium to best advantage know that in television, words serve only as guides for the pictures and sound that make up television's content. Television scripts are blueprints for what will be on the screen and come through the

speaker. Just as blueprints are distinctly different from the buildings whose construction they guide, so is television news different from the words that serve as its blueprints.

Much of tfie confusion about the nature of television communication lies in the medium's complexity. Television can record and communicate sound, just as radio does. Television can also display the printed word on the screen, just as newspapers do. It can broadcast still photographs, the stock market index, and editorial cartoons. But none of these things is what television does best. What television can do that no other medium except motion pictures can accomplish is to communicate with pictures that move. Television's primary strength is the television screen, and through that screen its ability to help viewers vicariously experience—and hence understand— those events.

The entry-level television reporter whose background is in print journalism will naturally fall back on the ways of a more familiar medium, using words as the primary communications tool. The radio journalist who enters television can be counted on to use words and sound. The television journalist who doesn't understand how the medium works to its best advantage will be inherently tempted to write a script and read the words into a microphone. Even the picture this journalist chooses to communicate the story may be of himself or herself standing in front of a camera and reading the script. At best, the pictures will be treated as visual chewing gum or what some journalists call **eyewash or wallpaper video**—something for the folks at home to watch while they listen to all those words.The greatest tragedy of all occurs when the habits of these print, radio, and aspiring television journalists persist long enough to become entrenched as "the way it's done in television."

In a word-oriented society, we are somehow compelled to verbalize our experiences—even those experiences to which we are eyewitnesses.

What, then, are the components of the language that is visual journalism? The first of these components is the visual image. Without the image, television would be radio. Implicit in the notion of visual imagery as it relates to television are the interrelationships of motion and time and their allied moods. Video is much like music. Its meaning is not established until it plays out through time according to predetermined rhythms and moods. Video is not meant to survive as a still photograph, or even as a series of unrelated

scenes in which message, context, and meaning speak for themselves. Just as a single note in music has virtually no meaning, so a single video scene is virtually mute. Only when the scene is placed next to others, and the complete work is absorbed, does it assume larger meaning.

A second component of video language is sound, which in its own way can be as eloquent as visual imagery. A shot of tall buildings accompanied by the sound track of a Central Park carriage tells us we are in New York. Words are unnecessary to set either the mood or the location. Add romantic music and the mood is established even more precisely — again, without words. Add sounds of an angry crowd and the effect is equally dramatic. Sounds — from the bustle of Christmas shoppers to the eerie silence of the bomb-gutted streets in Lebanon — are part of the language of television.

A third component of video language is the editing *process.* In print, the writer structures ideas and gives them their relationship to one another. In television, the same job falls to the video editor. More than half a century ago the Russian filmmaker Pudovkin defined motion picture editing as the compulsory and deliberate guidance of the thoughts and associations of the spectator. Although Pudovkin was describing film editing, he might have applied the same definition to almost any creative endeavor. Most certainly, he could have used it to describe the job of the visual storyteller.

Writing, the fourth component of the language of video, is itself a deliberate attempt to guide an audience's thoughts and associations.The goal is to create and to reveal an atmosphere of understanding. Words are essential to describe what the camera missed or is unable to communicate. Words clarify, emphasize, provide tone and mood, but even with these great abilities words alone are powerless to create television news that communicates with strength and impact. Only when all the writing instruments of video are incorporated by the visual storyteller—the visual essayist—can the medium realize its potential.

Teamwork

The time has arrived for visual news people to define their reporting responsibilities as much greater than those embodied in the traditional definitions of reporter, photographer, producer, or videotape editor. In television news, everyone is a writer. The reporter does not simply gather facts and write words at a typewriter, nor does the photographer merely take pictures or the editor simply join scenes. In television news, the roles of the reporter, photographer, and editor are equally important. Theirs is a partnership of storytelling skills and talents that contribute equally in reaching out to touch television viewers.

Only when the reporter, photographer, and editor understand the interrelationship of their respective skills, and only when they work to understand each other and to think like one another, can the great potential of television news be realized. If this book can serve in some way to help stimulate such understanding, it will have accomplished its purpose.

Your Story Is A Film

Sequences make sense.

An understanding of the rudiments of film direction is a valuable asset to any reporter. This has not always been the case. When news items were short and uncomplicated it was scarcely necessary. But now that some reports qualify almost as miniature documentaries, the need has been created for better technique. Formal training is increasing, though not necessarily fast enough, and those still waiting should aim to learn ail they can working alongside their colleagues in the camera crew.

Despite the general simplicity of its approach, news filming tries to conform to accepted pictorial grammar. Audience understanding of technique has been stretched over the years by what has appeared on the big and small screen, but the conventions should not be broken unless they further enhance understanding.

In particular, do not expect to build your story effectively through an assemblage of single, unrelated shots. Always

think in sequences leading the viewer progressively towards the action: long-shot, mid-shot, close-shot.

Picture composition

Few professional camera crews will like it if you insist on looking through the viewfinder before every shot. But that should not stop your journalistic eye being kept open for good backgrounds which help tell the story, or for errors in picture composition which might have been overlooked in the haste of news gathering. Try not to let interviewees appear to sprout trees, lamp-posts or other objects from their head as they speak. Look out for spectators creeping into shot or other background goings-on while the crew are absorbed in their work.

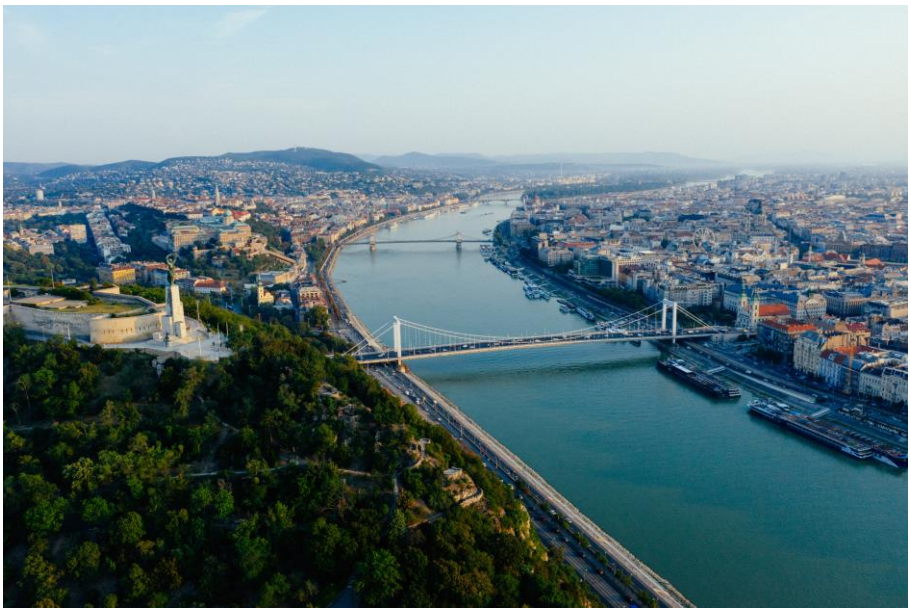
Be aware of what is written on walls over interviewees' shoulders or behind you during a stand-upper. It could be seriously offensive or inappropriate. Don't be tempted to take risks because it's in a foreign language. Someone will understand it, even if you don't. The same goes for street signs and advertisements which could distract the viewer during your report. The safe rule is: if in doubt - find another wall.

Sound

Television is two-dimensional. With the picture goes the sound. 'Natural' sound - 'effects' in this context - is often under-used by reporters who scarcely pause for breath, preferring to fill every available second with their own voice or those of interviewees.

Listen for any opportunity to make use of the natural sounds of life. They will give your work an extra quality. Some stories are simply better told by limiting the talk and letting the sound speak for itself.

Basic Camera Shots



The Extreme Wide Shot (Extreme Long Shot)

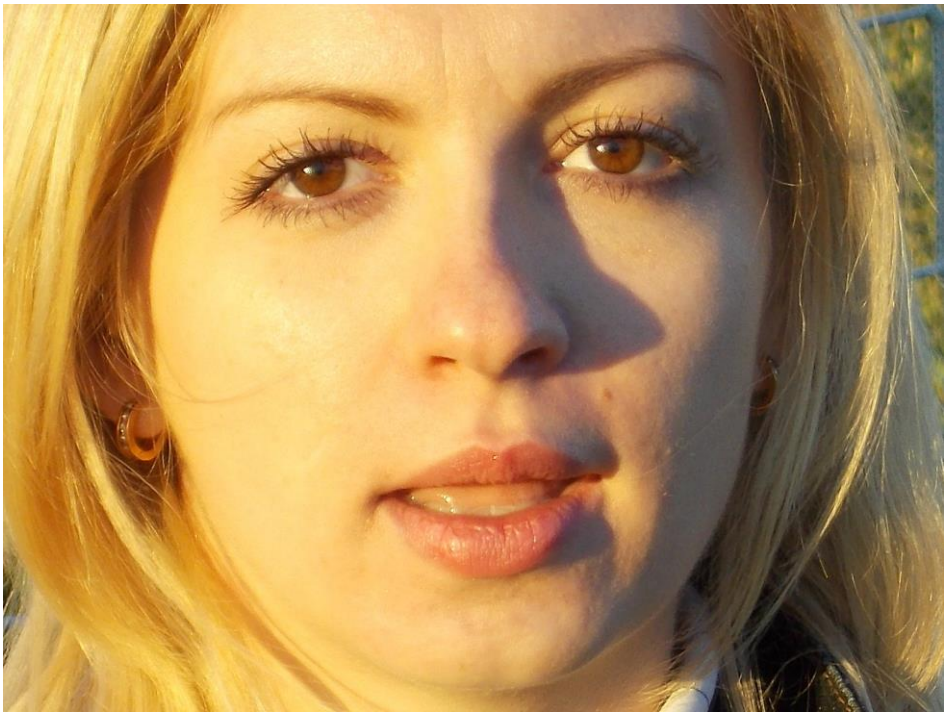
The Wide Shot (Long Shot)

The Full Shot

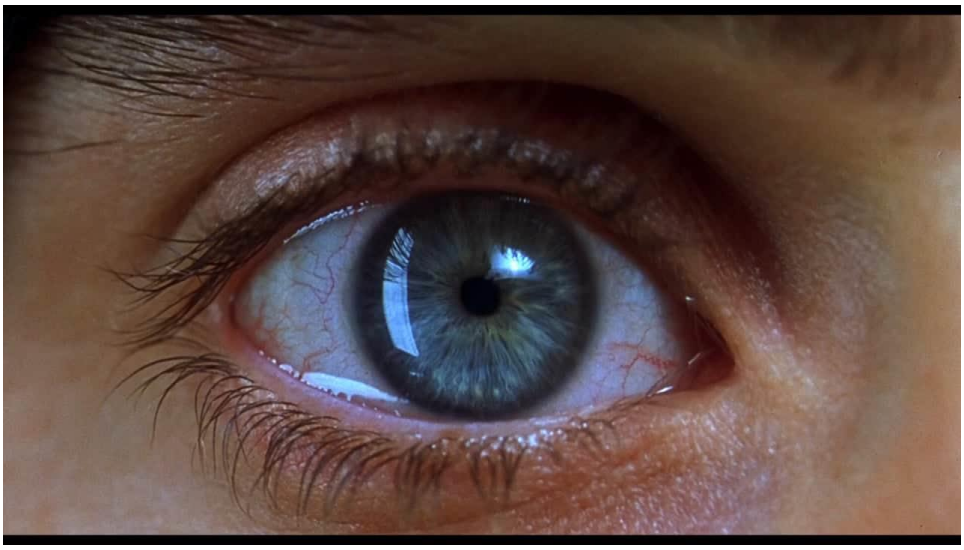
The Medium Long Shot

The Medium Shot

The Medium Close Up



The Close Up



The Extreme Close Up

2: Visual Reporting Basics

Reporter and 'presenter' roles may overlap.

What a Reporter Does

Few of those who aspire to careers as television reporters have more than a vague notion of exactly what the job entails. The evidence is there on the screen 24 hours a day - but how reporters function, where their responsibilities begin and end, and how they link into the editorial chain is not so obvious. The public may also be forgiven for confusing the role of the reporter with that of anchor/newscaster or presenter, because the duties sometimes overlap. Reporting may indeed be seen as a natural stepping-stone to the safety and warmth of the studio, but once installed as part of the news-processing as opposed to news-gathering team reports are usually less originators of their own material than shapers of other people's.

Origins of visual journalism

Once you become a visual journalist you join a profession with its roots chiefly in newspapers, magazines and radio. It can be a

confusing world. Many of those who work in it can not quite bring themselves to admit they are part of show business, but job titles which once reflected a bond with print journalism are disappearing as broadcast journalist, editor, producer, video-journalist and other televisual terms become more established.

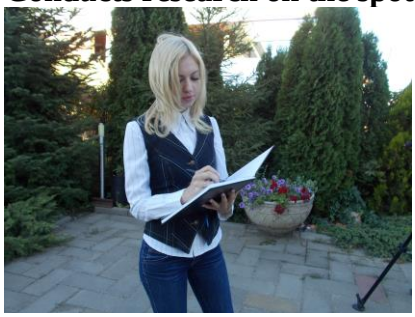
Reporting responsibilities

The role you have to fulfill depends entirely on your employer and the agenda of programme for which you are working. Local, regional, national and international newscasts each make Iheir own demands. In some organisations you will be treated separately as a specialist: in others you will be expected to double up as a picture editor or camera operator.

Whatever title or additional duties you may be expected to undertake, your main task will be to 'get the story'. This will invariably mean taking editorial responsibility for the content and shape of an entire item - assessing on the spot the newsworthiness of an event and the people in it, carrying out interviews, performing a piece to camera and recording a voice-over commentary, as well as co-ordinating the activities of support staff. You may also have to attend to the logistics of deadlines. No 'Brownie points' are won for a brilliant piece of work which arrives too late for inclusion in the programme for which it was intended. You may also expect to broadcast 'live'.

But do not imagine you will spend all your working life on the road. You will be newsroom-bound for a large proportion of the time, engaged in tracking down leads, writing scripts or providing the voice-over for incoming agency pictures or compilations.

1. **Conducts research on the spot**



2. **Decides content and shape**

3. **Supervises camera operator**

4. Carries out interviews

5. Records stand-up (Piece to camera)

6. Writes and records voice-over

7. Maintains base links

In the field reporters are in charge of covering stories as the representatives of their programmes or news organisations. Responsibility includes management of the camera crew as well as control of editorial content. In some organisations the reporter will double as camera-operator and/or picture editor.

3. Producing the Visual News

The TV reporter is part of a team.

What Is News ?

It needs no special talent to be able to recognise conventional 'big' news stories when they occur. Political changes, natural and man-made disasters, social upheavals, unusual crimes, notable trials - all speak loudly for themselves. What distinguishes the journalist from the rest is a well-honed ability to identify the subjects which, although less obvious, stimulate interest or have real bearing on people s lives.

Differences in news values

Audiovisual and newspaper journalists differ widely in their altitudes towards news. The tabloid press will frequently splash their front pages with offbeat or bizarre stories ignored by the more serious newspapers. Television will sometimes kick off with pictured items which have little relevance for either print or sound. So how does anyone assess what is news?

- First, always ask yourself how valuable it is to the audience.
- Scouting the newspapers for stories to follow up is a poor substitute for
your own ideas.
- Do not sit back and wait to be spoon-fed by what pours off the agency services.
- Get as close to the grass roots as possible in an attempt to generate original material.

Assignment Planning

Assignment tasks may be mundane but necessary.

The second part of the planners' task is to assemble the list of story possibles into a suitable form for discussion at senior editorial level. These meetings are usually held at weekly or monthly intervals, the aim being to give programme editors sufficient time in which to evaluate everything being suggested. Some items are quickly discarded, others referred back for further invetigation before a decision is reached For those that get the go-ahead, logistical problems may be considered briefly - perhaps the need for special travel arrangements, satellite bookings, co-operation with other departments or organisations -before detailed planning gets under way.

As a reporter you might not be involved at this early stage. It depends on the way your organisation works, whether news planning and news processing are separate or combined, and what ideas you have fed into the system.

Sources

Television news-related organisations are overwhelmed with unsolicited information which pours in from members of the public and with every mail delivery. In some cases it provides the backbone for programme coverage, but for the rest, existence without resort to some consistent professional back-up is likely to be regarded *as* scarcely possible.

The agencies

Much of the raw material on which news programmes are based comes fresh from the national and international news services. The Press Association

(PA) Reuters, the Associated Press (AP), United Press International (DPI), Agence France Press (AFP) and others like them provide a valuable subscription service of reports which appear on the computer screens in newsrooms all over the world. Agency staff and freelance reporters are often the first to break stories, setting the pace for others to follow, if they please.

Nearer home, each news desk has its own trusted sources to supplement the flow of intelligence from which the diaries are built up. The individual reporter - particularly the specialist - has the contacts log.

Making contact

People make news - so the name, e-mail address and telephone number of anyone who is or is ever likely to be of the slightest professional use should never be discarded. Those you come across may be previous interviewees, potential interviewees or providers of fact, record or opinion. Make a note of the officials of organisations which issue invitations or publicity handouts, local politicians and celebrities. Minor officials become major ones. Local politicians become national figures. Do not forget the expertise which is bound to exist within your own circle of friends, or the organisations to which you belong.

Correspondence columns are also useful sources. A large proportion of mail comes from those who represent organisations of all types, and a surprising number of well-known people who hesitate to list their telephone numbers openly include their addresses when writing to media. Keep a record of all those who might be of use.

Starting from scratch takes time, so at first it might be worth considering sharing names with others. Begin by swapping with a colleague of similar status. If you each concentrate on one subject area at a time you will make double the progress in half the time.

Keeping the list

Lastly, when you have built up your list, keep it safely. Experienced reporters guard their contacts logs jealously, so keep it safe!

Making Use of Your Contacts

Be on guard against news management.

Gossip and rumour are no substitute for fact, so it doesn't do to believe everything you are told. Scepticism is healthy as long as it does not become obsessive and blind you to accepting the evidence of your own eyes and ears.

The double-check

Contacts who seek you out may be genuinely anxious to help or may have their own axes to grind. It happens. If in doubt cross-check with other sources. Keep faith with your informants and respect their confidentiality if that is what they wish. Some reporters have gone to prison rather than reveal their sources of information. But be careful. Do not make promises you cannot keep. In some circumstances the act of receiving information can in itself be regarded as being in contravention of the law.

Briefings and lobbies

Reporters who deal with specialist subjects usually operate in groups which enjoy some privileges denied to generalists. Advance copies of official reports, speeches and other documents are made available to assist full and accurate reporting. Security passes and

identity cards are issued to reporters with official accreditation.

Members of the White- House Press Corps, for example, are given facilities to report Presidential activities. Aides give regular briefings - i.e. government or Presidential views on the state of the world or other issues of the day. Where the President goes, so does the President Press Corps. The lobby system in Britain enables political journalists to meet senior politicians and officials on a regular 'non-attributable' basis, bringing with it the opportunity to discover current government thinking.

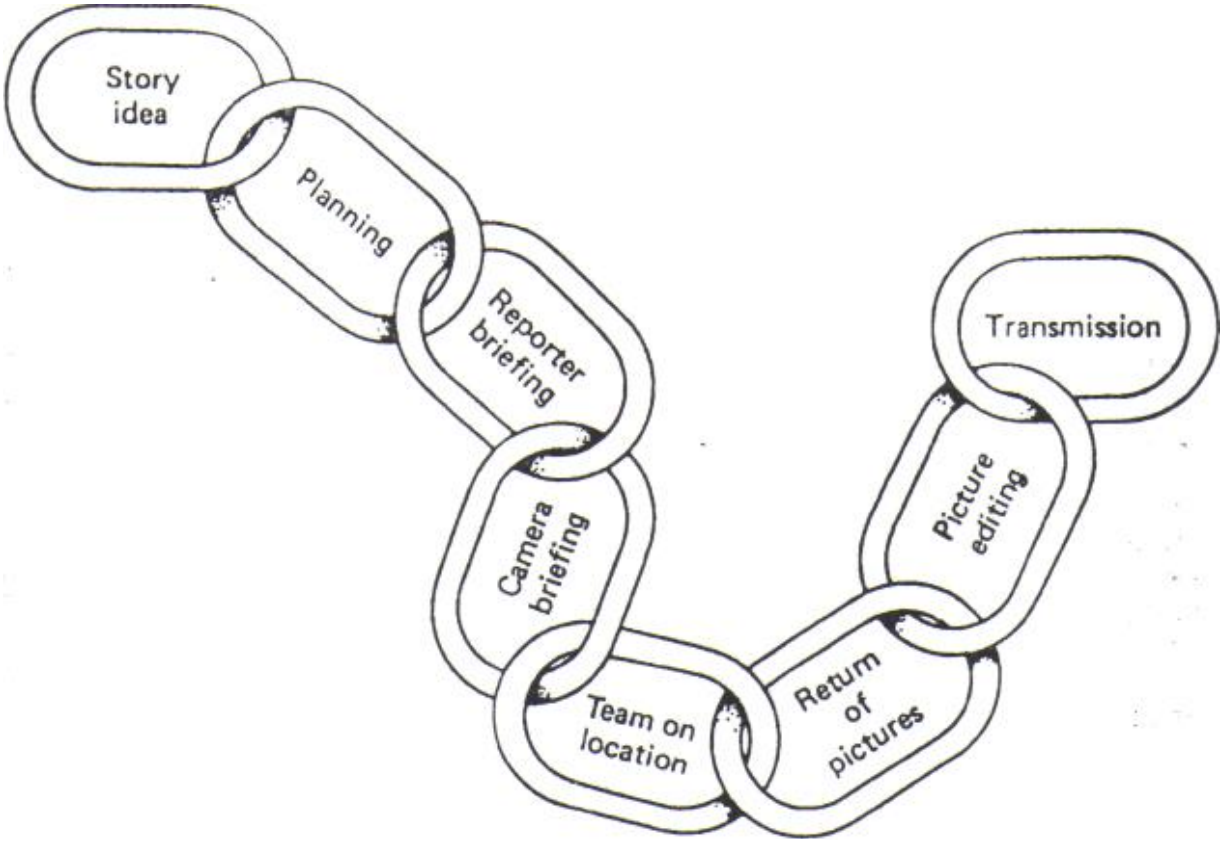
Uses and abuses

Although they have their uses, these systems are open to abuse. 'Lobbies' allow government officials or ministers to use the press to float ideas or theories which may not be official policy, and controversy over what has or has not been said at such meetings (which are never supposed lo take place) has begun to lead to the discrediting of the whole idea.

Yet those who are barred from entry or refuse to take part sometimes find themselves at a disadvantage. Some stories are impossible to cover properly without „official" help. Miss the plane to the President's next destination and you miss the story. You cannot buy a ticket to a remote war zone, so you have to enlist the help of the military to get you there and provide access to communications.

The trouble is that you will be taken subject to conditions imposed by your hosts - and in some cases that might be thought too high a price to pay.

The Editorial Chain



The reporter represents a single link in the editorial chain, which beings with the idea or a story and ends with its transmission as part of a programme. Where news-related programmes split editorial responsibilities, reporters belong to one group of journalists (intake/input/assignments) devoted to gathering the news. The other (output) processes and prepares the material for broadcast.

The Dramatic Unit principle.

Apart from other types of news, visual news are constructed following the DRAMATIC UNIT PRINCIPLE. There is no pyramid here. It is rather closer to principles of moviemaking, as video is closer to cinematography than to newspapers. It also has a lot to do with the psychology of the viewer. When you watch TV, you cabbot rewind the content as you wish.
The dramatic unit principle constructs the item in three steps.

1. Climax
2. Cause
3. Effect

So your visual item should start with the most powerful, the most compelling pictures that you have, preferably an action sequence, with natural sound, to draw the viewer in the story and lure him to watch the story to the end. Logically, you have to explain the context, explaining the CAUSE of the event. Here is where you answer the W questions. WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WHAT and sometimes WHY. And of course, step three explains the effects of the action previously presented.

Take a story about a fire, for instance. How should it look like?

1. CLIMAX – start the story with a sequence of firefighters in action. This is actually a real life action movie. Draw the audience. Without the audience, all your work is in vain.
2. CAUSE – Explain the context. Where, when, what caused the fire?
3. EFFECT – Show the aftermath. Consequences, victims, impact on community a.s.o.

Managing a news story
Whatever the assignment, you must make a conscious effort to ensure all stages are completed so the material is ready to be broadcast by the programme for which it is intended. Allow sufficient leeway for your raw 'rushes' to be edited at base or assembled on the spot lor 'live' transmission. Always build in a safety margin, especially abroad: it often takes longer to process the material than it does to gather it.

In case you are part of a team, your partner is the camera operator. In case you work alone, you must fulfill both tasks. But the camera operator is not with you all the time. Sometimes you share a camera operator with other colleagues. Here is how your lines of duty should look like.

REPORTER	CAMERA OPERATOR
Assignment briefing	Assignment briefing
Travel to location	Travel to location
	Rendezvous
Instant research	Set up equipment
	Cover event
	Raw material available
	Time for editing
	Transmission

Your Place in the Programme
A poor intro can ruin the best package

Some news organisations take remarkably little interest in the later stages of assignments they ask you to cover. No supervision or advice is offered, and you are left to make your own judgement about content and duration. The only support you may get is from colleagues willing to spare a few moments from their own duties to share your problems, in the knowledge that you will reciprocate when the time comes.
Comment, if any, from your superiors is reserved until after what you've done has been aired, and then it tends to be critical rather than complimentary. Unless you make a point of asking directly, the only way you may discover you are doing your job well is because no-one says you are doing it badly.
This is not necessarily a deliberate policy. In fact it is almost a compliment to be trusted to make decisions by yourself. Often the reason is pressure on time and lack of staff. Programme editors simply have too many things to do in the few hours leading lo daily transmission, and previewing your three-minute item is one they can do without.

4: Covering a Story. Basic Reporting Skills

Constructing a Package

Rule: know what's in the camera.

The biggest test of all-round journalistic ability comes with the creation of 'packages' combining the basic reporting skills with an understanding of video production techniques.
Packages have no set shape or duration, but as the reporter's way of storytelling they must follow a clear, logical thread and sustain interest, whatever the subject.
Occasionally, especially at first, you may have an editorial help-mate to guide you through the intricacies. Mostly, you are on your own. In the past, an experienced camera team could always be counted on to make an important contribution, but with the scaling down of camera units to a size where you might be expected to operate the equipment as well, knowledge of production methods is an essential ingredient of your profes-sional education.

Research

As we have already seen, some research, however limited, is a prerequisite for all good television reporting. It does not have to be sophisticated, consisting at its most basic only of ensuring that you and the crew are together in the right place at the right time.
Then it is important to know what the story is about. The treatment and degree of difficulty involved clearly vary according to the subject. With proper planning, including a reasonable amount of preparation time, some information can be established before you set out; background material if it exists, names of potential interviewees on or off camera.

Planning the shape

Unless they are straightforward 'hard news' stories calling for an intuitive approach on the spot, most news packages fall within a predictable framework. Variety comes from the order, number and duration of each ingredient, so the overall shape ol a

package can be considered and a provisional treatment planned without prejudging editorial value.

The 'recce'

Where possible, take the opportunity to conduct research on the spot. While a full-scale 'recce' is a bonus - in documentary-type work it is mandatory - simple matters settled' in advance will add to the speed and efficiency of the camera operation when it takes place. Journalists are indeed required to be flexible in their approach, but if 'making it up as you go along' can be avoided, so much the better.
At worst, aim to arrive on the scene a few minutes before the camera team to spy out the land, make contact with contributors, decide the location of the main interviews and note requirements for supporting shots.

Current theory suggests that longer, thoroughly researched packages may also lend themselves to pre-scripting. Whatever the subject, the typical reporter package should be so well-constructed that the audience is unaware of the joins. Voice-over commentary should dovetail neatly into and out of interview extract; the stand-upper should pick up smoothly, verbally, visually and acoustically - a tribute to the hard work, thought and professionalism which has gone into the construction of the item.

Knowing what to shoot

Camera crews rarely turn up at the scene of a news story, leap from their cars .and record everything in sight. Most news gathering is better-ordered and more organised than that. It is as bad to have too much coverage as it is too little. Someone eventually has to view it, and having to plough through an hour's video rushes to select the relevant rushes for a three-minute report is unhelpful and unnecessary. The cheapness and reusability of memory cards is a constant invitation to over-shooting, but this should be resisted.

Editorial partnership

By now it should be clear that a well-constructed report is the product of a satisfactory working relationship between reporter and camera crew. But it is necessary to be aware of the limitations of equipment and the time it takes to arrange

complicated camera set-ups. Understand that technical difficulties can disrupt the best-laid plans.
Usually, with experienced and co-operative camera crews, it is enough to give a general outline of what you want, but don't hesitate to act positively and direct the work to ensure that your ideas are followed through.

Accompany the crew

Every reporter should make a habit of accompanying the camera crew as they go about their business to make detailed notes about each shot or sequence. In circumstances where this is not possible, brief your colleagues as fully as possible.
The aim is to ensure that voice-over commentary makes fullest use of the available pictures, and this cannot be achieved without knowing exactly what they contain. With the right video equipment it is possible to view recorded material on site, but writing blind to other people's descriptions invariably leads to bland and unimaginative scripts.

Visual Storyteller's Procedures

STAND-UPPERS

Master this technique above all.

The stand-upper (stand-up or piece to camera) has always been considered one of the mainstay techniques of television reporting, although it goes in and out of favour according to fashion. It remains a yardstick against which confidence in front of the camera is measured, and while there is nothing complicated about the technique, no reporter is likely to make serious career progress without mastering it.

The term speaks for itself. The stand-upper consists of a straightforward spoken delivery to the camera - and through it to the audience. Also:

- It establishes the reporter's presence on the spot.
- It takes little lime to do.
- It offers versatility because it can be used by itself or as a single ingredient
  within a story

Given a choice, some reporters prefer not to use the stand-upper at all, believing they have failed if they have to resort to their own talking head instead of what they consider should be more adequate illustration. Others are reticent because, surprisingly, they lack the technique, which depends on three things:

- An ability to compose direct, spoken language.
- A good memory.
- Fluent, confident delivery.

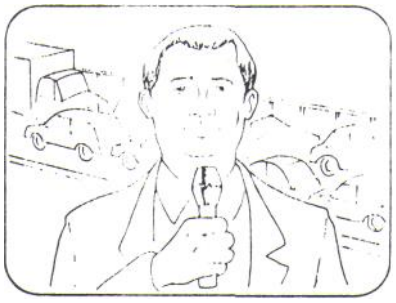
The emphasis on good, broadcast-style writing has already been stressed, so let us examine the other main requirements.

The right backgrounds

These are essential to nil stand uppers, which are intended to prove to the viewer that reporters are where they say they are. Pieces to camera are enhanced by relevant backgrounds, which should always be preferred to those offering only anonymily. It's worth taking time to investigate the most appropriate setting, but be sure to consult your camera crew before deciding where to place yourself. Don't allow so much to go on in the background that the viewer will not be interested in what you have to say. Noisy settings can be just as distracting. And never leave the audience wondering why a particular background has been chosen. Opening words must be sure to set the scene.

Centre-screen or to one side?

Some news organisations like their reporters to be positioned in the centre of the picture while delivering stand-uppers. They believe it adds authority. Others with an eye on the composition prefer the performer to stand to one side or the other, arguing that in this way the reporter becomes part of the scene and does not appear to be a superimposition on it. You may not be given the choice. If you nre, err on the side of consistency.



Stand-uppers brief

Find an appropriate place from which to tell your story. A background will put your piece in context (1), but take care not to distract the audience by cluttering the screen with too much detail (2). An anonymous setting is boring and adds nothing (3). Some news organisations prefer their reporters to be positioned centre-screen (4). Others believe picture composition is enhanced by placing the reporter to one side.

THE INTERVIEW

Rule: know why you are interviewing.

The Art of Interviewing

Interviewing is an art which is approached with far less careful thought than it deserves. There is more to it than the routine, all-purpose line of questioning which scarcely varies whatever the topic. The best interviewers are not satisfied unless every time they appear they unearth a small nugget of truth or open the door to wider understanding. Beginners have a tendency to think of all television interviews in the terms of the lengthy, combative setpieces conducted in studios at prime time and are surprised to discover the existence of a wide range of types, each calling for subtle differences in approach.

Preparation

The first rule of interviewing has nothing to do with journalistic ethics or technique. It is: find out who you are interviewing and why. Don't wait until the camera is rolling and expect the interviewee to come to your rescue. Some will. Others will enjoy your discomfort and the opportunity it presents. Nothing is more guaranteed to undermine your credibility with the audience and dent your confidence than an interview which gets off on the wrong foot, the subject prefacing the answer to your first question with the correction to a name or title. Embarrassment all round - at your expense.

Once you are armed with the basic details, ask yourself what you expect from the interview. Facts for the record? An opinion? Or a mixture of both? Is it to be short and incisive or leisurely and gently probing?

The extent and depth of your research will, of course, vary according to the kind of interview involved and the time allotted to it. A thorough examination of background material is more likely lo be necessary for a searching political interview than with the eye-witness to a robbery.

Questions

Some journalists do not prepare questions in advance, preferring to 'wing it' and let the interview run its natural course. There are very few circumstances in which this is *a* good idea, and few practitioners can get away with the technique. Spraying questions about as they come to mind is

undisciplined and is bound to lead to confusion, omission and repetition. Aim to approach the subject naturally and logically.

But unless there is a danger of running out of questions there is no need to write down a long list and stick to it regardless. If you are afraid of 'drying' it is worth jotting down a few to jog the memory. Spontaneity is better achieved with a broad outline of the ground to be covered and the details left until the interview gets under way.

The set-piece interview (1)

One of the main categories to be found either in the studio or on location, the classic single-camera set-up has the lens pointing over your shoulder at the interview subject.

Interview Preparation

Detailed rehearsal ruins spontaneity.

Most interviews benefit from spontaneity, so it is not a good idea to go over questions in detail. For the same reason avoid 'dry runs' or rehearsals with or without the camera, which risk nervous or inexperienced interviewees 'talking themselves out" before the real thing begins. But as the purpose of any interview is to extract something of value for the audience, the subject should be given a general idea of the ground to be covered and the shape the interview is intended to take.

Submitting questions

Do not readily agree to submit questions in advance unless it is the only way of securing an important or much sought-after interview, and - apart from rare and unusual circumstances - do not concede the right of veto over part or all of the finished product.

Judge on its merits a condition thai an interviewee will agree to an appearance on the strict understanding thai a particular subject will not be covered or a particular question not asked. It depends on how badly you want the interview. Quite often, as a well-conducted interview proceeds, it becomes possible to raise the contentious issue after all. On other occasions, if it would appear ridiculous not to ask the burning question of the hour, a refusal to answer — and the manner of that refusal - may be worthwhile in its own right. But once you have accepted conditions, stick to your word. Anything else would be unethical.

Tone

Much of the criticism made of interviewers is to do with their 'tone'. Accept that you will rarely be judged as having got it exactly right. Viewers' opinions are inevitably coloured by their own prejudices and perceptions, and it is not unusual for one half of the audience to believe, quite genuinely, that you have been too hard and aggressive and the other half -just as genuinely - that you have been too soft and tentative.

Faced with this conundrum every day, try to forget how the audience might react and seek to adopt a tone which suits the occasion. Sometimes it is necessary to pursue an interviewee who appears to be trying to avoid giving answers to legitimate questions. Regrettably that has become a tactic commonly employed by politicians and others. But there are basic courtesies to be observed, and remember that interviewees have the ultimate sanction: they can always walk away if they do not like the way they are being treated.

Set-piece interviews (2)

The set-piece is usually shot in medium close-up, concentrating on the interviewee (1).

Rather than stop the camera, ensure any running changes to composition are carried out during your questions (2) which can then be edited out (3).

Interview Technique

Rule:ask questions, don't make statements.

The technique of interviewing for television is very different from that used by journalists who work in the medium of print. Newspaper journalists are able to conduct their interviews over the telephone or in some quiet corner accompanied by nothing more technical than a drink and a voice recorder. The occasion can be formal or informal to suit, with questions asked and clarification sought in any manner which seems appropriate. Questions and answers do not have to be grammatical or follow a logical path, for once back at the keyboard the journalist can tidy up the product and make ii fit any desired shape.

The visual reporter's work is nothing if not public. At the very least the interview is conducted in the presence of one technician with the camera, which immediately creates an air of artificiality. And then the interviewer's technique is subjected to a scrutiny to which the newspaper journalist is never put.

Putting the questions

There is always an element of performance in every interview. Be conscious of it, even though your questions may be edited out.

- Don't gabble.

- Be clear and unambiguous

- Ask questions, do not make statements which leave the interviewee wondering whether to answer.

- Keep questions short, but not so short that they scarcely register.

- Remember that the audience is more interested in the interviewee's answers than your questions.

- Once you have asked a question, let the interviewee answer. If you have to interrupt, do so when there is a natural pause. Recordings of overlapping voices are impossible to edit.

- If an interview strays too far off the subject, bring it back on course. If necessary, stop the camera, explain to the interviewee what is going wrong, and start again.

- Do not preface every question with deferential words or phrases which suggest timidity. Typical examples: 'May I/Could I/Do you mind if I ask ...?'

- Be bold and direct - but being too brusque will be counterproductive.

- Take care not to ask questions which invite one-word answers, usually 'Yes' or 'No'. Rephrase.

Supplementaries

Some novice interviewers concentrate so much on asking their questions that they forget to listen to the answers. Always be prepared to ask supplement-aries, and if the interview suddenly takes off in an unexpected, more interesting direction, follow.

Cutaway Questions

Don't cheat in your cutaway questions.

Reporter cutaway questions (inserts or reverses) are recorded in case the picture editor needs to bridge chosen sections of an interview shot on a single camera. It is a cinematic editing device, the intention being to avoid the ugly, on-screen 'jump cut'.

For the reporter, the technique relies on an ability to repeat the original questions for the camera as naturally as in the interview, even though the interviewee is probably no longer with you. Consult your original list or replay the interview to ensure keeping to the questions as closely as possible. Some sticklers for accuracy record their interviews on personal voice recorders or mobile phones and play them back before asking the cutaways. While it is probably just about acceptable to tidy up the occasional grammatical error, be careful not to cheat by putting an entirely different construction on a question.

Noddies

Serving the same purpose as the cutaway is the 'noddy' - a shot of the reporter nodding in response to the interviewee's answer. This device should be used sparingly, as a 'noddy' could give a misleading impression that you agree with what is being said.

Some news organisations ban 'noddies' and cutaway questions altogether, in the belief that the viewer has a right to be aware that editing has taken place.

Both devices depend on a correct positioning of the camera. If it is wrong, the edited version will give the impression that interviewer and interviewee are looking in the same direction, not at each other.

Interview editing

In countries where a degree of press freedom exists, it is understood that television interviews ore subject to editing, those for news and news-related programmes most of all.

Yet the whole subject remains an area of controversy, an ever-present source of potential conflict - not so much with those in the public eye, but with those who are unfamiliar with journalistic practice. The complaint is then usually of 'misrepresentation' or 'distortion'. Regrettably there is often no answer which will satisfy the complainant, although it should be possible to prove that you have acted fairly and in good faith.

The main thing is never to give an undertaking to include or exclude a particular answer or passage. Whatever your own good intentions, it might be impossible to keep your promise, as the decision about editing may rest with someone more senior. In all cases, before you start to interview an inexperienced person it is advisable to make it clear that you are under no obligation to use all or any of what is said.

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Cutaway questions brief

When a single camera is used it concentrates on the interviewee (1). Shots of the reporter are taken afterwards to act as a bridge between edited sections, thus avoiding ugly 'jump-cuts on the screen'. (2) Unless care is taken in setting up these 'cutaway questions' bolh interviewee and interviewer will seem to be looking in the same direction, not at each other. The technique is beginning to fall out of favour for news-type programmes. Respect the 180 degree rule!

5: Writing for Video

Simplicity rules.

Reporter-speak

Language should be kept clear, simple, direct and accurate. Avoid stock phrases and cliches and stupidities.

How to Write for Visual News

In recognising the power of pictures it is easy to undervalue the importance of the accompanying words. Yet the need for good writing has never been greater. Audiences are being asked to understand political, social, economic and environmental issues which will fundamentally affect their lives in the years to come. As a visual reporter you will fail if what you provide is not comprehensible to ordinary people.

Keep it simple

Despite the welcome development of news-related programmes dealing with specialist subjects, most visual journalism is aimed at a general audience. Unlike newspapers, able to target readership precisely according to sociopolitical groupings, television has to appeal to and be understood by all, so it must neither be too intellectual nor insult the intelligence. Your main aim must be to tell your stories in language which is: • Accurate • Clear « Simple » Direct • Neutral.

Write as you speak

Something strange comes over many otherwise good journalists when they write for television. Clear thoughts become cluttered and confused, simple sentences convoluted. Direct language translates into 'officialese'.

The rule is: *think baore you write.* Better still: *think aloud before you write.* The less natural it sounds, the more likely it is to be wrong. When did you last hear someone in the couisp of normal conversation say: 'I see the government is proposing a one billion euros cash boost for the National Health Service?' You might have heard I see the government's going to give the National Health Service more money. It's a billion euros.'

Be logical

- Where possible, tell stories chronologically.
- As a general rule try to make it one short sentence, one thought.
- Understand what you are writing: if you don't, no-one will.
- Don't be put off by the language of official documents. Sometimes they are written deliberately to confuse or obfuscate, but more often the writer has no feeling for words.
- Always ask yourself: what am I trying to say? Then say it.

Avoid stupidities

Mistakes are made by reporters blind to the context of their words. Unintentional double-entendres, carelessness or insensilivities creep into broadcast material. Be alive to the changes in word usage. For example, 'gay' has a modern meaning far

removed from its once belter-known definition of joyful or light-hearted.

Avoiding Unnecessary Offence

Any heightened awareness of the importance of accurate English must take account of the need to avoid sexist, racist or other language likely to cause offence.

Sexism

Words which fail to recognise the proper place of women in modern society are offensive, especially when there are neutral alternatives. Sexist language also often inaccurate. Progress towards its elimination is being made, particularly in the United States and Western Europe, although there is still a long way to go, and resistance to some of the alternatives which the more conservative members of the older generation especially find difficult to accept. As a reporter you should make a conscious decision to use gender-free words without going so far the other way that you will alienate the rest of. the audience.

Racism

In the multicultural democracies of the 1990s, the careless or unwitting use of racist language is unforoivabie. It is not usually necesary to refer to someone's colour, religion or racial origins, so unless it adds materially to the under-standing of the story, don't.

It is also astonishing now ignorant some journalists are about the world's'-main religious beliefs (including their own, if they have them). Classic errors-include references to 'Jewish churches', a complete under-eslimation of the importance of Islam and Buddhism, and confusion about the titles of religious leaders. Most faiths have public relations, officers or their equivalent: ask them to clarify for the sake of accuracy.

Ageism

The newspaper obsession with giving the ages of virtually all those they feature is fortunately not as prevalent in broadcast journalism. The test should always be whether the inclusion of someone's age will help the audience towards a better understanding of the story.

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Political labels

Labels can bo extremely useful. 'Right-wing' or 'far-left', for example, are short-hand idications ol the views ol political figures, and an attempt to put them into context. At times they can be more misleading than helpful, because those to-whom the label is applied might not agree that it is an accurate reflection of where they stand in the political spectrum. Someone described as being on ' 'the left wing of the Labour Party' might object on the grounds that their views '[1] are left-wing only in comparison with those colleagues who have adopted what appears to be more 'right-wing' policies. So think carefully before using a political label which might be contentious. Or spend a lot extra words getting it absolutely right.

Writing to Pictures

The classic way: first the pictures, then the words.

The test of a really good television script is whether it makes sense when heard with the eyes closed. Oddly, it shouldn't - quite - because what is missing is that essential pictorial dimension. So the starting point for any journalist who hopes to produce anything more than run of-the-rnill commentaries is recognition of the principle that words are tailored to pictures, not the other way round. It follows the only way this can be achieved is by viewing and assessing the edited material before writing the commentary.

Regrettably, time pressures on writers have become such that the temptation to take the lazy way out and dash off recorded commentaries to which the pictures are then cut to match has become almost irresistible. The result in most cases is dreary 'wallpaper' which adds nothing to understanding and almost certainly omits shots which would tell the story more effectively. Failing to give the picture editor freer rein to select the most appropriate pictures shortchanges you, those who took the pictures, and the audience.

Golden rules of writing for video

- *View the pictures and listen to the sound.* While the picture editor's technical skills, advice and collaboration are essential ingredients, the journalist must be the arbiter when it comes to editorial priorities. It is impossible to judge the work you or others have done in the field unless you are present at the pre-edit stage.
- *Choose the pictures and sound most appropriate to the story you are aiming to tell.* Pay attention to any detail which might make a good scriptline and try to work out roughly what you might write. Don't be inhibited or hurried into agreeing to the inclusion of shots or sequences which are irrelevant, merely pretty, or do not contribute. If your story has been allocated a firm duration, work to it, otherwise you risk being asked to re-edit. At the same time, always be on the look-out for qualities which make your story of greater worth.
- *Shot-list the final version.* This is second in importance only to the Rule of Viewing. Shot-listing is a means of ensuring there will be an accurate match between words and pictures. The procedure consists of noting details of the length, picture and sound content of every scene in the edited story. As with the pictures-before-words principle, shot-listing may be regarded as old-fashioned, but be assured it will guarantee a better *product.*
- *Write the script working from the shot-list.*
- *Record the commentary.* If there is time, rehearse to make sure the words fit. If adjustment is needed, it is easier to change the script than the pictures.

Using the Shot-list

Three Words = One Second.

Try to start writing as soon as you have completed your shot-list, before the mental picture of your edited story begins to fade. Put three words - a second's worth of script - or program your computer to do so. It is surprisingly easy to lose track once you have strung 30 or 40 seconds' worth of script across a page.

Do not waste time polishing' your prose as you go along. Complete as much of the script in rough as quickly as possible. First thoughts often turn out to be best, and in any case you may not have very much lime for elegance.

It's not necessary always to start working out your commentary from the opening shot. Select any *key scene.* Once you are over the first hurdle, the rest of the script should begin to fall into place.

Common errors

- *Mistake One* is to try to cram in more words than the duration of the pictures will allow. More words than that and the pictures will actually run out. Let the pictures 'breathe". The best script is often the one with the fewest words.
- *Mistake Two* is io write without taking proper notice of what the pictures contain. Instead there are detailed references to people, places or events which do not appear. It's guaranteed to irritate the viewer, who has come to expect to see whatever is being described. The same applies to sound. If it is necesary to refere to something which cannot be illustrated, do so obliquely without drawing attention to what may be missing from the coverage.
- *Mistake Three* is to produce what amounts to a series of captions explaining exactly what the audience is able to see for itself. Sentences will be too long and the style heavy, more suited to the printed page. Let the words and pictures touch lightly and sensitively. Don't state the obvious or simply repeat what is happening on the screen, and vary the length of sentences to avoid sounding stilted
- *Mistake Four* is carelessness about accuracy. Example: if you are writing about the number of cars on the road, the shot should show cars, not predom inantly trucks or buses. If you are uncertain, use general terms. In this case . 'traffic' would cover anything from bicycles to juggernauts.

Cliche questions

Some questions are asked so frequently they have become cliche's
especially:

How do you feel (about) ...?
What of the future?
What's your reaction to ...?
Just how serious ...?
Just what...?
Just when …?
Just why ...?

These are just irritating

Writing the introduction

Another of your responsibilities as a reporter may be to write an introduction to your own completed package. At the least you may be expected to provide a few ideas in note form.
Either way, the introductory words must be constructed in a way which keeps the audience interested enough to stay tuned in to the report about to follow. Give them as much thought as the rest of your work. Include graphics where they help, introductions should be complementary and not include facts or phrases immediately repeated in the first paragraph of your report.
One sure way of avoiding this trap is to write a full introduction of, say, three sentences, discard the first two for the presenter to use as the introduction and begin your commentary proper with the third sentence. It works most effectively.

'Musical' news

Finally, an admission of personal prejudice against the use of background music in news items - it is often an easy substitute for natural sound effects, voice-over commentary, or an accompaniment to 'pretty[1] pictures. All this does is expose the reporter's lack of skill and imagination in finding the right words or natural sound.
Music, unless .strictly relevant, should be left where it belongs, in the archives.

6: Telling the Story in Pictures.

A general production guideline

Telling the Visual Story

Today, news stories can be more compelling and more meaningful to their audiences than at any time in journalism's history. Two reporting instruments, the television camera and the microphone, make this possible. Journalists can use the microphone to capture the sounds of news events and of people in the news. Most important, television journalists can use the camera to show people as they enact their own stories. The camera and microphone can put viewers at the scene of news events and help viewers feel as if they have experienced something of those events (Figure 1.1). Visual storytelling is thus among the most experiential forms of news communication, and in experienced hands it can be one of the most compelling forms of the storytelling art.

VISUAL STORIES BEGIN WITH A CLEAR FOCUS

Visual stories take form the same way any other story originates, with a summary statement that identifies the story to be told. This summary statement of the story is sometimes called the focus or focus statement. At some stations, the term used is story commitment. Regardless of the word, the process is as simple as summing up the story in your mind before you start to shoot. Defining the story focus forces the television journalist to not just identify the story, but what is most important and interesting about that story. It embodies the centuries old concepts of theme, story line, premise, and the reporter's point of view.

The focus is a simple, vivid, declarative sentence expressing the heart,the soul, of the story as it will be on air. Until you know the story yourself, it will be difficult to tell it to anyone else. "If you can't express your idea for a story on a 3 x 5 card, in one sentence, you don't understand the story," says *European* correspondent Shellie Karabell.[2]

Sometimes reporters and photojournalists say, "My focus — or commitment— is to show the demonstration..." or whatever story they happen to be covering, but defining the story's focus goes beyond merely showing the subject.The story itself remains unidentified until it can be stated as a complete sentence: "The economics of farming affect all Americans." Focus statements help define the essence of the story. Until you know what the story is, you can't tell it to anyone else. Simple as the idea sounds, it is often overlooked.

The beauty of television is that it allows us to show events, not just tell the viewer what happened.

"Normally, the photographer has control over what the public will see, because the photographer pushes the button," says Brett Axton, a reporter and photographer at KOAA-TV "But does that mean the reporter should be in charge only of what the audience *hears?'**

That scenario too often becomes reality when the reporter remains uninvolved and doesn't pay attention while the story is being shot or edited. The reporter, it must be said, is never the story. The story is the story, and in television the best stories are visual stories.

WRITE THE PICTURES FIRST

The strongest television news stories result when reporters remember to *write the pictures first.* This advice requires that reporters think first about the left side of the script (the video instructions) before they think about the words that will be in the report. In the field, look first for pictures that will tell your story. Search for sounds (and **sound bites)** that will add impact, emotion, and meaning to your reporting. Use words to interpret and explain what the pictures can't say.

Often reporters don't use even the pictures they bring home to really show viewers what happened. They use the pictures to illustrate their scripts, which are first written, then later "wallpapered" with available video. Slide shows, not compelling video, are the result.

SHOOT SEQUENCES

The human eye fragments the world in front of it by taking in thousands of glimpses — in close-up, medium shot, and long shot

— of first this thing and then that thing. Further impressions of reality are gained from sounds taken in through the ear. The mind makes constant choices from the sights and sounds that are available, then uses some of those fragments to reconstruct, within the mind's eye, an understanding of the larger world. In effect, we are film directors: We construct mini-movies in our mind's eye. The process is similar to reporting the news story: As journalists we understand (and visually manage) the larger world by first fragmenting it into its component parts, then reconstructing it from the fragments.

In television news, the same processes must be followed when shooting and editing video if viewers are to have a sense of experience from news reports. Sequential pictures with action that matches from one shot to another replicate how viewers would break down the action if they were at the scene. In real life we routinely and unconsciously construct sequences: As we walk up to a coffee machine, we look at the menu directory. We dig in our pocket or purse for a handful of change, counting the number of quarters we produce. We look at the push buttons as we dial our preferred drink's number. We turn, lean on the coffee machine and watch people walk by. We notice their faces, their shoes, how they walk, and what they carry. We watch buses and cars as they go past. We notice license plates, the drivers, styles of vehicles, even the soot coming from exhausts. If we were to isolate each of these separate views our eyes took in, we would have a sequence made up of **long shots** (LS), **medium shots** (MS), and **close-ups (CU):**

View of telephone booth (LS)
Look around for directory (MS)
Look at handful of change (MS or CU)
Push buttons (CU)
Watch people (LS, MS, and possibly CU)
Buses and cars drive past (LS, MS, and possibly CU)

If we photographed these same shots with a camera, instead of with our eyes, we would have produced a sequence that could be edited together for the screen, much as we experienced it "with our own eyes." Sequences consequently help to create a heightened sense of realism.

Since sequential video is difficult to achieve when pictures are forced to fit a prewritten script, it becomes imperative that reporters learn to think in sequences and commit themselves to "write the pictures first." And although video cannot yet transmit the smells and tactile impressions of the physical world, good writing can at least allude to those qualities from the news environment and further heighten the viewer's sense of vicarious experience.

PROVE THE STORY'S FOCUS VISUALLY

Once the story has been assigned and researched and the story's focus identified, the reporter and photographer can proceed to prove the focus visually. Perhaps your assignment is to report about a new school district policy that requires teachers who suspect child abuse to notify police within twenty-four hours.

If you state your focus as "School officials have adopted a get-tough policy toward child abusers," you have charted a very specific course in the way you'll cover this story. If your focus is "Abused children have a new friend in the public schools," then the story may concentrate more on the teacher's role in helping protect children and veer away from officials who talk tough about putting child abusers where they belong.

If your subject is a routine warehouse fire, you may identify the focus by the statement "This is a big fire." Your visual proof will then follow naturally. If your focus is "Firefighting is long days of boredom, followed by moments of sheer terror," then your visual proof will change accordingly. If, in the same story, your focus had been "This fire offered a study of the firefighter's ability to endure searing heat and freezing cold," your visual emphasis would have been still different.

THE FOCUS MAY CHANGE

Sometimes, through prior research, you can adequately identify the story's essence and state its focus before you enter the field. At other times the real story can't be nailed down until after you arrive at the scene. You may discover, contrary to the assignment editor's best educated conjecture, "This is not a big fire." Or you may determine "Tighter security could have prevented this fire," or you may watch even the most valid focus change before your eyes as the story develops (a firefighter becomes trapped inside the warehouse and rescue efforts fail).

The essential responsibility is to be ready to change your focus if the story changes or was improperly identified at the start. Any story suffers when a reporter or photojournalist tries to impose a preconceived focus on it, and the damage will be instantly apparent to the audience. Just as obviously, any story suffers when a focus is absent.

LOOK FOR A STORY FOCUS IN SPOT-NEWS EVENTS

There is a story in every event you cover, even when you are under a tight deadline and the story is not under your control. Assume that you have just received word of a fire in the central downtown

area. You jump in the car and within minutes arrive at the scene. At this point, you may not know what's going on, whether anyone is hurt, or even what caused the fire. You spend lots of time shooting the smoke going up, the walls falling down, and perhaps you capture a moment or two of drama as fire victims are rescued. But you commit an unpardonable professional error if you return home without having asked yourself, regardless of whether you are the photographer or the reporter,"What is the story?"

IDENTIFYING THE LARGER SPOT-NEWS STORY

Whenever you cover spot news, the first rule is to shoot what presents itself, what must be shot before it's lost forever, and what must be shot to protect your job, then to step back and ask yourself,"What's the real story here?" You may want to ask that question of the fire officials or the tenants or the business owner or whoever is available. Once you've identified the larger story, you can begin to shoot again. This time, perhaps phase 2 of the story becomes your main focus. This attitude assumes that the photographer considers himself or herself to be a member of the reporting team. It also assumes that the reporter has learned to think as a photojournalist.

TELL YOUR STORY THROUGH PEOPLE

Try to tell your stories through strong central characters engaged in compelling action that is visual or picturesque. So often, reporters try to tell the story themselves, using authority figures — the mayor, the fire chief, the sociology professor — to explain what ordinary people enact every day in far more compelling ways. The sociologist can tell you that suburban neighbors live in isolation, relatively anonymous to one another, but so can one of the neighbors. Simply ask her if she knows her next-door neighbor's name. When she scrunches up her shoulders, hesitates, then says sheepishly, "I don't," her information is just as valid and far more visually interesting and memorable. Why do we need the mayor to tell us the earthquake scene is a frightening mess when residents of the area can take us into their homes and describe the damage themselves? Sometimes you will need authority figures in your stories, but strive to include everyday people as well. Such people can help sell your story, so your job is to "sell" them by bringing them to life on your viewers' screens. Again, when choosing how to tell stories, try to show viewers your message in ways more compelling than through the world's voices of authority.

STRONG NATURAL SOUND HELPS TELL THE STORY

N'ight after night television viewers sit and watch a half hour of news, then can't remember what they saw because they have been told what happened — not allowed to experience something of the event themselves. "The television reporter's contract with the audience lasts for about fifteen to twenty seconds," says Bill Taylor, news consultant and managing partner of Audience Research and Development in Dallas. "Every fifteen or twenty seconds, the reporter must renew that contract, or risk losing the audience."[9] The use of strong natural sound gives the reporter a way to renew that contract: Nothing beats it to help heighten a story's sense of realism. The sharp, crisp sounds of news events give us a sense of being there and of having experienced the moment.

BUILD IN SURPRISES

When you report, try to build surprises into your stories to help sustain viewer involvement. A surprise is any device that helps viewers feel something about the story, helps lure uninterested viewers to the screen, or connects them more directly with the story's subject or main character. John De-Tarsio, National Photographer of the Year, KNSD, San Diego, launches a fire rescue story with natural sound of the rescuer's words, "Gimme air! I can't breathe!" John Goheen, three times named National Photographer of the Year, KMGH, Denver, lets audiences peer into the bottom of a small bucket as the rancher holding the bucket says, "I call this my rain gauge. I reckon it rained an inch and a quarter or so."[11] Inevitably, audiences chuckle to themselves as they are permitted a peek into the rain gauge. Surprises can be compelling

visuals, unusual or unexpected sound, short sound bites or poetic script, such as Bruce Morton wrote for a piece on atomic radiation: "Once upon a time on a Pacific Island, the sun exploded." Always, surprises are little moments of drama, regardless of their form, that help renew the contract with viewers and lure them back to the screen.

KEEP SOUND BITES SHORT

Short bites can be used effectively, to help prove the story you are showing. They are less effective when they are used as substitutes for your own reporting. An effective approach is to think of the sound bite as an exclamation point, both to help enhance the visuals and to punctuate story content. Especially in television, sound bites work best when they're kept short (five to fifteen seconds) and when they are not used as an essential part of the main story. Sound bites should enhance the story, but they should never take over to the point where their absence would destroy the story.

ADDRESS THE LARGER ISSUE

Most people will watch a story that tells them "Vacations are fun," but they may wonder subconsciously, "So what?" if that's all you tell them. Few viewers will forget your story if you address the larger issue: "The typical family vacation creates more stress than it relieves." Even routine traffic accident stories can address larger issues if you look beyond the event and search instead for the meaning of the event. An easy way to check whether you have addressed the larger issue is to ask the "So what?" question: Immediately after you have stated the story's focus to yourself, challenge the commitment with the question "So what?" If you believe the audience also will say "So what?" when your story airs, look for a new focus before you begin to report.

MAKE THE REPORT MEMORABLE

The strongest stories are memorable. Viewers relate best to stories that touch their emotions, so it's important to tell a story in such a way that your audience will be able to feel something about the story and its subjects. If feeling is present, the story has a better chance to connect with the audience.

NEWS PACKAGES ARE FACTUAL "MINI-MOVIES"

Television news stories can be thought of as "miniature movies" with a beginning, middle, and ending. Just as any other visual story, they tell the viewer where the story is headed, deliver the main points and prove them visually, and build to a strong visual close. In some ways they are similar to television commercials, which have a beginning (to establish a problem or a need), a middle (to introduce the product and show it in use), and an ending (to resolve the problem). Typically, the thirty-second television commercial delivers its messages with strong, often unforgettable, visual proof. Effective commercials further integrate strong sound, memorable writing, and creative editing to enhance the message. The same principles are true of the best television and Hollywood films — and of the strongest television news stories.

THE LEAD

The beginning of any package is the lead, and like all story leads it should instantly telegraph the story to come. Ideally, the lead is visual. If the story subject is a stranded rock climber, the package will better serve viewers if it begins with a shot of the stranded climber, not of sheriff's officials unloading their rescue gear. If the subject is the hardships of poverty, there probably is a more meaningful visual than an establishing shot of the county courthouse in which the welfare office is housed.

PROVIDE VISUAL PROOF FOR ALL MAIN POINTS

Throughout the package, one of the television journalist's greatest obligations is to tell the visual story and to prove its main points visually. The main body of the story, the middle, cannot be constructed until the journalist has identified the story's main points.

"So often journalists find themselves with a notebook full of facts and a half hour of interviews, and they still may not have the story firmly in mind," says NBC News correspondent Bob Dotson. "The trick is to realize that all those facts are your research, not your story. Then you can sit down and ask yourself, 'All right, what are the three or four main points I've learned today about this story?' Once you've identified those main points, you can then find ways to prove them visually."

Perhaps a main point in your report about child abuse is that some three hundred elementary students are abused each year in your community. Through voice-over narration you can tell your audience that figure, but the audience may soon forget what you said. No member of the audience can so easily walk away from that number if you communicate it visually.

A simple **standup** can accomplish the objective: A reporter in an empty school gymnasium points out the rows of bleachers those abused children would fill each year, then cuts to an extreme long shot to show that about every five years enough children are abused in just this one community to fill the entire gymnasium.

With sufficient thought and hard work, almost any main point in any story can be proven visually. The alternative, which will never amount to good television, is to write and narrate the main points verbally and illustrate them with **generic video.**

Even abstractions like inflation can be brought to life through pictures, in ways that will stick in the viewer's mind. Say you've been given a half hour to shoot a story on inflation and have been told to determine the story's treatment. "The typical approach is to crank up the graphics machine and make some charts with arrows that point up or down," says NBC reporter Bob Dotson. "But if you can think through a way to report the story with visuals your report will have far greater meaning for your audience."[14]

On assignment to show inflation's effects, Dotson entered a Fort Worth meat market and with the camera running gave the butcher a ten-dollar bill and asked how much stew meat that ten dollars would have purchased a decade

earlier.The butcher displayed a hefty chunk of beef. "Now," Dotson asked, "show me how much beef that same ten dollars would buy five years ago."The butcher grabbed his cleaver and chopped the once generous purchase approximately in half. "Now show me how much sirloin I could buy today with the same ten dollars," Dotson prompted. The butcher again apportioned the meat in half and handed Dotson the remaining tidbit. Reporters who saw the story remembered it ten years later during interviews with the author.

Dotson and his crew used a similar technique in an NBC report to demonstrate the impact of inflation on the American farm family. In this instance, a farm woman carried a loaf of sliced bread to the kitchen counter. Accompanying voice-over narration informed the audience, "Ten years ago, a loaf of bread cost twenty cents." The screen then cut to a close-up of the bread as the woman removed all but three slices. VO continued, "Today, that same twenty cents buys only about three slices."

As another example, perhaps a main point in a story is that new restaurant openings suggest that eating out is becoming a more popular pastime. Perhaps a main point in yet another story is that trucks that exceed state load limits are damaging interstate highways in your region. In either case your creativity and imagination can provide an effective way to prove those main points visually. In the first instance you might simply show the number of new entries in the telephone company's restaurant listings. In your story about road damage, your visual proof must be equally graphic. An interview with an expert who only tells you what happens to roads when trucks exceed their legal carrying capacity won't effectively prove your main point. Neither will voice-over narration, illustrated with trucks traveling down the interstate. What may work to make the message memorable is something like a close-up of hot pavement in the summertime, bending and stretching in slow motion as truck tires hammer their way through the potholes.

THE CLOSE

The story's close, the ending, should be so strong that nothing else can top it. Ideally, the moment you first arrive on scene, you will begin to look for a closing shot. You can then build the rest of your story toward the close because you already know how the story will end.[17]

The closing shot of a story on poverty might be of a woman on Social Security as she sits at her kitchen table one night, before her a pile of monthly expenses she must somehow cover with her meager income. The story of a national figure who has just died might build to a closing shot of file video of that person, waving a final good-bye to a crowd of admirers. Of all ways to close out a television news story, the weakest is generally the reporter standup. "There should be some better way to end a story than with a shot of a reporter on camera telling us his name," says former CBS reporter Charles Kuralt. "The viewer is going to feel nothing about this person standing on camera."

WRITE *FROM* THE VISUALS

Some journalists might contend that the audience is at fault for not remembering or understanding the stories on last night's newscast. But it's more probable that the blame lies with reporters whose stories flow over and around their audiences and fade quickly from memory because there was no drama, no compelling story, and few devices to engage the viewer's attention. Even when words are essential to help tell the story, writers frequently put up with too much laziness and uncritical thinking from themselves. It is difficult to be harsh with oneself, but every television writer can eliminate information the viewer already knows or that the visuals communicate more eloquently. A more workable approach is to *write from* the visuals. In a story on homeless Americans, for example, the pictures might show a man in tattered clothes as he walks down the sidewalk with a liquor bottle in a brown paper bag.

If you write *from* the visuals, whose message is "Whiskey numbs loneliness," your VO might say something like "Joe carries his best friend in a brown paper bag." The opposite approach is to write the script first, then find visuals that support the script. But this approach tends to damage visual and story impact. Words can more easily be written to the visuals than preshot visuals can be edited from the narrative script.

THE EDIT CONSOLE IS A REWRITE MACHINE

The video editing console is a writing instrument, just as surely as the word processor or newsroom computer console are writing instruments. And those who control the consoles are writers, just as surely as those who sit at computers .

The video editing console can be thought of as a "rewrite" machine where the editor structures ideas and gives them their relationship to one another.
In a world that considers words on paper to be the only form of writing, such ideas might at first appear to be heresy.

But the editing console is where television journalists put one idea in relation to another, where quotations from news sources take form as sound bites and are so positioned to help give the news story its clarity. The edit console is also where wild sound is positioned and emphasized within the story, to help strengthen story meaning. And the edit console is where VO is tightened and sometimes "rewritten" after it has been transformed from words on paper to words in air to words on tape. In its most classical sense, **editing** is an essential part of the storytelling art, for it is the *process* through which scenes and sounds are selected, arranged, and timed so as to impose certain rhythms, meanings, and moods on the final result.
Editing, in the words of the Russian filmmaker Pudovkin, is the "conscious and deliberate guidance of spectator thoughts and associations." If we adopt Pudovkin's view, editing becomes a life force in the process of visual communication, no longer misconstrued as the simple joining of scenes or as eliminating "the bad parts" so that only good material remains.

7: Field Production and Reporting

Out on the field, you must make decisionson your own

Field Techniques of Shooting Television News

Photojournalists who endeavor to refine their work often discover that relatively small changes in photographic technique can translate into substantial improvements on the screen. As the photographer brings one element after another under control in the photographic process, a substantive and individual style begins to emerge.The process is an affirmation that professional development never ends and that no detail is too unimportant to master.

USE A TRIPOD WHENEVER POSSIBLE

Even the simple use of a tripod can help distinguish the work of one photographer over another, yet an inspection of television news stories yields the inescapable conclusion that not all photographers use tripods. Especially at the smaller market stations, cameras tend to be handheld and the scenes unacceptably shaky, and among some photographers in large markets the problem persists.

Handheld shots are faster and easier to make, but too often they are the result of photographers taking the easy way out. While spot news and other fast-moving events are best photographed with a handheld camera, most other stories can be routinely shot from the tripod. If no tripod is available at the station where you work, or if the tripod assigned you is wobbly or inadequate and repair or replacement appears unlikely, consider buying your own tripod.The improvement in your work will be obvious.

THE HANDHELD CAMERA

With only minor accommodations in technique, most photographers can master the handheld camera. For maximum steadiness, use the tripod when-possible; otherwise, convert the body into a tripod. Find a wall, a telephone pole, a tree or whatever else is handy and push the camera up against tins object. Indoors, if a straight-backed chair is handy, sit backwards on the chair and use the chair back as a camera support. Further support the camera with a sandbag, pillow, or cushion.
For steadier shots, you can also kneel, a technique that provides good perspective on many shots. When kneeling, sit on your heels and rest elbows on your knees, or even set the camera on an equipment case. You can also place the camera on the ground or floor, straddle it with your knees, and use a wallet or similar object as a wedge to properly position the camera. Rather than kneel or crouch to obtain correct camera height, you can hold the camera at waist level (cradle it in your arms) or at arm's length. Most viewflnders can be positioned to virtually any angle the photographer might need to conveniently compose the shot.

Stance

A wide stance gives the body more support. Stand with feet about shoulder-width apart, and stand so that the body is straight, with the pelvis tucked forward and elbows close to the body. The stance photographers describe as "posterior out, elbows flying in the breeze," is unacceptable. It produces wavering shots.

Shoot on Wide Focal Length

The steadiest handheld shots are produced with the camera lens set on a wide-angle focal length. Most photographers find that steady handheld shots are almost impossible to shoot with the lens set on telephoto.

Control Breathing

As you prepare to shoot, relax. Breathe in, let half the air out, then hold your breath like a target shooter. If the shot is long, breathe in shallow breaths.

Preplan Body Movement

Preplan your body movement for pan shots or whenever you follow action with the handheld camera — to follow a plane taking off, for example, or to follow a person moving past the camera. Position your feet in the direction the shot will end, then swing your body back around to capture the approaching action. As you shoot, your body will "uncoil" much like a spring. Otherwise, your body will bind up as you "coil up."

Walk in Lockstep

Another trick to minimize the shakiness of handheld shots is to photograph only objects that move. Subject movement renders camera movement less obvious. For smoothest action whenever you follow a subject in a walking shot, either forward or backward, stay in lockstep with the person you're photographing. When the person steps on the right foot, you also should be stepping on your right foot.

Avoid Unplanned Camera Movement

When you zoom, take care to avoid bumping the camera as you reach for i zoom button or lever, and be especially careful to avoid hard starts and stc at the stop limits of the zoom range. Such techniques instantly call attent: to themselves. And when shooting spot news, take your hand off the ca era's start-stop button so that if you're frightened or startled, you don't dentally shut off the camera. Finally, for video that captures more of the tion, and for greater personal safety, try shooting with both eyes open so ; know what's going on around you.

HOW TO USE THE ZOOM LENS

The most legitimate zoom shots have purpose other than simply to lend ; cial camera movement to the scene. Ideally, the zoom is made to reveal thing new within a scene, to "discover" new meaning, so to speak, or to keep a subject in proper composition within the frame as it moves toward camera.
Since nothing marks the amateur photographer more indelibly than u necessary zooms and pans, practice self-control whenever you are tempted to make these shots.
When you do zoom, do so sparingly and with a reason. As you begin your career in television news, regardless of whether you will be a photographer, reporter, producer, or editor, consider adopting a philosophy that limit* the number of zooms and pans you will allow

in any given news story. Some professionals recommend allowing oneself approximately one zoom pa-year — if absolutely necessary.

Avoid Calling Attention to the Zoom

Normally, the best zoom shots glide so smoothly and slowly that viewers ; hardly aware of them. One trick is to introduce the zoom simultaneously as subject movement begins, as when a jet at the end of the runway begins **id** gather speed for takeoff.
Another device to help make the zoom shot less noticeable is to use only a portion of the zoom range, rather than zooming through the lens's **ca-**tire focal length range from wide angle to telephoto.A sensitivity to composition will suggest the appropriate zoom range for a particular subject.

Adjust Speed and Duration of Zoom to Story Mood and Pace

Remember also to control the speed, length and duration of the zoom so that it will match the overall pace and mood of the larger sequence in which it i§ to appear. Sometimes fast "snap" zooms are most appropriate. At other times,a slow, lazy zoom will work best. Zoom shots that are always made at the *tf* speed, and are predictably long and artificially slow, will inevitably damage story's pace.
XThen you zoom, remember to hold the beginning of your shot steady about three seconds, then zoom, and again hold the shot steady for an-cr three seconds before you stop the camera. If you decide not to use the im when you edit, you will have at least three seconds of usable footage in the beginning and end of the original shot in the form of static shots. o attempt to "feather" the beginning and end of your zooms shots: Accelerate slowly to predetermined zoom speed, then gradually deaccelerate the as you come to the end of the shot. This avoids the hard stops and starts that occur when zooms begin and end instantly.

Recompose the Shot as You Zoom

As you zoom, remember to tilt the camera up or down as necessary to keep such factors as head room in acceptable composition. Beginners often start a zoom shot with the subject centered close-up in the frame, then zoom back to a longer shot without tilting down the camera to keep head room above the subject in acceptable proportions. The result is a long shot of the subject dead center of frame, with most of the top half of the frame wasted on empty space.

Remember, also, the good advice of professional photographers: "When you zoom, don't 'play the trombone.'" Don't zoom in then back out during **the** same shot.

STORYTELLING AND PLANNING

li is possible for the photographer to shoot everything that moves and still not have a story. Photographers who have learned to think as reporters produce not just a succession of pretty pictures, but pictures that tell stories. Identify the story. Research the subject. Decide what you want your audience to learn. Know the story so you can tell it effectively to others with your camera. Ask yourself as you shoot, "What offers visual proof of the subject, of my point of view, my commitment?" Remember also to give every story you shoot a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Stories without an ending are the visual equivalent of unsigned letters.

ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION IN THE FIELD

Once you have identified the story in your own mind, talk over your ideas with other members of the reporting team. Make contributions as appropriate to the story and how it is to be covered and edited. Only if you establish communication with other members of the reporting team can you know what they are thinking and reach final agreement on the story to be told.
Communication with the subjects in your story is just as vital. The contributions of subjects who trust the reporting team, and who feel safe enough to share something of their inner selves, can elevate the story from the routine to the exceptional.

THINK BEFORE YOU SHOOT

To further separate your work from the competition, exercise imagination every time you shoot. Try to make your photography communicate not only what you see and experience in the field, but what other observers may have missed. Show the event, but also give viewers a reason to want to watch the story, and look for ways to help viewers feel as if they have participated in it.

SHOOT SEQUENCES

A proven method to heighten the viewer's sense of involvement in the story is to shoot matched-action sequences. Through sequences, photojournalists can reconstruct an event much as first-person observers would see the action. To shoot sequences, learn to recognize action that repeats itself and to break" simple" action into its complex parts. If the assignment is to show a teenager boarding a bus, show the child's face, a close-up of her scuffed tennis shoes, the sapphire-chip ring on her ringer, her fingers tightly curled around her lunch box handle, her point of view of the approaching bus, the driver's smiling face, the cars stopped behind the bus, her father waving good-bye. the bus door closing, and the bus resuming its journey. During editing, the shots can be used in any given selection and order to emphasize particular aspects of the message

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SHOOT AND MOVE

After every shot you make in the field, try to physically move the camera to a new location and angle. A series of shots composed with the zoom lens and photographed with the camera on the same axis line results in edits that yeld a distinct visual jump — an effect sometimes referred to as the **pop cut. Pop** cuts are most apparent when the zoom lens is used to shoot a long shot of a subject (say a person) from a distance, followed immediately by a close-up without having moved the camera off the original axis line .
To avoid the pop cut, simply remember to shoot and move. When you first photograph the subject, establish an imaginary axis line projecting from the **lens** through the center of the subject. Shoot the subject, then physically move the camera to a new setup position for each new shot. To avoid arbitrary false inverses, in which the action appears to reverse from one cut to the next, remember to shoot all shots from the same side of the original axis line.

ANTICIPATE ACTION

If you can study the action before you shoot and learn to anticipate what happens next, your photography will have originality. "You have to learn to anticipate in which direction someone's going to walk before they take a step." says KUSA photographer Chuck Richardson.[3] If you find yourself shooting behind the action, try to preplan your shots. Wait for the action to occur and be ready to shoot when it does occur. "Don't let yourself get behind the **story."** advises CBS freelance photographer Bob Brandon. "Otherwise you will always be shooting aftermath."

SHOOTING ACTION OUTSIDE THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S CONTROL

Action that occurs only once and that is outside your control can still be shot sequentially if you anticipate it. Even in spot news, sequences happen all around you. Perhaps in the aftermath of a tornado, firefighters search for survivors beneath the rubble of fallen buildings as a cold rain falls. Elsewhere gas utility workers look for the shut-off valves on gas mains. An elderly woman is discovered alive beneath the rubble of her home. In the absence of stretchers, firefighters carry the injured piggy-back to waiting ambulances. Perhaps you can shoot a sequence if you know in advance where the fire-fighter will carry the elderly woman who has just been found. As you plan the sequence, think in terms of distance. You can then estimate the amount of time required for the firefighter to walk from "where you'll begin to shoot to where you'll finish shooting.

SHOOT INTO-FRAME/OUT-OF-FRAME ACTION

You also can decide in advance whether to hold the firefighter in frame during a continuous shot as he or she carries the woman, or how many times you will allow the firefighter to enter and leave frame. In fact, one of the easiest "ways to maintain continuity when shooting uncontrolled action is to shoot lots of into-frame/out-of-frame action. Begin to shoot before your subjects enter frame and continue to shoot after they have exited. Once the subject has left frame, an editor can cut to virtually any new scene without a jump.

SHOOT ONLY THE SHOTS YOU NEED

Most photographers have had the experience of seeing a bad shot make air. Usually the editor is blamed: "The shot was out of focus/too shaky/too fuzzy/too green. *Why* did you put *that* shot on the air?" and so on into the night. In turn, the editor usually blames deadlines that prevented a more critical review of the footage prior to broadcast. Rest assured that if a shot with poor focus or an unsteady zoom resides on your tape, it will somehow make its way onto the screen.

Have a Reason for Every Shot

Occasionally it happens that photographers return home after shooting everything that moved in the field, but still they have no story. Generally the fault can be traced to a lack of story commitment or to a breakdown in communication between the reporter and photographer. If no story has been defined, or if the photographer *is* unsure of the reporter's ideas, the tendency is to protect oneself by shooting everything that presents itself in the field, then try to create a story out of all the random footage back at the editing bench.The truth, of course, is that a story can never transcend the footage brought back from the field. If the footage is random and vague, similar ailments will afflict the edited story.

Since then, with the introduction of twenty-minute field cassettes, many photographers exhibit a tendency to overshoot their subjects. They simply shoot until the cassette is full, sometimes shooting twenty minutes of tape for a simple thirty-second spot. This practice of shooting "editing fodder" unnecessarily wears down field batteries and forces editors under tight deadlines to handle unnecessary volumes of taped footage. As every editor will attest, short tapes are easier and quicker to edit.

Even if every shot on the cassette is award-winning material, the editor faced with a ten-minute deadline may still have to cut the spot from the first two minutes of tape anyway. If you discover that your best footage often is near the end of the cassette, strive to become more selective and avoid shooting the camera randomly. The goal is to assess the story visually in your mind before you shoot each scene and to have a purpose for every shot you take, a process made easier if you have first identified the story to be told with your camera.

EDIT IN THE CAMERA

Many of the best photographers are also experienced editors. Their experience at the edit console allows them to previsualize or edit a scene in their mind even before they shoot it. This ability allows the photographer to **edit in the camera,** shooting sequences and overlapping action in generally the same order in which they later will be aired. The technique can save valuable editing time on stories that are being covered very close to air time.The technique can even help to ensure that a story will be edited as the photographer wants it to be aired.

When you edit in the camera, it is important to concentrate on three shots at a time: the shot you're taking, the shot you just took, and the shot you will take next. With this approach, you will intuitively shoot more sequences and can more naturally maintain continuity in the action from one shot to the next.

If you retake a shot without altering composition, take steps to avoid the inadvertent airing of identical takes by placing your hand to the lens to blank out the screen, or by recording a few frames of color bars between your identical takes. When you are editing against deadlines, or whenever someone else edits your footage, these visual separations will help prevent jump cuts from making air. Just as important, when you want particular footage to be aired, especially when the editor is on deadline, submit your tape for editing with the cassette already cued to that footage.

SHOOT TO ELIMINATE THE FALSE REVERSE

As you edit in the camera you can eliminate false reverses in the subject's screen direction by remembering to establish an axis line, then consciously footing only on one side of that line. If the axis line is a confusing concept, just remember to keep action moving in the same direction in the viewfinder from one shot to the next. If the train is moving screen right, keep it moving screen right in every shot.
To soften abrupt reverses in action, buffer with a shot of the action as it approaches the camera head-on, provide a cutaway to divert audience attention from the abrupt reversal in action, "take the audience with you" by running the camera in a shot as you cross the line, or soften the reverse with a dissolve or other optical effect. This is another way of expressing the 180 degree rule.

Shot A

Shot B

Correct

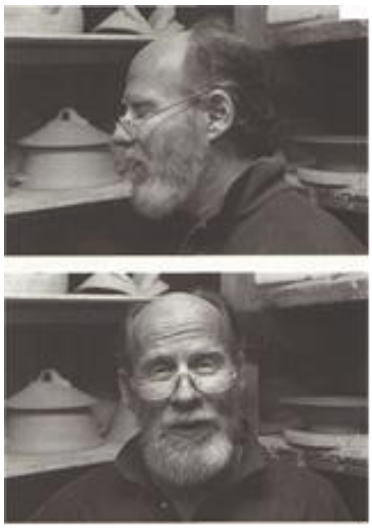
	
Shot A	**Shot B**

Incorrect (false reverse)

INVOLVE THE CAMERA IN THE ACTION

Audiences come to television for a sense of involvement and first-person experience, so try to move in close to your subjects and involve the camera in the action as intimately as possible. When you involve the camera in the action, you involve the audience. Go for detail and try to include full facial close-ups of people in the news, in views that approximate how we see people in real life during our everyday, one-on-one encounters. Otherwise, the audience may feel cheated.

Full facial shots derive much of their impact by virtue of their emphasis on eyes. Close-up, detailed shots of eyes help reveal to the audience what the subject is thinking and feeling, so try to show both of the subject's eyes, rather than a profile shot that shows one ear and one eye.



Full facial composition in which both of the subject's eyes can be seen is preferable to the often observed shot that shows only one of the person's eyes and an ear.
In this context, telephoto shots seldom count for close. Shots made on the long focal length settings do magnify the subject but tend to produce an artificial and unappealing sense of perspective. Almost never do telephoto shots involve the audience as intimately as the camera that is truly close to the subject.

WORKING WITH PEOPLE

Since news is about things that happen to people or otherwise affect their Swes. an emphasis on people can help give virtually all television news stones larger meaning. Without people in your stories, your reporting will tend toward institutional treatment, which many viewers may find dull and un-inviting. Often, when you tell your stories through people, you can use their presence to help illuminate the larger meaning of events.
Working with strangers in the field is less intimidating than it might at first appear to be. Most strangers will be willing to cooperate, provided you approach them with an attitude of courtesy and respect. Most people are flattered to learn they'll be on television.
To alleviate nervousness or concerns people may have about their "performance," you can suggest that they go about their work and routines just as though you weren't present. Within a few minutes, in the majority of cases, the initial trauma of being on television will have faded from mind.
Confidence in yourself and your ability helps you avoid being intimidated by your gear or by onlookers or even by the subject of your story. If you do feel inhibited or intimidated, remember that self-confidence develops as a product of experience. In a short time you should feel entirely at ease telling the stories of other people. It should be noted, however, that not all stories are worth intruding on the privacy of others, especially if your presence would add unnecessary emotional distress in the situation.

Avoid Distracting the Subject

Since the camera and other hardware of television act as barriers to reality, try to avoid drawing attention to yourself or any of your equipment whenever you work with people. Set up sound and lighting equipment with as few distractions as possible, preferably before your subject arrives, and try to make yourself "fade into the wallpaper." If people are worried about how they'll look or how they should behave in front of the camera, they won't give you their best heat in white light.

Heat is present when sound bites are spontaneous and believable and when they embody moments of emotional and intellectual intensity.

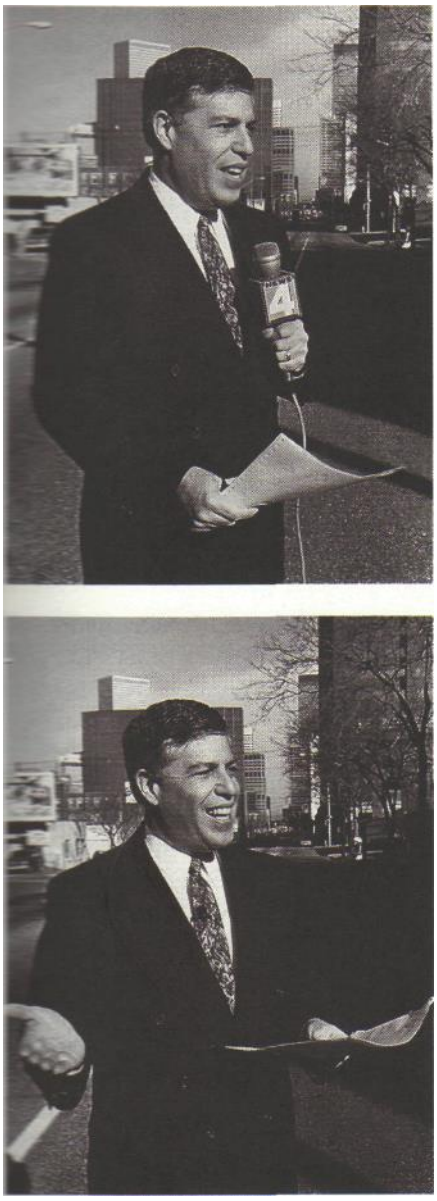
White light occurs whenever the subject is natural, unaffected, and emotionally transparent while on camera. When white light occurs, viewers know they are experiencing something of the real person in a real environment.

As a way to further preserve an atmosphere of spontaneity, consider not showing the microphone in frame.The microphone intimidates many people and acts as an additional barrier between you and the subject. Furthermore, mic flags tend to pull the viewer's eye away from the person and the person's emotion. With the exception of satellite trucks, mics are the only piece of reporting equipment journalists routinely continue to photograph. Unless station policy dictates otherwise, consider substituting a wired lavaliere or wireless mic instead.

Staging versus Motivating

When working with people, the photographer has at least three options to photograph their activity. The first is to photograph people as they go about their affairs. This technique results in perhaps the most honest and natural depictions of the subject. A second approach is to ask the subject to perform a particular activity on camera. If the wood carver has decided not to work on the day you show up, you may have to ask him to carve anyway so you can shoot the video you need and get on to your next story assignment. Most photographers consider this practice to be ethically acceptable, on the grounds that the subject only performs as he or she normally would in the photographer's absence. A third alternative, unacceptable at virtually all new* operations, is to **stage** the action and ask people to do what they don't normally do or direct them to engage in activities that are obviously out of character.

The far more preferable alternative to staging is to motivate people to do what they normally do. The process can be as simple as making an observation: "I'll bet you can still outrun your grandkids." If the photojournalism luck holds, Grandpa may reply,"It's a fact. Here, let me show you."



The handheld or "stick" mic (top) can draw attention to itself and unnecessarily act as a barrier between the audience and reporter. The miniature lavaliere microphone is far less intrusive (bottom).

8: CREDIBILITY AND MORAL GUIDELINES

Partiality undermines credibility.

Whose Bias?

Unlike newspapers, whose editorial lines are frequently based on the political sympathies of their owners, many broadcast organisations are bound, morally or legally, to be impartial in their coverage of news, and to refrain from expressing opinions.

To those who suffer the excesses of Ihe sillier side of the press (regrettably not confined to the tabloids) it comes as a relief to know that sanity is meant to prevail somewhere. But the difficulty you face as a television reporter is how to keep your audience fully informed about matters of a highly complex and political nature at the same time as "maintaining a duty not to take sides.

A complication is the opinion of some in high places that a decision to cover an item is itself evidence of partiality. There is no comfort in knowing that bias is in the eye of the beholder, or that history has made a habit of blaming the messenger for the message. The question is how to square the circle.

Impartiality versus balance

It used to be believed that 'impartiality' was synonymous with 'balance'. This is no longer the case because 'balance' - implying equality - is not always strictly fair. Using a stopwatch to ensure that speech extracts from two opposing politicians are of the same duration may be doing both a disservice. One might be as effective in half the time. A perfect 'balance' which resulted in two sides cancelling each other out might be of no practical value and leave the audience none the wiser. As for 'impartiality', that is now seen as more of a doctrine than the definition of a single editorial principle.

Neutrality

Neutrality could be thought of as offering an alternative. But it is not possible to apply that stance to everything. There are moral absolutes about which it is impossible to remain neutral and civilised. Truth not lies; justice not injustice; freedom not slavery. Decent journalists are not neutral about racism or cruelty, but they are truthful about the facts of them.

Fairness

In the absence of anything else, the notion of fairness seems to be the most sensible. At least it has a positive ring to it. It also has the merit of flexibility. Fairness in one case may be to seek an interviewee's contribution 'live' rather than recorded. Fairness in a second way may be to paraphrase an interviewee's remarks. Fairness in n third mny bo to ask someone else.

Fairness guidelines

- *Tell potential interviewees why you want them.*

They have a right to know how you intend to use their contribution, and in what context. Be prepared to have your invitation declined.

- *Protect your sources.*

But be aware of the legal risks. In some circumstances refusal may lead to a fine *or* imprisonment.

- *Stick to the facts.*

Do not be tempted to speculate unless you possess information from which you can properly draw conclusions. If the opposition wants to 'take a flyer with the truth', let it.

- *Choose adjectives with care.*

They could be interpreted as 'editorialising'. Better still, avoid adjectives altogether. Well-written reports, accompanied by good pictures, rarely need embellishment.

- *Keep your opinions to yourself.*

It's unprofessional - and the audience is more interested in what your contributor has to say.

- *Avoid partiality.*

It's as wrong to champion the weak because they are weak as to favour the important or powerful.

- *Don't overcompensate.*

If you are not in personal sympathy with one argument, do not overcompensate with conscious bias towards the other.

- *Do not take advantage.*

People are not fair game because they are unfamiliar with the medium. Don't play the tricks of the trade.

- *Obsorvn and report.*

You are bound to witness injustice, it is your job to observe and report it dispassionately. Let the audience draw their own conclusions.

- *Treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself.*

The Bounds of Good Taste

To any of the satellites which form the global web of communications it makes no difference whether the television signals sent from one side of the world to the other show the most horrific pictures of massacre in Rwanda or the colourful frenzy of a carnival in Rio. The geography and the technical operations are the same. And terrible events do not just happen abroad - as many of the reporters who went to Dunblane will remind us.

Like doctors, television professionals - reporters, picture editors, and camera crews - come across violence, death and human suffering as part of their daily routine in troubled areas. Then they go home one day and mow the lawn. Like doctors, they need to be immune to it all. If not, they cannot function effectively. Immune does not mean they are not affected. Experienced correspondents will explain that the more terrible things they witness, the more determined they are that the world should know, and should do something about it. That is the reason, as mentioned earlier, that many governments build the reaction of audiences into their foreign policy.
The viewer at home rarely has any inkling of the emotions of those involved in deciding how much of a cruel world can be shown, or of the decisions required to show the truth about what people do to one another, or what nature does, and yet avoid drifting into distasteful voyeurism.

The danger in your presence

In some situations the presence of you and your camera crew can inflame passions and lead to events which would not have occurred had you not been there to witness them. At all times be alive to the potential for manipulation, and avoid recording acts of violence that you suspect may be being staged for you. If in any doubt keep the camera out of sight.

Scenes of violence

When you do witness violent scenes, don't believe you are acting responsibly by including them in your coverage and expecting senior colleagues to decide whether to edit them out. You must judge for yourself whether they add to or subtract from the strength of your report.
Avoid lingering close-ups of pools of blood, bits of bodies, or whole bodies identifiable to relatives. Long shots can be just as effective.
Take account of who will be watching and when. Children or people viewing alone can easily be upset.

Your responsibility

Let none of these difficulties make you forget your responsibility for fair, honest reporting. Weigh that against the risk of offending the substantial lobby of opinion which would rather be left safely in ignorance of anything which is unsavury or violent. These people have as much right to be considered as those who are voyeuristic or those who, out of genuine concern for their fellow humans, wish to be told the unsanitised truth, however much it hurts.

Glossary

ADI. Area of Dominant Influence, a term used by Arbitron Ratings to designate the boundaries of the survey area within which the primary viewers of a station are located. See "DMA." (Appendix B)
Aerial Shot. Shot taken from a camera mounted in an airplane, helicopter, drone or similar conveyance. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Anchor Debrief. The question-and-answer period between an anchor and on-set reporter immediately after the reporter's story has aired. (The Role of Talent Performance in Field Reporting)
Aperture. An adjustable iris inside the camera lens that can be regulated to control the amount of light entering the camera. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Apparent Authority. The authority of an individual that can be reasonably assumed to be sufficient for a reporter to enter someone's premises or other property, as in the case of permission from a police officer to enter an apartment building in the absence of the building's owner. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Assignment Editor. The person who monitors the news day and schedules and assigns reporting crews to cover stories. (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
Audio-Video Linkage. The desirable marriage of words and pictures in which voice-over narration directly references the pictures on the television screen. Also called "referencing." (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
Axis Line. An imaginary straight line projected from the tip of the camera lens through the center of the subject and beyond. If the photographer shoots on both sides of the axis line, false reverses in the action may result. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Backlight. A light placed opposite the key and shined down upon the subject from behind. Also called a "rim light." (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Barndoors. The hinged metal doors used on light heads to block or direct light. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Bidirectional. A microphone pickup pattern in which sound is picked up in front and back, but not to the sides of the microphone. (The Sound Track)
BOPSA. A term used to describe boring scenes normally shot at meetings and luncheons that show a "bunch of people sitting around." (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
Bounce Light. Light is reflected off a surface to make it appear more soft and natural. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Broadlighting. The lighting pattern that results when the key light illuminates the side of the subject's face closest to camera. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Butterfly Light. A variation of top lighting in which the main light is placed high and slightly in front of the subject, resulting in a butterfly-shaped shadow beneath the subject's nose. Also called "glamour lighting." (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Garnet. A guarantee that all custom duties and excise taxes will be paid to a foreign country in the event that any items covered by the carnet are not taken out of the country. (Appendix D)
Charge Coupled Device (CCD). A solid-state chip that converts reflected light directly to electrical signals in lieu of a video pickup tube. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Circles of Confusion. Light rays that register as overlapping circles of light on the film plane or target surface, rather than as pinpoints of light that result in crisp focus. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Close. The closing shot of the story; the ending toward which the rest of the story builds. (Telling the Visual Story)

Close-Up (CU). A shot that fills the screen with the subject or with only a portion of the subject, as for example the face of a person or the full screen shot of a wrist watch. (Telling the Visual Story, The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Cold Cut. A cut in which an outgoing shot and its accompanying sound end simultaneously, only to be replaced at the splice line by new picture with new sound. The effect can destroy a story's otherwise smooth, fluid pace. (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Color Temperature. An expression of the proportion of red to blue light that the light source radiates. As color temperature increases, the light becomes progressively more bluish. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Combination Shot. Camera follows action until a new moving subject enters frame, then picks up the new subject and follows it. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Commitment. A declarative sentence that identifies the story to be told. The journalistic equivalent of the terms *theme, storyline, premise,* or *point of view* as commonly used in literature and theatre. (Telling the Visual Story, How to Improve Your Storytelling Ability)
Composition. The placement and emphasis of visual elements on the screen. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Contrast. The proportion of white tones in a scene in relationship to black or gray tones. High contrast results when objects in a scene are white and black, with few intermediate gray tones. Low contrast results when objects in scenes are white on white, black on black, or mostly medium gray. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Contrast Ratio. The difference between the most brightly illuminated areas of a subject and the areas of least exposure. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Cookies. Opaque panels with cutouts that create patterns of light and shadow on backgrounds. See "Flags." (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Cut. The point in edited video at which audience attention is transferred instantly from one image to the next. See "Edit Point." (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Cutaway. A shot of some part of the peripheral action, such as a clock on the wall or football fans in a stadium, that can be used to divert the viewer's eye momentarily from the main action. Commonly used as an editorial device to help eliminate jump cuts and condense time. See "Motivated Cutaway." (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Cut-in shot. A shot such as a close-up or insert that emphasizes particular elements of the action in a master shot. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Cutting at Rest. Editing together scenes of matched action at points in which the action has momentarily stopped. (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Cutting on Action. Cutting out of a scene as the action progresses and continuing the action without interruption at the start of the incoming scene. (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Decibel (dB). A measure of sound intensity that corresponds roughly to the minimum change in sound level that the human ear can detect. (The Sound Track)
Defamation. Any statement that damages a person's name, reputation, or character. (Law and Broadcast Journalist)
Demonstration Standup. The reporter addresses the field camera while engaging in an activity that helps visually prove and reinforce the story being reported. (The Role of Talent Performance in Field Reporting)
Depth of Field (DOF). The range of acceptable focus in a scene. Normally about one-third of the total range of depth of field occurs in front of the subject or focus point, and two-thirds behind the subject. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Dissolve. A scene optically fades to black on top of another scene, which optically fades from black to full exposure. The effect is a melting of one scene into the next. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)

Distancing. The feeling that a news happening is remote or even unreal, which can overcome photographers as they watch events unfold in the camera viewflnder. (Field Techniques of Shooting TV News)
Distortion. Any signal that unintentionally sounds or appears different on output from a transmission or recording device than on input. (The Sound Track)
DMA. Designated Market Area, a term used by A. C. Nielsen Company to designate the boundaries of the survey area within which the primary viewers of a station are located. See "ADI." (Appendix B)
Dolly Shot. A shot made from a camera mounted on a wheeled conveyance that is moved either toward the subject or away from it. See "Tracking Shot." (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Dropouts. Temporary interruptions in transmitted or recorded sound or picture-(The Sound Track)
Dual Anchor. Two anchors take turns presenting news from the studio. (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
Dynamic Microphone. A rugged, handheld microphone often used in news applications. (The Sound Track)
Editing. The editing of videotape and its attendant sound is the "conscious and deliberate guidance of viewer thoughts and associations." The editor strives both to create illusion and to reconstruct reality, as well as to guide viewers' emotional responses. (Telling the Visual Story, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Editing in the Camera. The practice of shooting sequences and overlapping action in generally the same order in which they are to be aired. (Field Techniques of Shooting TV News)
Edit Point. The point at which one shot is surrendered and a new shot begins. See "Cut." (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
ENG. Electronic news gathering. (Preface)
Enterprise Stories. Reports with exclusive content developed on a reporter's **or** station's own initiative. (The Assignment Editor and Producer: Architects of the Newscast)
Establishing Shot. Used to introduce viewers to the story's locale or to the story itself. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Ethics. A philosophy of what is right and acceptable as it governs the rules of living and conduct that impact upon professional deportment. (Journalistic Ethics)
Exterior Shot. A shot made out-of-doors. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Eyewash. Pictures whose meaning has little to do with the main point of the story being reported. See "Wallpaper Video" and "Generic Video." (Introduction)
Fade. The scene fades to black (fade-out) or fades from black to full exposure (fades-in). (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
False Reverse. A subject moving in one screen direction is seen in the next shot to be moving in the opposite direction. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Field Techniques of Shooting TV News, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Fast Lenses. Lenses useful in low light situations because of their large maximum aperture sizes, generally in the range of f/1.2 or f/1.4. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Feather. A technique used in zooming and panning shots, in which the artificial camera movement begins almost imperceptibly and builds to the intended speed, then slows and again ends almost imperceptibly. The technique reduces audience distraction by eliminating the abrupt and obvious beginning and ending of artificial camera movement. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Field Producer. Often the first "reporter" on a story, this individual conducts research, makes initial contacts with story sources, handles logistics for the reporting crew, and may conduct

interviews and write scripts. This position is found most commonly at the network level and in larger union markets. (The Assignment Editor and Producer: Architects of the Newscast)
Fill Light. A secondary light source set to produce illumination approximately one-fourth to one-half as intense as the key light. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Filmic Time. The representation of time in motion picture media as an elastic commodity. In television and film, time can be compressed or expanded far beyond the constraints of real time which is inelastic. (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Filter. A colored glass or optical gel used in photography to control exposure, contrast, or color temperature. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Filter Factor. A measure of the amount of light that is lost when a filter is used in photography. Each factor of 2 cuts the original amount of light in half. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Flags. Opaque panels used to block light from certain areas. See "Cookies." (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Flash Cut. Brief fragments of shots are cut to exact rhythm against a musical beat or sound. (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Flat Light. A flat, uninteresting light with little sense of depth or modeling which results when the primary light is mounted on the camera or very near it. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Focal Length. The designation of a camera lens and its angle of view as determined by measuring the distance from the optical center of the lens to the front surface of the target or CCD chip in television cameras. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Focus (of the story). A simple, vivid, declarative sentence expressing the heart, the soul, of the story as it will be on air. See Commitment. (Telling the Visual Story)
Follow-up. The practice of monitoring ongoing stories and reporting as warranted on significant developments. (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
F/Stop. An aperture setting expressed as a fraction. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Futures File. A file of story ideas, notes, and news releases about upcoming events, normally organized by day, week, and month. (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
Generic Video. Visuals from file video or similar source originally shot for one purpose, then later used to haphazardly "illustrate" a script. Often the pictures are inappropriate to the message being communicated. (Telling the Visual Story)
Gray Scale. A printed scale of contrast values ranging from black, through the various shades of gray, to pure white. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Great Depth of Field. The term used when a scene appears to be in focus from quite near the camera to and including the background. See Maximum Depth of Field, Shallow Depth of Field. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Gyro-lens. A lens that electronically compensates for unintentional camera motion and vibration to produce a smoother, steadier shot. The lens is especially useful to smooth out aerial shots and hand-held shots made on long focal length-settings. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Hatchet Light. Side light that appears to "split" the subject's face in half. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Head-On Shot. Action in the shot moves directly toward camera. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Heat. The emotional or intellectual intensity often present in sound bites that are spontaneous and believable. (Field Techniques of Shooting TV News)
Hertz. A unit of frequency expressed as one cycle per second. See Kilohertz. (The Sound Track)
High-Angle Shot. A shot taken with the camera high and looking down at the subject. High angles tends to diminish the subject and give viewers a sense of superiority. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Highlights. Vignettes of the most noteworthy happenings in sports or news events. (Sports Reporting and Photography)

High-Pass Filter. An audio filter that diminishes the low frequencies where most wind and some equipment noises originate. (The Sound Track)
Illustrative Video. Separate shots of video keyed to each sentence or paragraph of script, with little regard for continuity in subject matter or consecutiveness from one shot to the next. (How to Improve Your Storytelling Ability)
Impedance. A characteristic of microphones similar to electrical resistance. (The Sound Track)
ING. International news gathering. (Appendix D)
Insert Shot. Close-up, essential detail about some part of the main action. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Interior Shot. A shot made inside a building or other interior location. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Invasion of Privacy. Any act of intrusion, including trespass and publication of embarrassing facts, even if true, that violates an individual's reasonable expectation to privacy. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Inverse-Square Law of Light. The law that states that at twice the distance from a subject, artificial lights provide only one-fourth their original level of illumination. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Iris. An adjustable aperture inside the camera lens that can be regulated to control the amount of light entering the camera. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Jump Cut. An action that is seen to jump unnaturally into a new position on the screen. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Key Light. The primary or dominant light that illuminates a subject. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Kilohertz. A unit of frequency equal to 1,000 cycles per second (kHz). See Hertz. (The Sound Track)
Lavaliere Microphone. A miniature microphone which can be clipped to or hidden beneath the speaker's clothing. (The Sound Track)
Law. The rules and principles of conduct enacted through legislation, and enforced by local, state, and federal authority, that dictate how the affairs of a community or society are to be conducted. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Lead. The first shot in a news package. Its purpose is to instantly telegraph the story to come. (Telling the Visual Story)
Libel. The use of factual information, as opposed to opinion, that holds someone in hatred or contempt, subjects the person to ridicule, or otherwise lowers one's esteem for the individual. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Limited Invitation. A principle that holds that even in public places, such as restaurants and supermarkets, photography may be prohibited and the reporter's conduct limited to the primary activities of the business in question — in this example, eating or shopping. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Long Shot (LS). A full view of a subject. (Telling the Visual Story, the Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography
Low-Angle Shot. A shot taken with the camera low and looking up at the subject. This shot tends to make the subject more dominant and to reduce the viewer's sense of control or superiority. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Macro-Focusing. An adjusting lever permits the front lens element to be extended beyond the limit for normal focus in order to produce larger-than-life images. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Manifest. An unofficial list of the items without serial numbers that are carried into a foreign country. (Appendix D)

Master Shot. A single camera is used to record a continuous take of the entire event from one location and generally at one focal length lens setting. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Matched Action. The action of a subject in an edited sequence appears to flow smoothly and without interruption from one shot to the next. See "Overlapping Action." (Telling the Visual Story, The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Maximum Depth of Field. The maximum or deepest range of depth of field, or what appears to be in focus in a scene, available in a given shot at a particular focus setting, focal length, and aperture setting. See Great Depth of Field, Shallow Depth of Field. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)

Medium Shot (MS). Brings subject matter closer to the viewer than a long shot and begins to isolate it from the overall environment. (Telling the Visual Story, The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Mic Flags. A small, four-sided box imprinted with the station logo and attached to handheld microphones. (The Sound Track)
Motivated Cutaway. A cutaway that contributes desirable or essential new information to the story. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Moving Shot. The camera swivels on a tripod or other fixed base to follow action. Different from a pan because the photographer's motivation is to follow action, rather than to show a static object in panorama. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Multidimensional Reporting. An attempt to heighten the viewer's sense of experience by addressing as many of the five senses as possible in a report, and by allowing viewers to see the reporter think, interpret, and react to the story. (The Role of Talent Performance in Field Reporting)
Natural (Nat) Sound. Natural sounds from an environment that often serve to heighten the viewer's sense of realism. (Telling the Visual Story,The Sound Track)
Negative-Action Shot. Action in the shot moves away from camera. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
News Planner. A person whose responsibility is to generate ideas for stories and series, conduct research, and plan coverage well in advance of airdate. (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
(Newscast) Open. The prerecorded introduction to a newscast, commonly featuring graphics with the newscast name, music, sound effects, shots of news events or cityscapes, and pictures of newscasters, weather, and sports personalities. (The Assignment Editor and Producer: Architects of the Newscast)
Node. The optical center of a lens. (Shooting Television News:The Basics)
NPPA. National Press Photographers Association. (Preface, Appendix B)
Objective Camera. Action is portrayed as an observer on the sidelines would see it. See Subjective Camera (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Ohm. A measure of electrical resistance. (The Sound Track)
Omnidirectional. A microphone pickup pattern in which sound is picked up from all directions. (The Sound Track)
One-Person Band. Any person who shoots, writes, reports, and edits his or her own news stories. (Field Techniques of Shooting TV News)
Open Shade. The quality of shade produced when an outdoor environment is protected from direct sunlight, but with nothing above the subject to obstruct secondary light from the sky itself. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Optical Center. The point inside the lens at which light rays first bend as they are brought to bear on the target during the focusing process. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)

Overlapping Action. Action that is contained in one shot to be edited also is present in the shot to which it will be joined. See "Matched Action." (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing:The Invisible Art)
Package. An edited, self-contained videotape report of a news event or feature, complete with pictures, sound bites, voice-over narration, and natural sounds. (Telling the Visual Story)
Pack Journalism. A high concentration of journalists from competing news organizations jammed into an area, each concerned primarily with his or her own interests. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Pan. The camera swivels on a tripod to show an overall scene in a single shot, or the handheld camera is moved in similar fashion. See "Moving Shot." (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Parallel Cutting. Intercutting between separate but developing actions. (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Perspective. The apparent sizes of photographed objects in relationship to one another as they appear at certain distances, in comparison with how the human eye would view the same scene from the same distance. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Photojournalist. An individual who uses or relies on the camera not merely to take pictures, but to tell stories. (Telling the Visual Story)
Pickup Shot. Any shot, such as a close-up or insert shot, reaction shot, point of view, or even a new camera angle, that emphasizes particular elements of action in the master shot. See Cut-in. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Point of View (POV) Shot. The view as seen through the subject's eyes. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Pool Coverage. An effort to minimize distraction by which information or television signals generated by one news agency are made available to all interested stations. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Pop Cut. The visual "pop" or jump created when the zoom lens is used to shoot a long shot of a subject from a distance, followed immediately by a cut to a close-up from the same camera taken without having moved the camera off the original axis line. (Field Techniques of Shooting TV News)
Producer. The "architect of the newscast" who typically determines story selection, the news lineup, and the use of various production elements for the newscast. (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
Rack Focus. Rotating the lens focus ring to shift the focus point from one subject to another while a shot is being recorded. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Ram bo Video. Video recorded by a photographer who shoots everything in sight with little regard to story line or subject matter. (Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Reaction Shot. A shot that shows a subject's reaction to an action in the previous shot. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Reestablishing Shot. A shot similar to the original establishing shot of an overall scene. Used to reintroduce locale or to allow the introduction of new action. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Referencing. The practice of writing voice-over copy to reinforce what is being seen on the screen. Also called *audio-video linkage.* (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
Reportorial Editing. The process of previsualizing the story, including the pictures, sounds, words, and other production elements that will be needed to give the story logical structure and continuity; a form of mind's-eye storyboard. (Telling the Visual Story)
Reveal Shot See Transition Shot. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)

Reverse-Angle Shot. A shot made by moving the camera so that it shoots back along the axis line as originally established in the first shot. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
RF. Radio frequency, the means through which audio and some video signals are transmitted. (The Sound Track)
Room Tone. The ambient sound peculiar to each separate environment that is inserted during editing to prevent sound dropouts. (The Sound Track)
RTNDA. Radio-Television News Directors Association. (Appendix B)
Rule of Thirds. An approach to photographic composition in which the viewflnder is mentally divided into thirds both horizontally and vertically. Subjects are placed at points within the viewflnder where the lines can be imagined to intersect. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Screen Space. The space that surrounds subjects in the frame, including headroom, gaps between people, and the space into which subjects move. Improper use of screen space results in visual imbalance. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Section 3A(7). A section of the American Bar Association's Code of Judicial Conduct that advocates bans on courtroom photography and broadcast paraphernalia. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Sequence. A series of related shots of an activity in which continuing action flows smoothly from one shot to the next to create the illusion of an uninterrupted event. (Telling the Visual Story, The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Sequential Video. Video that produces a continuous, uninterrupted flow of action that tells a story and communicates a sense of experience. (How to Improve Your Storytelling Ability)
Shallow Depth of Field. Only a narrow area of depth within the scene appears to be in focus, as when a foreground object is reproduced in razor-crisp focus but the background is blurred. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Shield Law. A law that protects journalists from having to disclose the identities of confidential sources. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Shooting Ratio. The ratio of footage recorded in the field to that which is used in the finished story. (Field Techniques of Shooting TV News)
Short Lighting. The lighting pattern that results when the fill light shines on the side of the subject's face closest to camera. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Shot. The single, continuous take of material that is recorded each time the camera is turned on until it is turned off. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Shotgun Microphone. A long, cylindrical microphone with a pickup pattern similar to a telephoto lens that picks up sound from as far away as thirty feet or more. (The Sound Track)
Slander. The defamation of a person made orally, as opposed to in writing. Generally, a broadcast organization would not be charged with slander, but rather with libel (i.e., written defamation) especially whenever the broadcast originates from a written script or notes. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Slow Lenses. Lenses restricted for reasons of manufacturing economy to maximum aperture sizes in the range of f/3-5 or f/4. Such lenses are less suitable in low light situations. (Shooting Tele vision News: The Basics)
Snap Zoom. A shot in which the photographer snaps the zoom lever, instantly zooming in or out to a different composition of an action. When the few frames of the snap zoom are eliminated during editing, two separate shots result. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
SNG. Satellite news gathering.
Soft Focus. A scene, or an area within the scene, appears to be out of focus. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)

Sound Bite. A short excerpt from an interview, public statement, or spontaneous comment that normally is aired as part of a broadcast news package. (Telling the Visual Story)
Specular Light. The effect created when direct light rays throw strong highlights and distinct shadows. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Split-Focus Presentation. The practice of dividing attention between the anchor and the audience during a reporter's on-set interaction with the anchor. (The Role of Talent Performance in Field Reporting)
Spot News. Hard news events, such as fires, explosions, airline crashes, hurricanes, and tornadoes, that break suddenly and without warning. A hallmark of many spot news events is their unpredictability. (Telling the Visual Story, How to Improve Your Storytelling Ability)
Staging. The practice of asking people to do on camera what they normally don't do in real life, or directing people to engage in activities that are out of character. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Field Techniques of Shooting TV News)
Standup. A reporter in the field delivers one or more sentences of dialogue while appearing on camera. (Telling the Visual Story, The Role of Talent Performance in Field Reporting)
Standup Bridge. A field reporter's on-camera appearance that is used as a transition within the news package from one subject, time, or location to the next. (Sports Reporting and Photography)
Step-Down Electrical Transformer. Converts 220-volt electricity to 120-volt current. (Appendix D)
Storyboard. A cartoonlike panel of sketches or artwork that shows the main shots and developing action in a sequence or story before actual photography begins. (Telling the Visual Story)
Stringer. A private individual who photographs or reports breaking news for a station in return for a small fee. (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
Subjective Camera. Action is portrayed as the subject would see it. See "Point of View Shot." (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Subpoena. A court order to produce documents or other information, including on-air tape, a reporter's notes, or perhaps even the names of sources. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Talking Head. Any interview or sound bite; often, a tedious or boring interview or sound bite. (The Broadcast Interview: Shooting the Quotation Marks, How to Improve Your Storytelling Ability)
Tandem Anchor. Two or more anchors take turns presenting news from the studio. **(The** Assignment Editor and Producer)
Target. The front surface of the video pickup tube in some electronic cameras on which light rays from the lens are focused. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Tease. A sentence or two of copy that reveals just enough about an upcoming story to help keep viewers tuned to the newscast. (The Assignment Editor and Producer)
Throw. To pitch or offer reporting opportunities to news sources, as during a conversation; or, the distance that rays from artificial light sources penetrate the environment to be photographed. (The Broadcast Interview: Shooting the Quotation Marks, The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Tilt Shot. The vertical equivalent of a pan shot in which the camera tilts up or down to reveal new action or subject matter. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Tracking Shot. Camera is moved physically through space to keep moving subjects in frame. Sometimes referred to as a "dolly shot." (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Transition Shot. A shot that transfers the viewer's attention from the end of one sequence to the start of another (a close shot of a ship's whistle serves as the transition shot from scenes at a fish market along the wharf to shots of canning operations aboard a fishing ship). Also called a "reveal shot." (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)

Trespass. The illegal entry onto another's land, property, or premises. Also, the unlawful injury to a person, or to a person's rights or property. (Law and the Broadcast Journalist)
Trucking Shot. Camera moves through space past fixed objects. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
T/Stop. A lens aperture setting somewhat equivalent to an f/stop, but which takes into account the various light-absorbing properties of the lens. See "F/stop." (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
TV Cutoff. The phenomenon by which home television receivers, whether because of their design or faulty adjustment, clip off the edges of the transmitted video image. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
Umbrella Lighting. A soft, indirect form of light created by shining artificial light into a metallic-colored, heat-resistant umbrella. (The Magic of Light and Lighting)
Unidirectional. A microphone pickup pattern in which only sound in front of the mic is picked up. (The Sound Track)
VCR. Videocassette recorder. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
Visa. Official authorization, typically attached to a passport, that allows an individual to enter a country or area. Must be obtained in advance of arrival. (Appendix D)
Visual Essayist. A photojournalism whether photographer or reporter, who incorporates all the writing instruments of television — words, camera, microphone, and edit console — to tell compelling visual stories. (Preface)
Visual Grammar. The rules that govern the visual reconstruction of events, including the raw material shot and recorded in the field and the process of editing the material for broadcast. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography)
VO. Voice-over narration.The reporter's voice can be heard "over" the pictures on the screen. (Telling the Visual Story, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Wallpaper Video. Pictures with little meaning but whose subject matter is close enough to illustrate the reporter's script. See "Eyewash" and "Generic Video." (Introduction)
White Balance. The adjustment of camera circuitry to reproduce pure whites under the light source at hand; the absence of color "at white." (Shooting Television News: The Basics)
White Light. The quality that occurs when a subject is natural, unaffected, and emotionally transparent while on camera. (Field Techniques of Shooting TV News)
White Space. Pauses in voice-over narration that allow compelling pictures and sounds to involve the viewer more directly in the story. (Telling the Visual Story. Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
Wild Sound. Natural sounds from an environment that help communicate a sense of experience and often serve to heighten the listener's or viewer's sense of realism. (Telling the Visual Story)
Windscreen. A foam or metallic mesh microphone shield that reduces wind noise. (The Sound Track)
Wipe. An optical effect in which one shot appears to be shoved off the screen by an incoming shot. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Video Editing: The Invisible Art)
X Factor. The distinctive, often indefinable qualities that make public performers recognizably unique. (Appendix B)
Zoom. A shot produced from a fixed location with a continuously variable focal-length lens. When the lens is said to "zoom in," the subject appears to grow larger and move closer to the screen. When the lens is said to "zoom out," the subject appears to grow smaller and move away from the screen. (The Visual Grammar of Motion Picture Photography, Field Techniques of Shooting Television News)
Zoom Lens. A lens that provides for continuously variable focal length settings from wide angle to telephoto, such as 12-120mm or 25-250mm. (Shooting Television News: The Basics)