January 2009

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Interview with Director Darren Aronofsky
Wrestling with Rourke's Demons

Demystify the Bluescreen and Greenscreen Process

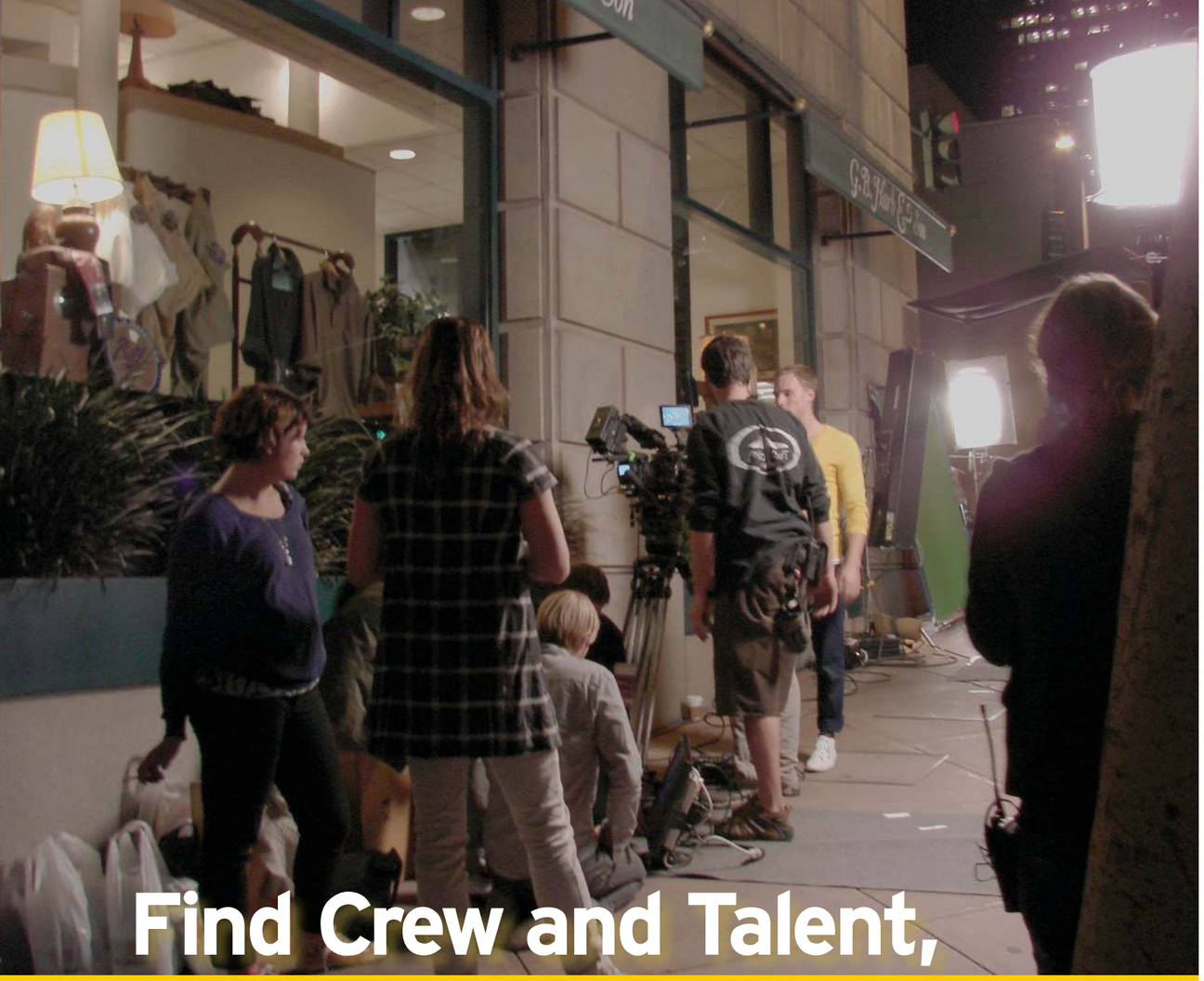
As an Editor, You Can't Just Follow the Script

Danny Boyle Reflects on "Slumdog Millionaire"

Editing: "Targeting Animation" Method Applied

6 Different Kinds of Voiceover Demos

Shopping for HD Monitors? 10 Important Tips



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Mickey Rourke with the Director Darren Aronofsky on the set of THE WRESTLER. Photo Credit: Niko Tavernise



Publisher's Desk

In 2009, the *StudentFilmmakers* magazine will continue serving the needs of both students and professionals of all levels with educational articles about new technologies, new and tried techniques, insightful interviews, and advice from the world's top motion picture makers. We are looking forward to new contests, hands-on workshops, and networking events that will give us new opportunities to connect with our readers, our advertisers, and our writers. Most of all, we look forward to meeting you and seeing the new movies you are making.

Some of the most enjoyable activities I am looking forward to include meeting our readers and writers at the tradeshows, conferences and seminars. It is always an inspiration to hear what they think and see what the professionals and students who read our magazine are working on. It is amazing how that number keeps growing.

We want to thank our sponsors and ask that you visit them and use their products in 2009 to make your works. Also, be sure to let them know that you saw their ads in our magazine!

I want to thank our many talented contributing writers for their wonderful work and insights. Many of them are working professionals that have taken the time to write or taken time out to do interviews with us. We applaud you and hope to see you at the events we will be attending in 2009. I am looking forward to attending NAB, Cine Gear, and DV Expo, just to name a few. So, be sure to mark the dates in your calendars and stop by our booths. Check our website for updates, locations, and times.

This issue has some inspiring looks at the way motion pictures are made and things you might want to think about when telling your story. One must-read is the interview with director Danny Boyle by Scott Essman for his insights about the making of his feature film shot in India, *Slumdog Millionaire*. Danny did two films I like, *Trainspotting* and *28 Days Later*.

Enjoy all the articles in this issue. Be sure to visit the website at www.studentfilmmakers.com to sign up for workshops, get books and DVDs, and sign up for the networking section and forums for expert advice.

Truly,
Kim E. Welch
Publisher / Editor-in-Chief

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Publisher / Editor-in-Chief Kim Edward Welch
Senior Editor Jody Michelle Solis

Contributing Writers
Thomas Ackerman, ASC, Jack Anderson, Anthony Q. Artis, John Badham, Adam Biddle, Kevin Burke, Julia Camenisch, Steve Carlson, Chris Cavallari, Michael Corbett, Vanessa Daniels, Carsten Dau, Todd Debreceni, Jeff Deel, Christina DeHaven, Dana Dorrity, Pamela Douglas, David E. Elkins, S.O.C., Scott Essman, Bryant Falk, Carl Filoreto, Jon Firestone, Brian Flees, Jacqueline B. Frost, Daniel Gaucher, Fred Ginsburg C.A.S. Ph.D. MBKS, Leonard Guercio, John Hart, David K. Irving, Catherine Ann Jones, David Kaminski, Michael Karp, S.O.C., Sam Kauffmann, Christopher Keane, Tamar Kummel, Richard La Motte, Adam Matalon, Matthew Marshall, M. David Mullen, ASC, Dennis Palumbo, Stacey Parks, Richard D. Pepperman, Mark Sawicki, Myrl A. Schreibman, Dr. Linda Seger, Bryan Michael Stoller, Ira Tiffen, Saro Varjabedian, William F. Vartorella, Ph.D., C.B.C., Kevin Zanit, Bill Zarchy

Media Art Director Lien-Chen Lin

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Publisher / Editor-in-Chief Kim Edward Welch
Media Art Director Lien-Chen Lin

Advertising & Sponsorship Opportunities:
Kim E. Welch 212.255.5458
Jody Solis 212.255.4330

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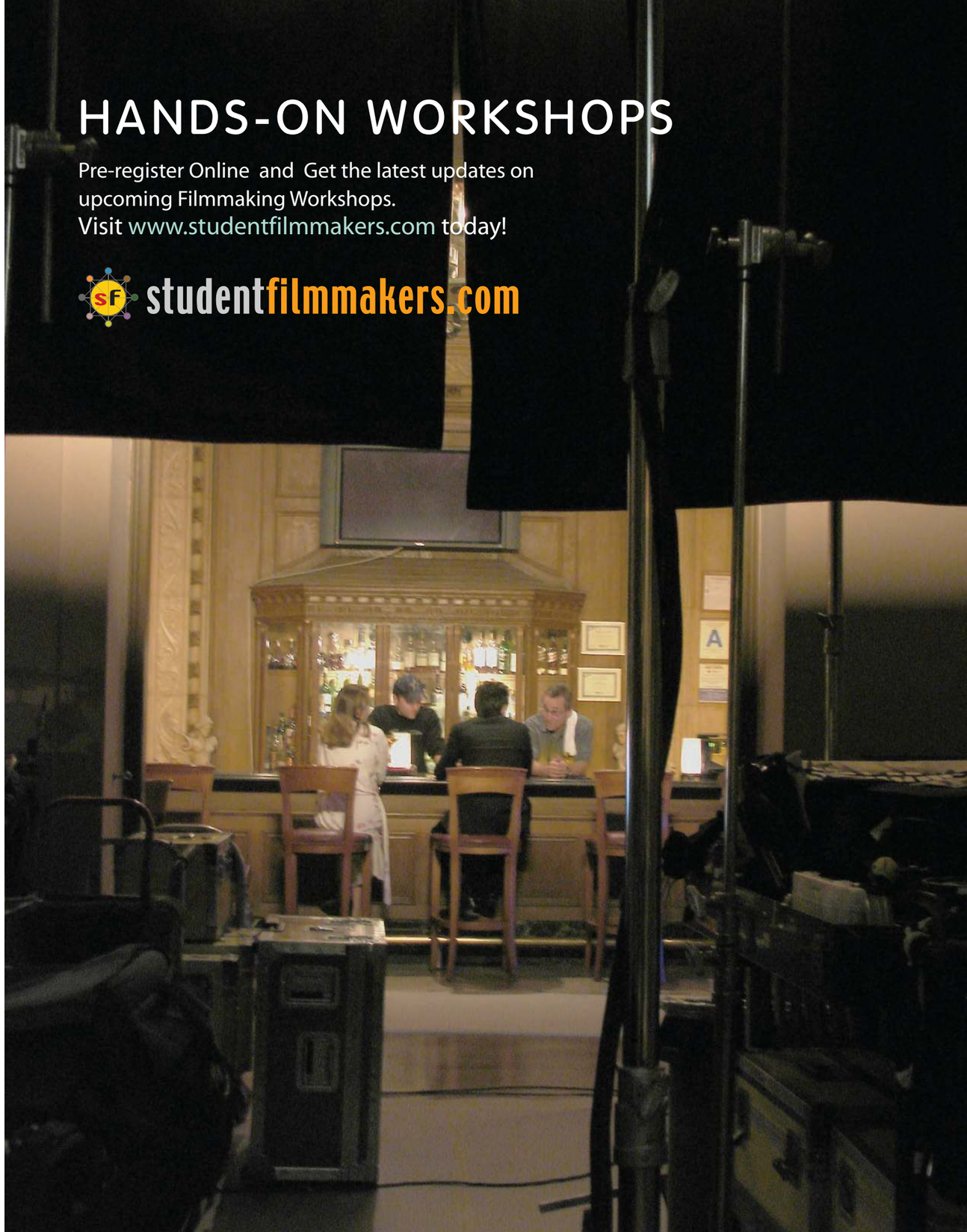
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News Implosion: **When One Door Closes, Another Door Opens**

How are industry changes and trends affecting: news coverage, news production and journalistic film/video production?

by Carl Filoreto

It's a mirror of the times. An unrelenting squeeze between economic and technological forces is causing the news media at all levels to implode. Budget cuts and layoffs are rampant. It's occurring at all levels and across the media world. National broadcast networks, local stations, cable news operations, newspapers and magazines are all being affected and feeling the pain.

Shoptalk, a daily industry newsletter with a pulse on the business, is filled with a litany of layoffs on a daily basis. In just one recent issue it included information about more on-air layoffs at CNN, buyouts at WUSA, Washington D.C., buyouts and layoffs at three stations located in Buffalo, N.Y., and high-level corporate layoffs at CBS Entertainment and CBS Paramount Network TV. That's in one day!

It's alarming, somewhat shocking and rather depressing. But why am I recounting these stories in *StudentFilmmakers* magazine? Well, the shockwaves are having an impact that's spreading far from ground zero. The overall implications are much too great to concisely navigate here. For now, I'm going to look past the dilemmas presented by a society without a functioning news media, and aim more directly at the manner in which these changes are affecting news coverage, news production and overall film and video production in its many forms.

The ripple effects are being felt beyond the news world. Cuts are taking place at cable channels and other entertainment forums, even at Internet based media businesses. Most people reading this magazine are probably working in one type of media business or another, or they're studying to become a part of it. What's happening today is reshaping the landscape of jobs, salaries and opportunities. It's changing the pipelines for delivering media, and the methods of producing content are being revolutionized. It'll be difficult to work in a media based business that's not affected by the current environment.

So I feel like Dr. Doom at the moment. There's a conundrum present though. At a time when many traditional media businesses are cratering, video and its many close cousins are ubiquitous. What's going on? I wasn't an economics major, but my take on it is two-fold.

First, the Internet has put news at our fingertips. We expect to get the latest developments in stock prices, baseball scores and reviews on the latest iPhone app immediately. Now that web video is becoming highly watchable, we're also expecting to maybe see a report from the floor of the stock exchange, a clip of the walk off home run Derek Jeter jacked moments ago and have a detailed look at that iPhone app. On the surface, this is all good, and is part of a major revolution in information dissemination. What's not working is the business model. Advertisers are becoming reluctant to put their ads in newspapers or within television programming, when more and more eyeballs are turning to the net.

But wait, newspapers and television stations, and the like all have web sites and are placing their content there. True enough. From what I've been told, though, these web sites don't generate the income of their traditional counterparts in their heyday.

And then there's convergence, one of those somewhat menacing buzzwords of the day. Newspaper websites and local television news websites are beginning to look very similar. For some time now, many newspapers have been training their photographers, and some enterprising reporters, to shoot and edit video. Photogs have also been recording audio sound bites and are producing audio slideshows. Likewise, local TV news operations must put words on the page in order to have meaningful content. Both entities have the same goal, to provide a more exciting, attractive, and yes, hopefully informative product. The end result, though, is a meeting in the middle. For the first time, these news organizations are competing with the same tools for the same customers in the same space. And not only isn't there room for both of them, the companies themselves can't figure out how to generate enough revenue out of the operation.

As I've been told at several times in my life, though, when one door closes, another one opens. Even with the rampant loss of jobs, there are opportunities, in the news business and beyond. The era of the media specialist, though, seems to be waning rapidly. At local stations, and even at some of the network news operations, producers and reporters are shooting, writing and editing their own stories. And increasingly, photojournalists are shooting, writing and editing their

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own stories. The skill sets are defined but the line between job descriptions is blurring. This is an opportunity for some, a downfall for others. This type of, in this instance, job convergence, is also appearing in non-news related media businesses as well.

There are many businesses and information gathering organizations that have sprung to life as the Internet has evolved. For now, I bestow the name information gathering organizations because many web based "news" operations have a distinct point of view. That's okay, and of course many fingers have been pointed at the "traditional liberal media", but these news organizations have developed a certain credibility over many years for covering news, all the news, not just the parts of the landscape it chooses to cover. It's an interesting topic, though, and deserves a discussion of its own. Suffice it to say, there are many successful web sites based in areas like entertainment, finance and investigative reporting.

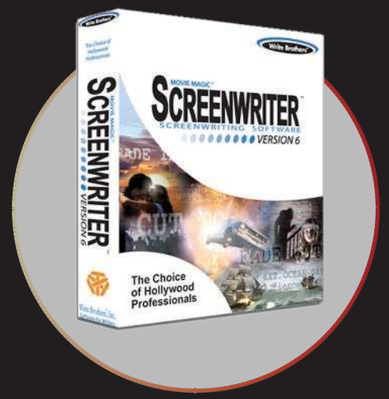
When I discussed the idea of doing news-based production stories with the editors of *StudentFilmmakers* magazine, I thought it would be a slam-dunk. Then as the days slipped by, I began to wonder, if – wait for the drum roll – the news media would simply disappear in a few years. I think it's an interesting and important subject. It's sometimes difficult to grasp how quickly it's changing and evolving. The methods of producing its content are transforming at lightning speed. And news organizations still put a staggering amount of edited video material on the air and the net every day.

I also have some personal disclosures to make at this point. My formative years in the video world were spent at local news stations. And since I started my own business, I still work for a number of network news organizations, primarily NBC News, at both the national news and magazine level. So I've always had a strong interest in this area. And I have a strong interest in keeping a pulse on the business as it moves through a period of hyper rapid evolution.

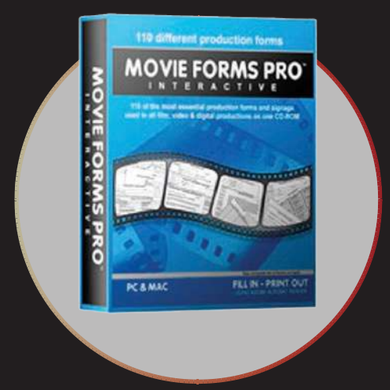
I'd also like to see a lot of interactivity with this topic. I'm curious about what students and pros alike are thinking and experiencing in this rapidly changing technological era. I encourage you to write to me at elkruntv@gmail.com, and provide your observations and thoughts about the world of news and beyond. It'll help me construct more informative focused articles in the future. For example, I'm highly interested in the thoughts of the folks in broadcast journalism schools, as they watch the business transform before they ever collect a paycheck. For now, I'm planning on writing about one of the changing production and editorial facets of the biz, looking at the trend toward back pack journalism.

Carl Filoreto is an award-winning DP, and his company is Elk Run Productions, Inc. (www.elkruntv.com), which has a roster of clients that spans corporations, production houses, crewing agencies, and broadcast and cable networks, including Dateline NBC, The Food Network, and The Travel Channel. Prior to starting his business, Carl won seven regional Emmy awards, numerous national and regional National Press Photographers awards, and multiple awards from Colorado Ski Country and the National Snowsports Journalists Association, while working at KMGH-TV in Denver, WTNH in New Haven, and WGGB in Springfield, Massachusetts.









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Demystify the Bluescreen and Greenscreen Process, and Achieve Professional-Looking Composite Effects

Try These Steps for Setting Up Simple Chroma Keying

by Saro Varjabedian

Director/D.P. Saro Varjabedian prepping Willem Lee for a scene shot over green screen on the set of Shogi Samurai. Photo credit: Christopher Dimitrov

Embarking on a bluescreen or greenscreen shoot might be a scary proposition. However, with the right preparation, and following these simple steps, you can pull off some composite effects that could rival professional productions.

The first step to the chroma key process is to select the appropriate screen. In theory, pretty much anything can act as a chroma key screen, and in fact, it doesn't necessarily have to be green or blue in color. However, there are two very good reasons why green and blue are the standard colors used in the industry. In the early days of compositing, blue screens were the first to be used because at the time, all compositing was done on film. Because film renders colors using the primary colors of red, green and blue, there was a process developed which could key out an image placed in front of blue colored screen. Later with the advent of video, it was discovered that video responds better to green screens. Since the industry has been using green and blue screens for many years, advances in technology have pretty much perfected the process making green or blue screens completely interchangeable for film or video. The other practical reason with going with a green or blue screen is that, in general, you can get away with using one of those colors, and for the most part, the colors will not be part of your subject. This is the main deciding factor when choosing a screen color. If your subject will be wearing dark blue jeans, then go with the green screen.

Earlier I mentioned that, in theory, any material could be used as a screen, such as green bed sheets. While this may be the most economical choice, it definitely is not the most practical. To achieve desirable results with the color screen elements, invest some money into a chroma key balanced muslin or paint. The reason being is that these professional systems are chemically balanced to get the purest green or blue color while minimizing the amount of reflectance of the material or paint thereby reducing the amount of spill (more on spill later). So, do not try and go cheap by buying a bed sheet. Rather, spend money on a chroma key formulated screen, and to save yourself a lot of time and angst later in the post process.

Once you've acquired your screen, the next step is setting it up and lighting it. If you opted for the paint, you would paint a flat and even wall surface. If you purchased the Muslin, you will hang it up as taught as possible. You may need to iron out wrinkles with a steamer to get it as smooth as possible. Once your screen is setup, you will need to light the screen as evenly as possible. To accomplish this, use soft, even light sources such as soft light boxes, kinos, lights with chimeras or bounced off white cards. You could even place the screen outside and light it under even daylight conditions like behind the shadow of a building. Place the light sources at opposite sides of the screen facing it at 45 degree angles. The colored screen can also be lit from the top and bottom.

Once the screen is lit fairly evenly to the eye, check it using a spot meter which, some video cameras come with the feature of giving you the internal spot meter readings. With the spot meter, scan across the entire screen making sure that the screen comes up at the same exposure level. As you scan the screen, there should not be more than a third of a stop difference from point to point. If you do not have access to a spot meter, you can use the zebra settings in your camera as a meter of sorts. To do this, open up the iris incrementally until the zebra lines first appear. If your screen is evenly lit, the zebra pattern would be displayed across the entire screen. If the pattern shows in spots, then the lighting is hotter in those

