

ERIC

JOE

ERIC (V.O.)

[INTRO SEQUENCE]

ERIC

Hello, and welcome to the Pre-Production Phase! I'm your host, Eric Rustum, and we—

JOE

And I'm Joe!

ERIC

—are going to talk a lot today about some very important things to remember before you even pick up the camera to start filming.

[EXPLANATION SEQUENCE]

ERIC

First thing we are going to talk about today is lining the script. Lining the script is what you do when you plan out all the shots you are going to get in a scene. Every line you create on a script indicates a particular shot and how long it will last within shooting the scene. Let's take a look at the lined script of my senior narrative as an example.

ERIC

Here we have scene 2, which takes place at a school. Two characters, Chad and Matt, have a conversation by the vending machine about a girl who is sitting close by.

Joe chuckles.

JOE

Chad...

ERIC

First I line my master shot which is labeled 2A, to start our shot sequence. This a wide shot that goes through the entire scene.

A short exchange plays out in a wide shot. (From “Yo Matt” to “The one sitting over on the bench.”)

ERIC

Next, I'll line my singles. Since I am planning on shooting them after the master shot, they are labeled sequentially with 2B and 2C. These are going to be close-up shots of each of the two characters. Typically the lines start with the dialogue and end when the characters are done talking. The squiggles in the middle are for when a character isn't talking. In this example 2B is Chad's single and 2C is Matt's. Squiggle moments are also important for reaction shots during the scene.

Scene plays out with the singles only. (From "Well, why..." to "Dude, you could get with")

ERIC

With these three shots we have obtained triangle coverage. One master shot and two singles is the simplest form of coverage in a dialogue scene. It gets more complicated depending on your scene, but it's all expanded from triangle coverage.

ERIC

For example, insert shots are a way of expanding beyond just seeing the characters talking. Insert shots help immerse us in the film and can help emphasize certain objects in a scene. So, our insert shot is going to be labeled 2D. These are the shortest lines on our scripts because these shots take very little time to take.

Scene plays out but with the insert in the middle. ("Dude, you could..." to "tell her how you feel").

[END OF SEQUENCE]

ERIC

Now, you may have a lot of questions right now. "Eric, what's the point of getting all of these shots if we're not even going to use some of them in the edit?"

JOE

Yeah dude that was, like, a lot of work.

ERIC

You didn't even have to do anything.

JOE

Yeah but still, I'm on my fifth orange.

ERIC

Yes, this method of single cam shooting is one that can take a lot of time, but you want to make sure that you have all of the options you can in case something goes wrong. Also, generally it's better just to have all the options you can in the editing room. If production time is a worry for you, then putting a lot of effort into things like a lined script can really help move things along.

Thanks to our senior narrative's lined script and shot list, we were able to keep track of exactly what shots we needed and how long each would take in a given scene.

[Transition]

ERIC (cont.)

Preparation can make or break a film. You can often tell just by watching a film how much effort was put into its pre-production. So going forward, here are some general tips to keep in mind before you start filming.

[EXPLANATION SEQUENCE]

ERIC (cont.)

Storyboarding can be a great tool during production. It allows you to see the shot you envisioned and exactly what needs to be in the frame as well as how the camera should move. If a shot on your lined script or your shot list isn't clear enough, you could refer to your storyboard to clarify.

[Transition]

ERIC (cont.)

When you are scheduling your shoot days, list out everything you will need for those days. Whether it is wardrobe choices for your actors, camera equipment, lights, mics, props, food, extra batteries, whatever you need, list it out! Being completely prepared for a shoot will make it go that much smoother, and it will encourage your actors to be just as professional.

[Transition]

ERIC (cont.)

When you are contacting people, whether they are crew members, actors, or your producer, be very formal! Even if the people who are helping you are your best friends, maintain a professional tone. These people are volunteering time for your film, so you should treat them with the utmost respect. Plus, being professional encourages those people to work with you and stick with your film.

Here's a JOE TIP!

[Transition to JOE TIP!]

Joe is holding an index card in front of him as he sloppily reads what's on it.

JOE

“Schedule times that are a little bit over the amount of time you think you will shoot. That way, if you finish early, your actors will appreciate that you worked hard to let them go home.”

Joe smiles.

[END OF JOE TIP! AND EXPLANATION SEQUENCE]

ERIC

Pre-production, for me, was the hardest part of my senior narrative. But hopefully, these tips can help you overcome some of the challenges you'll face in this process.

JOE

It's gonna suck either way!

Eric gives Joe a look.

ERIC

In a good way! Hopefully! Thanks for watching, and let's get started with the Production Phase!

[OUTRO SEQUENCE]