CHAPTER 5

From Screenplay to Visual Plan

Tell me and I will forget.
Show me and I will remember.
Involve me and I will understand.

Chinese Proverb

Once you're acquainted with the fundamental aesthetic and conceptual principles of the cinematic language, you're ready to transform a written screenplay into a story, told in images and sound playing out across a screen. This transformation is the heart and soul of filmmaking, and the visualization process is where directors do the lion's share of their creative work. However, this is also the beginning of the nitty-gritty logistical work necessary for you to have a successful production period, so a filmmaker needs to wear two hats at this stage: the creative, visual storyteller and the foreman of a production team who has a movie to construct.

Novice filmmakers tend to rush or overlook previsualization, but this is precisely the stage that, if done thoroughly and correctly, can ensure a successful production. When it is done right, a filmmaker goes onto the film set knowing what to shoot, what it should look like, and what everyone must do in order to achieve the unified vision of the film. Knowing your visual approach beforehand allows for two things. First, it makes the production process, the most expensive and stressful stage of making a film, much more efficient and calm. Second, because you are clear about what you are striving for aesthetically, you can more easily respond to the unexpected and improvise on the set. In other words, thorough preparation actually facilitates creative spontaneity during production.

[W]e basically make the movie before we even walk on the set. I mean she and I know so well what we want to accomplish and what we want to do that we know what the shots are. We know what we're going to do before we even get there. This kind of collaborative planning, instead of a one-sided approach, is what enables the flexibility on the set, the opportunity to make changes as the need arises. . . . People who don't plan get themselves so worked up when they actually get to the location that they're so frantic to get something in the can that they're out of their minds.

Ellen Kuras (cinematographer) on preproduction with director Rebecca Miller (From *Taking the Digital Medium into Their Own Hands,* by Philippa Bourke)

There are three tools that we use to previsualize a film: the shooting script, overheads, and storyboards. We use these tools simultaneously to help us "see" our film and devise the visual and practical strategy that will make the script come alive and the film shoot progress smoothly.

THREE TOOLS FOR PREVISUALIZATION

The Shooting Script

The ultimate goal of the visualization process is the realization of a shooting script. The **shooting script** expresses the director's visual strategy for every scene in the film. It shows you what shots are used to cover a scene and how they connect together as an edited scene. Camera angles, shot sizes, and camera moves are marked right on the script itself. Not only does the shooting script clearly communicate the director's aesthetic approach, it also shows, at a glance, many practical and technical details, especially the coverage required for each scene. It's important to remember that the core creative team (cinematographer, art director, sound mixer, etc.) each get a copy of the shooting script on which they make their own notes. This is why you must be sure that all major revisions are completed. From the details in the shooting script, you will then devise the logistical strategy for your shoot—the organization of the order in which scenes will be shot. Considerable time, effort, collaboration, and creative attention are required at this stage, because the shooting script functions as both the creative and the technical blueprint for the entire shoot.

Creating the Marked/Shooting Script

1. The first step in creating a shooting script is to number each scene in the script sequentially by placing the scene number in the left margin next to each scene heading.
2. Next, indicate how every action and line of dialogue will be covered by **marking the script** (also called **lineup**), which means drawing a vertical line through the action and dialogue covered by a specific shot. The line represents the anticipated duration of the shot—where the camera starts rolling and stops (which is always longer than the anticipated edited shot). Each line is labeled with the type of shot desired (i.e., CU or MS PAN WITH or MLS, etc.). When you have finished marking a script, you should be able to see at a glance the anticipated coverage for each scene; you'll also easily see if you've inadvertently left any actions or dialogue uncovered by a shot. Keep in mind that some actions may be covered more than one time (drawn through with multiple vertical lines), allowing for options in the editing room. Also, keep in mind that actions on which you anticipate editing should be duplicated in each camera take to allow for a matched action edit (see **action overlapping** pages 71–72). The concept of starting a shot well before the anticipated edit point is known as **shooting with handles**.
3. Finally, give every shot a letter identifier. Shots are labeled with capital letters and in alphabetical order beginning with (A) in every scene. Each new scene begins with (A) again. For example, scene #1 will have shots 1A, 1B, 1C, etc., and scene #2 will have 2A, 2B, 2C, etc. One caveat is that we usually skip over the letters I and O because they can look like a one and a zero, especially written on a slate (e.g., is scene #5O scene five-O or scene fifty?). When you are done, every shot in every scene has a unique identification number and a basic shot description. This information will become very important when it comes time to organize your shot list and shooting schedule (see later, "Creating a Shot List").

The **marked shooting script** (Figure 5-1) for several sample scenes from the film *Kiarra's Escape* will serve to illustrate how we visualize and indicate some of the cinematic concepts discussed in previous chapters: especially 180° line of action, POV sequences, and moving characters through space. *Kiarra's Escape* is about Kiarra (Jessica Krueger), a skilled freelance undercover agent who discovers sensitive military surveillance footage she wasn't supposed to see. As a result, she is being hunted by the CIA and the corporation who hired her. Her principle nemesis is the capable, but sleazy, Vogler (Robert Youngren) who, along with his sidekick Smith (Rick Varela), is always just one step behind her.

In these six example scenes (scene #13 through #18), every action and line of dialogue has been marked through and is covered by at least one shot, and every shot is now identified with a scene number and letter. Notice also that for the POV sequence in scene #13 that shot 13C continues right through shot 13D, even though there will obviously be an edit from the looking shot to the POV shot. It doesn't make practical sense to separate the looking and reaction shots into two different shots when you can easily shoot the looking and reaction in one shot and then insert the POV shot later (see Figure 4-15). Also notice how scene #16 is covered first by a master shot (16A) and then again by the CU reverse shots of each character in the scene (16B an 16C); this is a typical coverage strategy for simple dialogue exchanges and gives you great flexibility in post to determine the pace of the exchange or cut around less than perfect acting. There is similarly duplicated

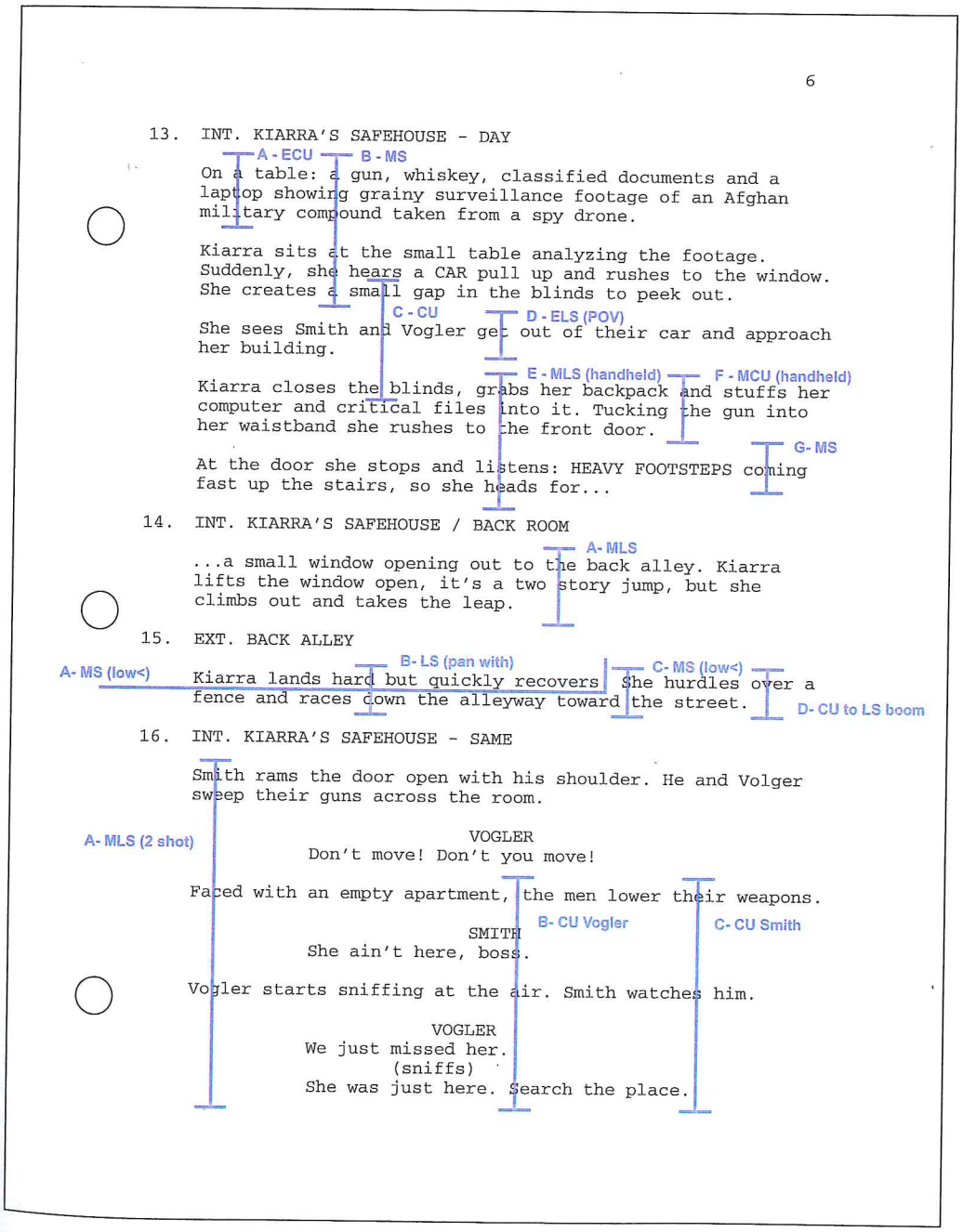


Figure 5-1
Marked shooting script. By drawing vertical lines across dialogue and action on a script to indicate shot coverage, the director can visualize how they will shoot the film. Scenes must be numbered and individual shots identified with letters.

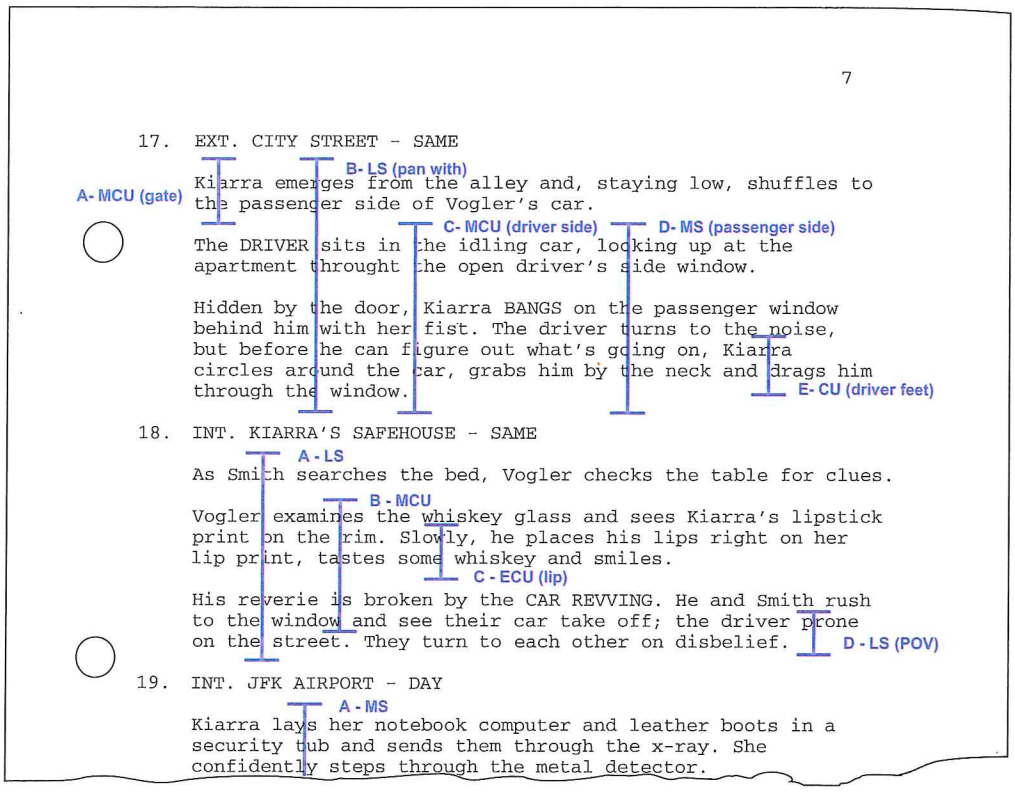


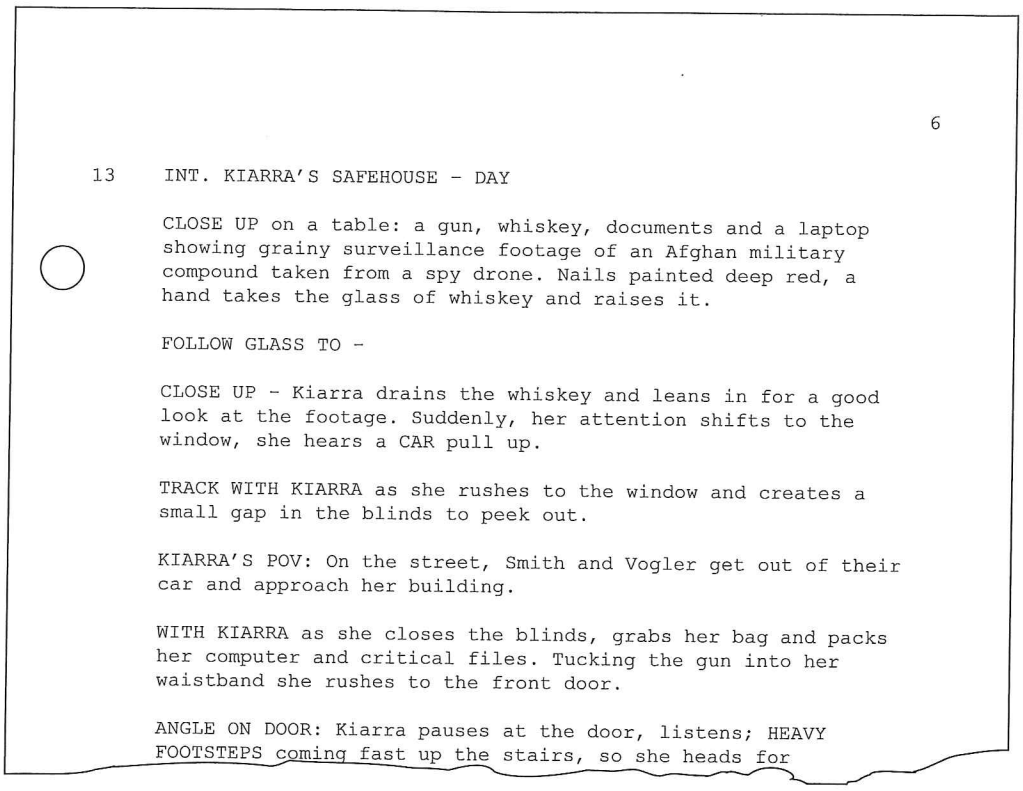
Figure 5-1, cont'd Marked shooting script. By drawing vertical lines across dialogue and action on a script to indicate shot coverage, the director can visualize how they will shoot the film. Scenes must be numbered and individual shots identified with letters.

coverage for the action sequence in scene #17 when Kiarra sneaks up on the driver and drags him out of the car. Large chunks of this scene are covered by different angles so that the rhythm and energy of the attack can be precisely modulated through editing. Finally, look at scenes #14 and #15. Both are very short moments, but #14 is covered with one fairly neutral shot while #15 is covered by *five* very different and dynamic shots. This gives you a sense for which scene the director felt was more important or was doing more for developing the character, narrative, or tone (see these scenes from *Kiarra's Escape* at www.voiceandvisionbook.com).

For short films, the marked shooting script is certainly all you need to take your film into production. The marked script suffices as your shooting script. Feature films, however, often go through an additional process of rewriting the script to incorporate the shot information into the body of the screenplay itself (Figure 5-2). On short films, this is an unnecessary, non-creative step. It's best to simply work from your marked screenplay, as it also gives you a more immediate picture of scene coverage.

Overhead Diagrams

Overhead diagrams are essential previsualization tools worked out and used simultaneously with the development of the shooting script (Figure 5-3). **Overheads** are basically drawings of each scene from a bird's-eye perspective; they help the filmmaker figure out important details like the axis of action, camera placement, and character **blocking** (the movement of your characters in the space). Overheads are one of the most efficient methods for figuring out where the camera goes for each shot and for communicating the visual breakdown of a scene to your crew. You may



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13 INT. KIARRA'S SAFEHOUSE - DAY

CLOSE UP on a table: a gun, whiskey, documents and a laptop showing grainy surveillance footage of an Afghan military compound taken from a spy drone. Nails painted deep red, a hand takes the glass of whiskey and raises it.

FOLLOW GLASS TO -

CLOSE UP - Kiarra drains the whiskey and leans in for a good look at the footage. Suddenly, her attention shifts to the window, she hears a CAR pull up.

TRACK WITH KIARRA as she rushes to the window and creates a small gap in the blinds to peek out.

KIARRA'S POV: On the street, Smith and Vogler get out of their car and approach her building.

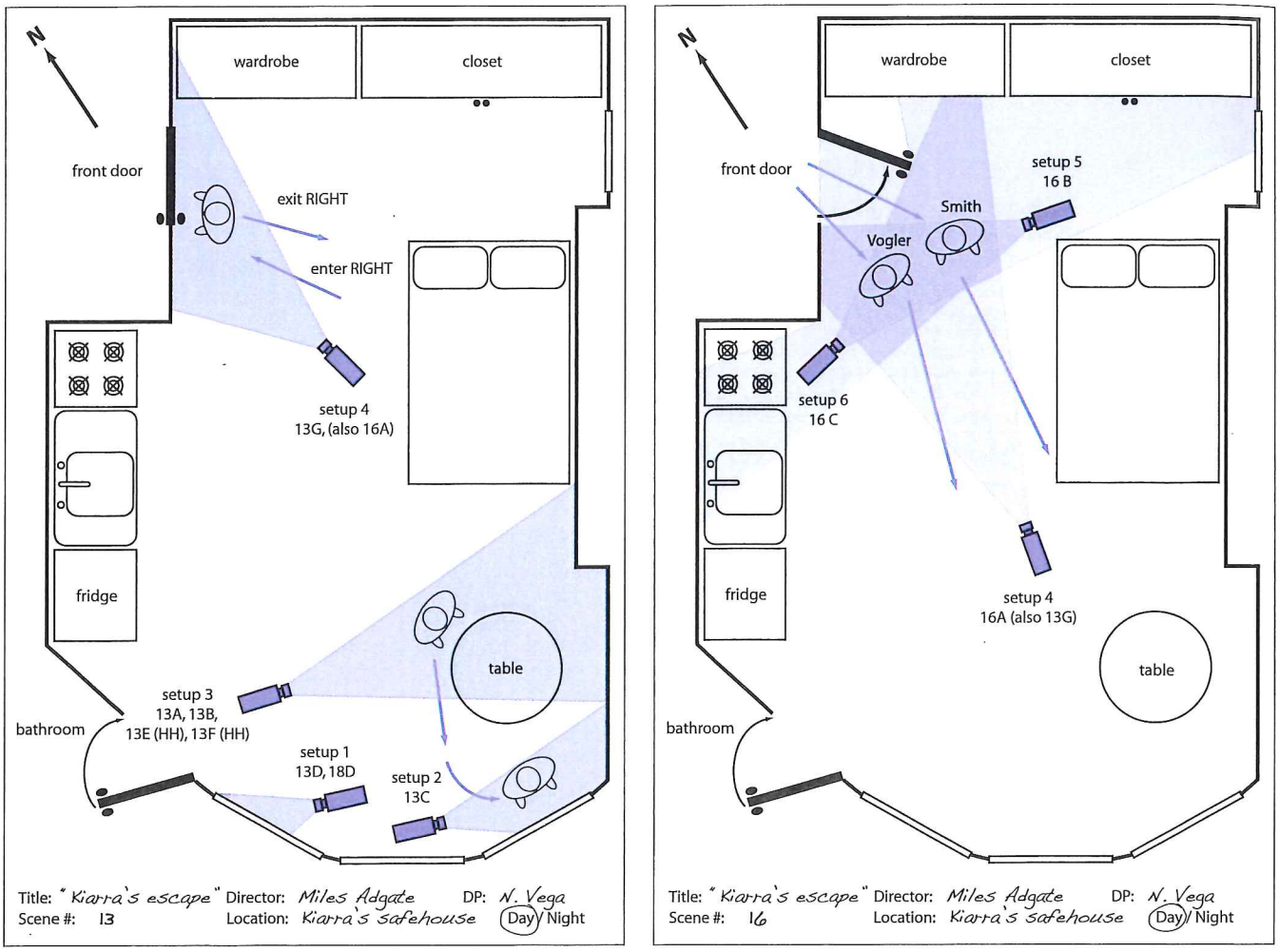
WITH KIARRA as she closes the blinds, grabs her bag and packs her computer and critical files. Tucking the gun into her waistband she rushes to the front door.

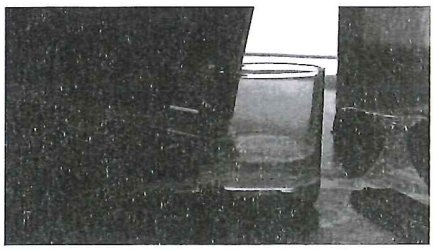
ANGLE ON DOOR: Kiarra pauses at the door, listens; HEAVY FOOTSTEPS coming fast up the stairs, so she heads for

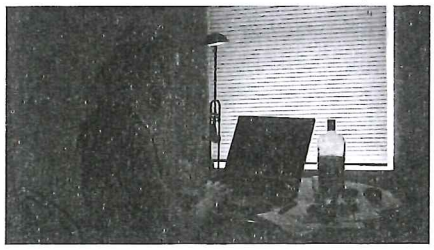
■ **Figure 5-2** Shooting scripts for feature films often involve rewrites that incorporate shot angles. This is usually an unnecessary step for short films that can easily use a marked script as the shooting script.

sketch and throw away many preliminary overheads as you work and rework a scene during previsualization and rehearsals, but in the end you should always generate polished overheads of your final scene strategy to accompany the shooting script on the set of your film.

Each camera symbol represents a **camera setup**, which is the basic location and angle (e.g., angle on table) of the camera from which we shoot one or a number of similar shots from the shooting script. Camera setups communicate to the entire crew where equipment needs to be roughed in from shot to shot and which areas will be in the frame and therefore must be lit and prepped. Notice in **Figure 5-3** *(left)* that four different shots are being taken from setup 3 (angle on the table: 13A, 13B, 13E, and 13F). By referencing those shots with the lined script, you'll see that the shots are of different sizes, but they all share the same basic angle and therefore the same lighting setup and mise-en-scène details. Camera setup 2, on the other hand, is used for only one shot, 13C. So in the end we are covering scene #13 *(left overhead)* with seven shots, but we have only four setups. One additional detail to note is that there are, in fact, *nine* shots on the overhead. This is because two shots from other scenes (16A and 18D) share these camera setups, so we'll also grab those shots while we're already lit and ready to go with those angles (see setup 1 and setup 4 in left overhead). Remember, a film shoot is usually organized for maximum efficiency. This idea of multiple shots taken from the same camera setup will be an important consideration in organizing your shoot (see later, "Creating a Shot List"). You'll also notice the indication of character movement in both overheads. This ensures that continuity of action is consistent and that, even though we're shooting out of sequence, it'll all cut together smoothly in the edit.




13A (setup 3)


13B (setup 3)


13G (setup 4)


16A (setup 4)


16B (setup 5)

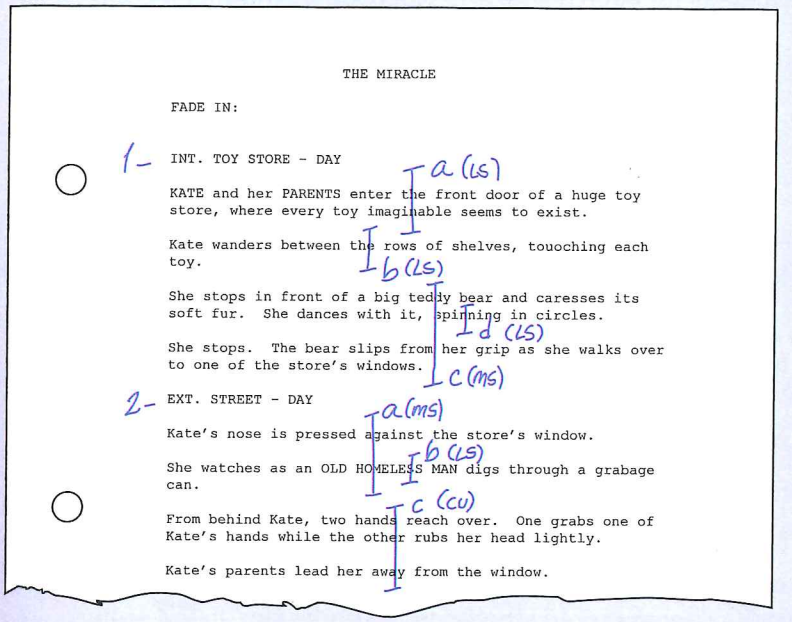

16C (setup 6)

Figure 5-3 Overhead diagrams are simple bird's-eye views of locations with camera positions and actor movement sketched in to allow everyone on the crew to know the basics of each setup.

in practice

For his film *The Miracle* (read the script in Chapter 2), George Racz managed to obtain permission to shoot in a famous toy store in New York City (scenes #1 and #2). But he was allowed only one hour (from 9 to 10 a.m) to get all of the shots he needed. To save time, George scouted the location 10 times before shooting day! He went alone and with his D.P. He imagined shots, actions, and character movements. He took copious notes and digital photos. He was aware of where all of the toys were and how many shoppers were usually there at that hour. Before production day arrived, he drew overheads of the toy store so that everyone on the set could see where the characters would be, how they would move in the space, and where the camera would be set up for every shot. George had eight setups (12 shots) to do in one hour, but he was so well prepared that he got what he needed on the first take, every shot (**Figure 5-4**).

One small note: Although scene #3 also takes place at the toy store, some of this scene was in fact shot in a studio, since the real location wasn't necessary and more time could be taken for lighting and shooting in a more controlled location.



THE MIRACLE

FADE IN:

1- INT. TOY STORE - DAY

a (LS)

KATE and her PARENTS enter the front door of a huge toy store, where every toy imaginable seems to exist.

b (LS)

Kate wanders between the rows of shelves, touoching each toy.

She stops in front of a big teddy bear and caresses its soft fur. She dances with it, spinning in circles.

d (LS)

She stops. The bear slips from her grip as she walks over to one of the store's windows.

c (MS)

2- EXT. STREET - DAY

a (MS)

Kate's nose is pressed against the store's window.

b (LS)

She watches as an OLD HOMELESS MAN digs through a grabage can.

c (CU)

From behind Kate, two hands reach over. One grabs one of Kate's hands while the other rubs her head lightly.

Kate's parents lead her away from the window.

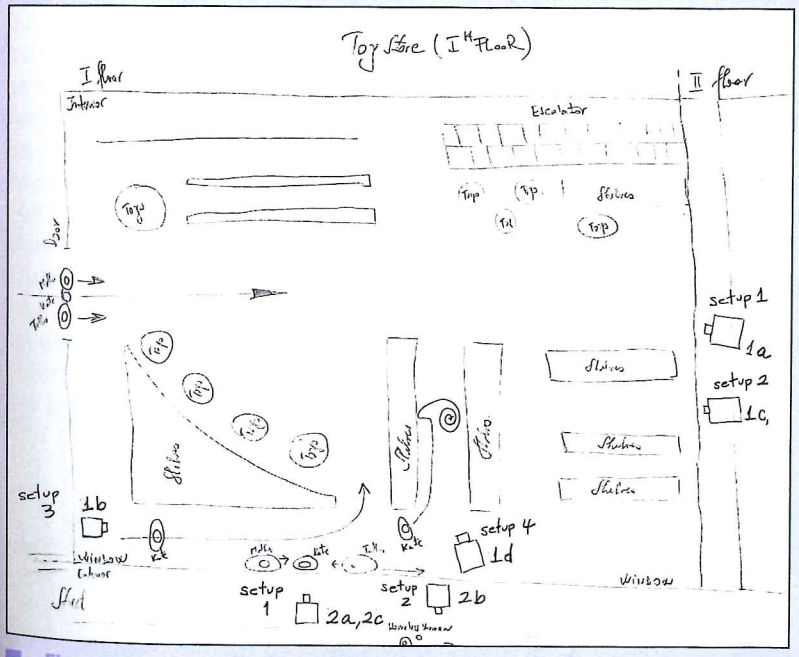


Figure 5-4 George Racz's thorough research, marked shooting script, and overheads for his short *The Miracle*, allowed him to be efficient and precise while shooting under extreme time pressure.

These examples should make it clear that in order to make accurate overheads, you need to have a good sense of the layout of your location, so it's important to do your location scouting ahead of time (see Chapter 6). Because overhead scene visualization involves character placement and movement, overheads often reflect work accomplished during rehearsals with the actors as you work out the blocking of the scene. Also, if it's available, this can be done in the actual location, but often blocking is done in a mockup location (see page 158). Finally, overheads can also incorporate rough lighting placement ideas for each scene and electrical distribution at each location as well (see figure 18-13). I think you can see how, once given an overhead with basic camera placement and character movement, the D.P. can start to sketch in a lighting scheme for each setup.

Storyboards

The third previsualization tool commonly used is storyboards. **Storyboards** are drawings of shots, arranged on paper in the order they appear in a sequence. Storyboards are always drawn in frames with the same aspect ratio as your camera frame. Written under each drawing is a description of the shot and the actions or lines of dialogue it covers. Usually, each frame of a storyboard represents one central moment within a single shot; however, long moving shots, which include different framings, might be represented by a number of frames. As the storyboards for *Kiarra's Escape* (scene #15) illustrate, the movement of characters within the shot is indicated with arrows inside the frame, and movement of the camera is indicated by arrows outside the frame (Figure 5-5).

Storyboards are the most direct way to see what your film will look like before you shoot it, but it is by no means necessary to storyboard an entire film. In the professional world, storyboard use is quite idiosyncratic. Some people base their storyboards on the shooting script; other people do just the opposite by previsualizing with storyboards first and then transcribing the results into the shooting script. Some people create storyboards with detailed and intricate renderings of costumes, sets, facial expressions, and lighting, to establish the style of the film, while others use bare bones sketches to do nothing more than figure out shot size, screen direction, and sequencing. Some people use storyboards for every scene, while others use them only for sequences that involve an intricate interplay of movement, action, and composition. It is true that once you get the hang of shot/reverse shot technique, you really don't need to storyboard these scenes; however, sequences that require tricky graphic or movement matches from shot to shot might require drawings. Several computer programs are available to help you create storyboards, including Frame Forge 3D or Storyboard Artist, but hand drawing is still by far the preferred method, especially with short films produced on tight schedules.

It's Only on Paper, Not Written in Stone

Once you have completed previsualization, resulting in a marked shooting script, overheads, and perhaps storyboards, then you have, in fact, already made your first, fairly complete, visualized version of your film—on paper. Now you are ready to go into production because you know exactly what shots are needed to tell the story of your film. For some directors the production process is mostly the realization of the creative decisions they've made in preproduction. For most filmmakers, however, the previsualization process is just the next step in the development of the film's visual strategy. It's not uncommon for a director to rethink choices made in preproduction based on the energy of production: being in the real location, looking through the camera, interacting with the actors, seeing the lighting, negotiating logistical problems, and seeing how the movie is actually coming together. It's common to hear a director on the set say things like, "Let's combine these three shots into one with a slow pan left and a tilt up" or "Lose

the close-up and let's stay with the two shot; I prefer to keep the tension between the two of them in the same frame when he says that line" or "Look at those trees in the background! Instead of a medium close-up here, let's use a long shot to get them in the frame." This is the importance of having thorough and detailed previsualization. When you go onto a set knowing exactly what you need to realize your movie, you actually gain for yourself the freedom and confidence to respond to the moment and improvise with your camera from time to time.

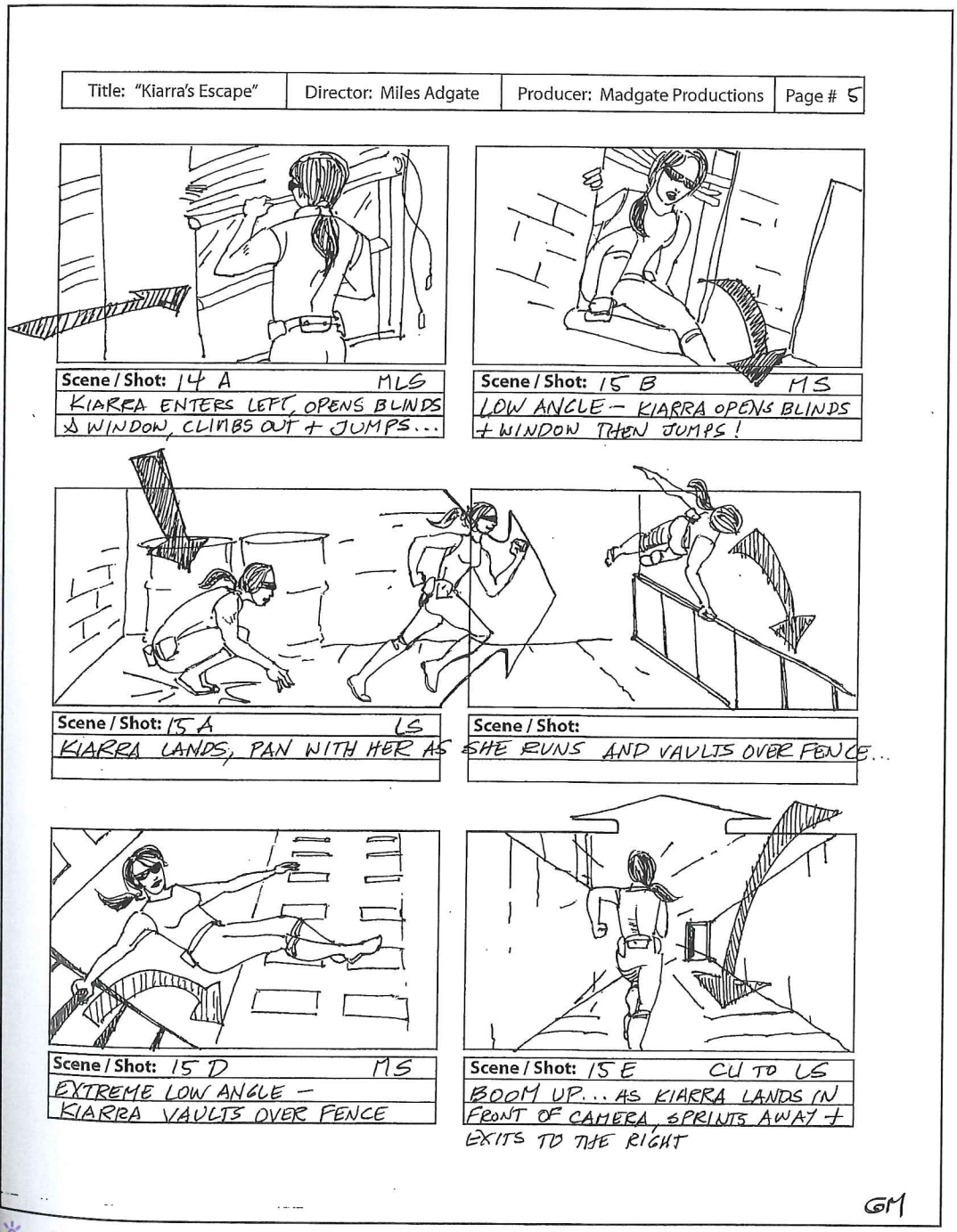


Figure 5-5 Storyboards for *Kiarra's Escape*. Storyboards are a useful tool for previsualizing the composition and editing of a film. They usually depict a central moment of a shot and include arrows to show actor movement or camera movement.

in practice

The award winning short film *The Black Hole* by Phil and Olly (a.k.a. The Diamond Dogs) is a little gem of a story. Told in less than three minutes, the narrative revolves around a bored office clerk who discovers the magical powers of a black hole bizarrely printed out by a photocopier. Since the film was so short and involved absolutely no dialogue, the directors decided to eschew the screenplay process altogether and work directly from detailed storyboards (**Figure 5-6**). Although the storyboard sketching itself is fairly simple, they have included every shot in the film, right down to the exact angle. They also include the basic actions contained in each frame and even little exclamations like "?" "OMG!" and "Realizes what it can do" to provide the running internal thoughts of the main character (Napoleon Ryan). There is also a technical aspect to these boards, as you will see small notes to create the hole edge in postproduction for the inside-the-hole POV shot or how to shoot the green screen effect shots. What is especially remarkable about these storyboards is that, despite the simplicity off the renderings and the inclusion of technical information, the filmmakers managed to capture the style, tone, and spirit of the film (see *The Black Hole* film and storyboards at www.voiceandvisionbook.com).

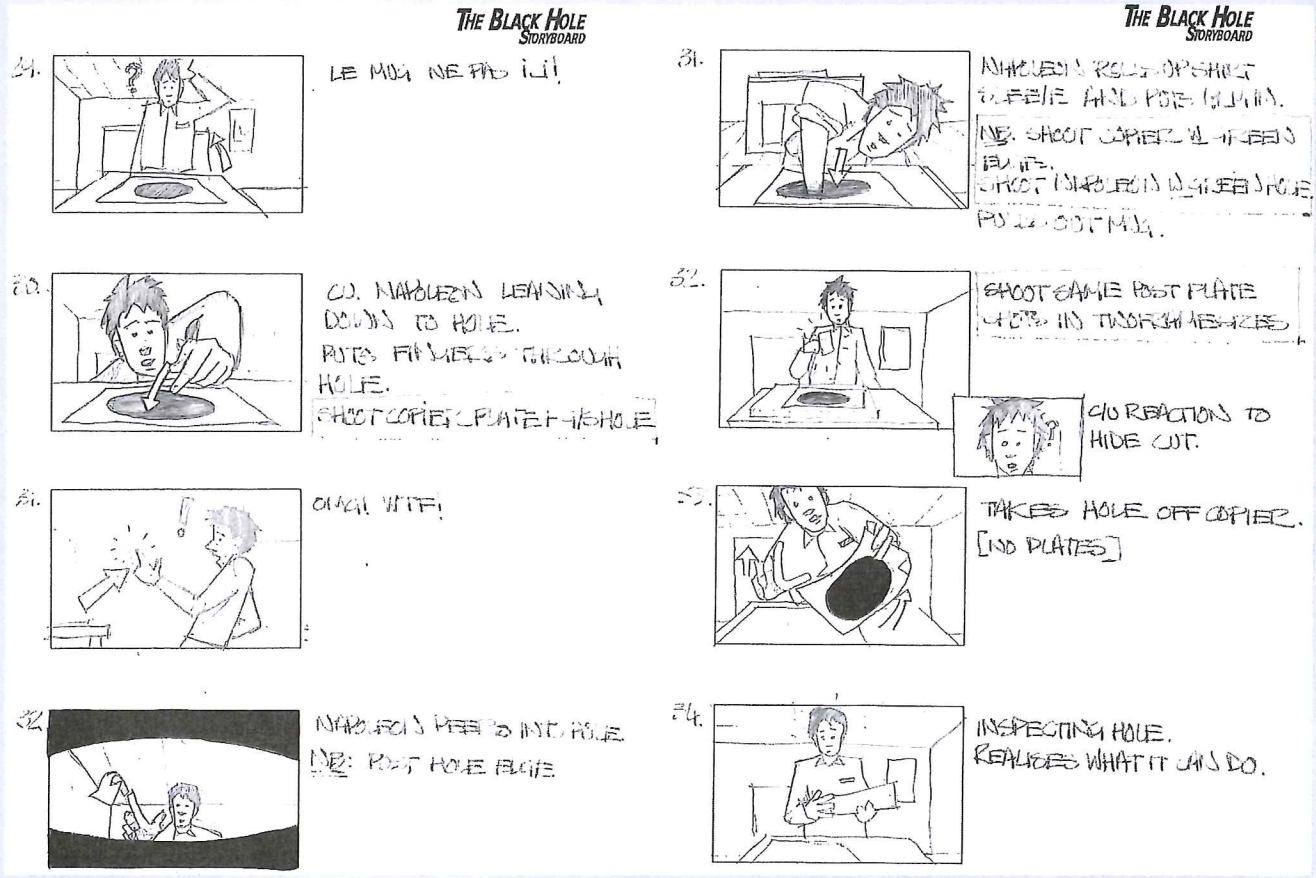


Figure 5-6 Phil and Olly's three-minute film *The Black Hole* (2008) was shot using storyboards in lieu of a screenplay (Storyboards courtesy of Phil and Olly and Nicola Doring.).

THE DIRECTOR AND PREVISUALIZING: A METHOD

> *Framing and editing determine the eye-path of the viewer. It might not be too much to say that what a film director really directs, is his audience's attention.*
>
> **Alexander Mackendrick (From *On Filmmaking*)**

Some people like to do it in the shower, some people like to do it lying in bed, others do it at their desks in the early hours of the morning when everyone else is asleep. Personally, I have always enjoyed doing it while jogging first thing in the morning: imagining how the film will unfold—shot for shot, moment by moment, and scene by scene. The ability to "see," in specific detail, how you want your film to play out in specific images and how sequences hold together to tell a story is a skill a director must practice and cultivate.

In general, when we first approach a script we begin from the broadest aesthetic concerns and work toward the details. We also want to find an approach that supports the ideas and intentions of the script, rather than imposing a style regardless of the script content. Your job in the previsualization process is to find a visual style that will add something to what is on the page, not simply illustrate it and certainly not clash with or undermine it.

The Big Picture

First, consider the overall tone, mood, and pace of the film and determine a general visual strategy. Does the narrative suggest an energetic style involving many quick shots cut together, or is a contemplative pace, with long takes playing out over time, more appropriate? Would a fluid, moving camera feel right, or are highly composed and graphically complex static shots more revealing? What is the overall point of view of the film, and how will the camera present this point of view? Will wide objective frames work better than tight, intimate angles, or vice versa? Remember, there is no universally "right" answer and no universally "better" approach. You need to find the style that works best with your specific story material and resources.

The Details

Next, working within your general aesthetic approach, look at each scene individually and determine how every scene and each moment in your film will be visualized, including shot compositions and sequence coverage. As you decide on shots, ask yourself three questions: What is this scene about/what really happens in this scene? Whose scene is this/from whose point of view should this scene be presented? And finally, are there any important moments, actions, or details that need to stand out above everything else? Answering these questions (and working with overheads and storyboard sketches) will help you to determine specifically what shots and sequences will best convey the content of the scene. Then you'll note them directly on the shooting script. For each shot, sequence, and scene, you are attempting to express a dramatic point through visual choices, so it's important to know what you want to express and then decide how you can best express it.

For example, take a look at the shooting script for the six-scene excerpt from *Kiarra's Escape* again (see **Figure 5-1**). You'll notice that there are two specific things that the visualization emphasizes over all the other action. The first is Vogler's general creepiness. His sniffing the air after he breaks into Kiarra's safehouse warrants a reaction shot of his partner Smith (a minor character) just to highlight Vogler's animal behavior; and, of course, the moment in which Vogler sees Kiarra's lip print on the glass and tastes it for himself is elevated as a character-defining action with three shots including an ECU of his mouth on her lip print. If the moment had remained in a wide shot, it may have seemed that Vogler

just takes a swig of whiskey for himself, but after witnessing this act in close and closer detail, we know that this is not just an ordinary job for Vogler—he's getting some sort of intimate thrill from hunting Kiarra. The second character detail that is highlighted through previsualization is Kiarra's athletic physical abilities. The scene in which she jumps to escapes Vogler is defined by many dynamic shots, which help the viewer realize that she may be chased, but she will not be easy to catch.

Some moments are critical and need careful attention, special emphasis, or extra technique (Kiarra leaping from the window and escaping: five shots), while other moments get us from point A to point B and should be conceived with simplicity and efficiency (Kiarra getting to the window itself before she leaps: one shot). Where it gets *really* interesting is when a critical moment presents several valid coverage and emphasis options to consider. Here is a simple example: A young soldier is saying good-bye to his fiancée moments before he is to leave her to join his platoon on the front lines. Let's say we start with a MLS two-shot as he says goodbye and they kiss for the last time before he leaves. Then, at the moment he walks out the door, leaving his fiancée alone, we are faced with a choice: which shot is best for this highly emotional moment? Where do we put the camera? Should we cut to a close-up of her face to show her distress and sadness, or do you cut to a wide shot and show her as a small, lonely figure within the emptiness of her surroundings? The first option draws the audience into a close identification with the fiancée by bringing them into her intimate space, but the second option creates an equally valid and powerful understanding of her situation. Again, there is never one "correct" answer, but often there is a "best choice" for what you want to express and for the stylistic unity of your project. This is an example of an emotion that must be conveyed through an image, but you will face similar questions with other details, like visually presenting physical tasks in shots or sequences, or simply finding the right composition to match the scale and dynamism of an event or action. Thinking in visual terms like this allows the camera to become the storyteller—and that's what cinema is all about.

in practice

Figure 5-7 provides an example of a carefully visualized scene in which the camera is the primary storyteller. In the following interview of Alfred Hitchcock (A.H.) by François Truffaut (from Truffaut's book *Hitchcock*), Hitchcock discusses his carefully planned and considered shot strategy for a key scene in *Sabotage* (1936) and the role the camera plays in building the tension and revealing the inner thoughts and emotions of the characters. In the scene where Verloc is "accidentally" killed by his own wife, there isn't one aspect of any shot that is taken for granted. Notice, too, how Hitchcock anticipated editing the sequence as well as the audience's reactions to each shot.

A.H.: *We had a problem there. You see, to maintain the public's sympathy for Sylvia Sydney, [the actress playing Verloc's wife] her husband's death had to be accidental. And to bring this off, it was absolutely essential that the audience identify itself with Sylvia Sydney. Here we weren't trying to frighten anyone; we had to make the viewer feel like killing a man, and that's a good deal tougher.*

This is the way I handled it. When Sylvia Sydney brings the vegetable platter to the table, the knife acts as a magnet; it's almost as if her hand, against her will, is compelled to grab it. The camera frames her hand, then her eyes, moving back and forth between the two until suddenly her look makes it clear that she's become aware of the potential meaning of that knife. At that moment, the camera moves [cuts] back to Verloc absently chewing his food as on any other day. Then we pan [cut] back to the hand and the knife.

The wrong way to go about this scene would have been to have the heroine convey her inner feelings to the audience by her facial expressions. I'm against that. In real life, people's faces don't reveal what they think or feel. As a film director I

in practice

must try to convey this woman's frame of mind to the audience by purely cinematic means.

When the camera is on Verloc, it pans [cuts] to the knife and then back again to his face. And we realize that he, too, has seen the knife and has suddenly become aware of what it may mean to him. Now the suspense between the two protagonists has been established, and the knife lies there between them.

Thanks to the camera, the public is now living the scene, and if that camera should suddenly become distant and objective, the tension that's created would be destroyed. Verloc stands up and walks around the table, moving straight toward the camera, so that the spectator in the theater gets the feeling that he must recoil to make way for him. Instinctively, the viewer should be pushing back slightly in his seat to allow Verloc to pass by. Afterward, the camera glides back to Sylvia Sydney, and then it focuses once more on the central object, that knife. And the scene culminates, as you know, with the killing.

F.T.: *The entire scene is utterly convincing! Someone else might have ruined the whole thing merely by changing angles when Verloc rises to his feet, and placing the camera at the back of the room for a full shot before going back to the close shot. The slightest mistake, like the sharp pulling back of the camera, would have dissipated all of that tension.*

A.H.: *That would ruin the whole scene. Our primary function is to create an emotion and our second job is to sustain that emotion.*

(From *Hitchcock,* by François Truffaut, Simon & Schuster, 1985.)

Figure 5-7 The careful visual design of this scene from Hitchcock's *Sabotage* (1936) allows the audience to feel the fear that pushes Mrs. Verloc (Sylvia Sidney) to murder her own husband (Oskar Homolka).

One conventional way to visualize a scene is to start wide, with establishing shots (master shots), and then move in tighter (MCUs and CUs) when tension starts to mount. The tightest shots are reserved for the most climactic moments when seeing the emotional reaction of a character is vital. For example, in the scene from *Sideways* described in Chapter 4 (**Figure 4-8**) Alexander Payne starts with an LS (master shot) and moves in closer and closer as it becomes increasingly clear that Maya is interested in Miles. Toward the end

of the scene, the tight close-up on Miles shows us that he is both very attracted and very nervous. The subsequent ECU of Maya laying her hand on his is the climactic moment in the scene and puts the question to Miles: "What are you going to do, Miles?" The next moment Miles balks and the shots become wider again. He blew it.

Even the Hitchcock sequence described in Chapter 3 (Figure 3-5) uses this pattern. We start with ELS establishing shots of the location, then an LS of the swimmer in the waves, and then an MLS of her washing ashore, and finally the sequence culminates in the close-up of the belt, which announces to us that there has been a murder.

This conventional pattern, however, is certainly not the only way you can visualize a scene. You could, for example, start with tight shots to create a sense of mystery about where we are or who is in the scene and then broaden out to fully contextualize the scene and answer the mystery. Scene #13 in *Kiarra's Escape,* for example, begins with an extreme close-up of the table. The shot is filled with a sense of espionage because it tells us in vivid detail: computers, surveillance, gun, whiskey; and it begs the question "Where are we?" The next shot reveals Kiarra and the question is answered, "This is Kiarra's domain." If we consider the hypothetical scene of the young soldier and his fiancée introduced earlier, we could start our scene of the young man leaving his fiancée with a close-up of the woman crying. The audience might wonder, why is she crying? What's going on? Then pulling out to a wide shot and seeing the young man next to her in a soldier's uniform might be all an audience needs to see in order to understand her tears. He's been inducted! The choice is yours.

Back to the Big Picture

Just as a painter will step back to see how the small details are working within the broader canvas, you, too, need to step back from time to time to look at the overall picture as you visualize each individual scene. The transitions from scene to scene are especially important to consider. Your scenes may be visualized beautifully, but scenes are not totally distinct dramatic units. You must look at the larger architecture of the film and determine how each scene will link with those on either side to create the overall shape and rhythm of the film.

For example, I had a student who made a simple chase film. A tourist in New York City thinks he is being chased by two young hoodlums but discovers in the end that they were only trying to *return* his wallet, which he had dropped. The chase takes us through several areas of Central Park and midtown Manhattan. This student carefully considered the larger shape of the film and decided that the pace of the film should speed up toward the end, in order for us to feel that the hoodlums were getting closer and closer. Each successive scene was constructed with increasingly quicker shots, more angles, and more dynamic frames than the previous one, to give us a sense of acceleration. The final sequence was done entirely with a handheld camera to reflect the main character's anxiety. This film was a success because the student did not think about each scene in isolation; rather he imagined the film, and composed it, almost as a single, unbroken piece of music.

PREVISUALIZATION AND COLLABORATION

In the professional world, a director is lucky to be able to make one film every two or three years, but it is not unusual for a cinematographer to shoot two or three films every year. It's important to understand that a director is not alone in the previsualization process and that a smart director will draw on the experience and expertise of his crew. The creation of a shooting script, overheads, and storyboards is often done in collaboration with the cinematographer. Cinematographers are trained to find visual solutions to narrative challenges, and this second set of eyes is invaluable. Cinematographers are also knowledgeable about practical techniques and technical capabilities (from film stocks to lenses), which the director might not know. Even on student shoots, where the director and cinematographer have equal experience, the pooling of knowledge and the additional perspective of the person who is responsible for lighting the scene, choosing the lenses, and using the camera can provide indispensable creative contributions (Figure 5-8).

The other important creative collaboration that informs previsualization is the one between the director and actors. During rehearsals, which often happen simultaneously with previsualization, the director and actors explore the emotional and psychological dimensions of the story, the characters, and specific scenes. This process often yields ideas for **blocking** (the movement of characters in the space) as well as an understanding for where critical moments in a scene are located. For action-oriented sequences, like most of *Kiarra's Escape,* it's fairly simple for actors to work within the visual design of the scene, but for longer, more emotionally involved scenes, it's not always easy for actors to perform at their best if their movements have been completely prescribed for them beforehand. If, for example, you were to block the intensely emotional scene I introduced on page 110 in which the young soldier gives his fiancée the news that his unit has been called to go to war and you tell the fiancée that she *must* cross over to the window and start to cry there because you've already planned for a nice close-up with great lighting at the window, you'll likely to get a mechanical performance. But if you rehearse the scene and watch carefully how the actors engage each other and discuss what feels best for the actor in terms of emotions and movement, then you'll start to get ideas for where to place the camera based on the strongest performances those actors can give you. You may discover through the actor's choices, for example, that it's best for the fiancée not to break down until after her soldier boy has left the room, where she then weeps all alone against the door he's just walked out of. One of the main functions of rehearsals is to help directors previsualize scenes by allowing performances to inform their visual design. (See Chapter 7 for more on rehearsals.)

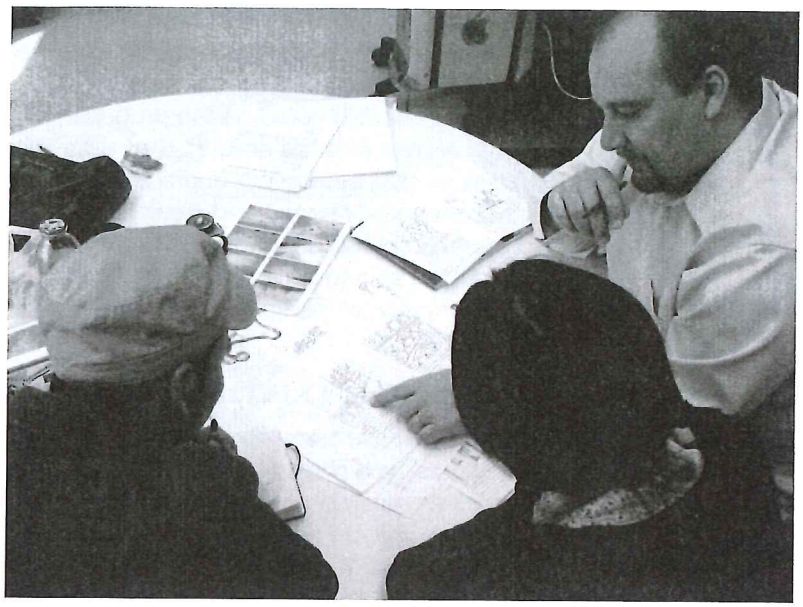


Figure 5-8 George Racz, going over camera setups during a production meeting with his D.P., Tim, and his A.D., Kanako.

During previsualization, it is also important to include someone from your team, like the producer, who is responsible for the practical and logistical aspects of your production. This person keeps an eye on the feasibility of the director's creative aspirations and helps the director stay within the practical parameters of the project, like how many shooting days there are, how big the crew is, what equipment is available, and so on. To imagine dolly shots in every scene when you have a budget to rent a dolly for only one day is counterproductive. To cover a scene with 25 shots when you have only two hours at the location is futile. It's very common for inexperienced directors to get overly optimistic during previsualization and forget to check their exuberant and expansive creative vision against the realities of production resources. Once, as a student, I was the cinematographer on a project with a four-person crew. The director had many great ideas and some that were not so great. One idea was to send me up on the roof of a six-story building to get a handheld, subjective camera shot for a nightmare sequence. In one swift movement I was supposed to transport the camera from behind a chimney, along the roof tiles, and hold it, suspended over the edge of the roof. "It'll be a great shot!" the director insisted. But the producer intervened, "Nope, can't be done." "Why?" the director asked. The producer replied calmly, "One, we don't have access to the roof and I doubt that the university will give it to us. Two, it's dangerous; Mick could fall and die! And three, if the professor sees on screen that we were dangling the school's camera over the edge of a roof, we'll all lose our equipment privileges for the year." The director said, "Oh, yeah. You're right," and he came up with a different shot. I think it was the idea of losing equipment privileges that ultimately convinced him.

In the professional world there is no shortage of people who perform the role of "reality checker." The production manager, assistant director, and associate producer all function as overseers of the practical, financial, and logistical feasibility and progress of the film. On small crews this could be the producer or associate producer's role. On very small shoots (with a crew of three or four), a director might ask everyone during previsualization to help keep an eye out for the impractical and unachievable and to devise alternative solutions that are equally strong and creative, but more practical. Additionally, everyone along the line should be considering the safety of the ideas proposed during the previsualization process. Red flags should go up if anything seems to remotely endanger the health and safety of the cast or crew, or the safety of the equipment (see Chapter 18 for more about project safety).

THE SHOT LIST: FROM VISUAL PLAN TO PRODUCTION PLAN

Once you have completed your previsualization (marked/shooting script, overheads, and storyboards), you should have a clear and specific idea of every shot you need to bring the script to the screen. Now you need to take the next step and transform your creative visual approach into a practical production plan. As we mentioned earlier, the scenes and shots in a film are rarely shot in the order in which they appear in the script or on the screen. Instead, actual shooting is organized to maximize efficiency of time and resources, which usually means shooting out of sequence. So how do we know what to shoot first? What setup follows after that? How do we organize the order of our shooting to be most efficient? The answer to these questions lies in understanding how to create a tight shot list. A **shot list** is a list of all of the shots that make up the film *in the order in which they will be shot.* A shot list contains exactly the same shots as in your marked scripted, but they have been rearranged according to the practical and logistical considerations of the production process. With a good shot list the entire crew knows, at a glance, what shot they need to set up for at any time.

Creating a Shot List

The shot list is usually created by the director and the production manager (or associate producer). The shot list is the first step in the larger task of scheduling the production, and the principal factor in organizing the shot list is efficiency. The considerations determining the organization of our shots, in more or less descending order of importance, are (1) major location (and time of day), (2) camera setup angle, (3) shot size, (4) on-set logistics, and (5) pickups. Additionally, there may be some (6) exceptional considerations that determine when certain shots must be scheduled.

For the following discussion, refer to the *Kiarra's Escape* marked shooting script (see **Figure 5-1**), overheads (see **Figure 5-3**), and shot list (**Figure 5-9**). These three preproduction documents work in concert with one another.

1. *Location and time of day.*
   The first and broadest organizing principle for ordering shots concerns location and time of day. In general, we organize our shooting schedule so that we shoot all scenes occurring in the same location together, regardless of where they appear in the script. For example, if we have a script with four scenes in a restaurant kitchen (one in the beginning, two in the middle of the film, and one at the end), we will, nonetheless, group all of these scenes together and shoot them back to back. This way, we minimize the number of times we need to travel to a location and set up lights, camera, sound, etc. Imagine the waste of time if we were to shoot the first kitchen scene, then strike the set to go shoot the next scene somewhere else, and then return to the kitchen location another day and set up all over again.

   Figure 5-9 shows the shot lists for two shooting days for *Kiarra's Escape.* Scenes #13, #16, and #18 all take place in KIARRA'S SAFEHOUSE around the same time of day, so these scenes were shot on the same shooting day, back to back, and then that particular location was no longer needed (see **Figure 5-9**, Shot List 7/20/10). Although Scene #14, KIARRA'S SAFEHOUSE/BACK ROOM is in the same apartment according to the script, in reality, the location chosen for the safehouse was a

SHOT LIST (7/11/10)

TITLE: Kiarra's Escape	**Dir.** Miles Adgate	**Scenes:** #14, #15, #17	**Shoot Date:** 7/11

SCENE: #17 EXT. CITY STREET – DAY
SET-UP 1: Angle on front gate to street
1) 17A: MCU K. enters checks if coast is clear, exits left.

SCENE: #15 EXT. BACK ALLEY – DAY
SET-UP 1: Angle on window (low angle)
1) 15A: MS K. opens blind, window and leaps out.
SET-UP 2: Angle on Kiarra
2) 15B: / PAN WITH K. lands, recovers runs and leaps over fence.
SET-UP 3: Extreme Low angle from ramp
3) 15C: MS X-TREME LOW ANGLE K. leaps over fence (and over camera)
SET-UP 4: Angle down alley
4) 15D: CU – LS/BOOM UP K. lands in front of camera. BOOM as she sprints away.

SCENE: #14 INT. KIARRA'S SAFEHOUSE / BACK ROOM – DAY
SET-UP 1: Angle on window
1) 14A: MLS K. enters left, open blind, window and leaps out.

SHOT LIST (7/20/10)

TITLE: Kiarra's Escape	**Dir.** Miles Adgate	**Scenes:** #13, #16, #17, #18	**Shoot Date:** 7/20

SCENE: #17 EXT. CITY STREET – DAY
SET-UP 1: ANGLE ON CAR - DRIVER'S SIDE
1) 17B: LS/PAN WITH Kiarra. Start up street, pan with and follow action to end.
2) 17C: MCU on Driver casual. K.'s hand hits window, roll down window. To end.
SET-UP 2: ANGLE ON CAR – PASSENGER'S SIDE
3) 17D: MS on Driver casual, hand hits, window down, K. enters screen left, attacks!
4) 17E: CU on Driver's Feet (hand held) Feet struggle as he is dragged out window.

SCENES: #13, #16 and #18 INT. KIARRA'S SAFEHOUSE – DAY
SET-UP 1: POV ANGLE ON STREET
1) 13D: POV from west window.
Start with blinds shut, cracked open, then snapped shut. (Kiarra's hand)
2) 18D: POV from west window.
Start with blinds shut, cracked open, then snapped shut. (Vogler's hand /stand in)
*** *Car* & Driver *are done and can go home* ***
SET-UP 2: ANGLE ON WINDOW (EAST)
3) 13-C: CU Kiarra enters left. Opens blinds, looks, reaction, close blinds. Exit left.
SET-UP 3: ANGLE ON TABLE
4) 13A: ECU table top. K's hand lifts glass out of frame (top)
5) 13B: MS K. looking at footage, noise, reaction. K. exit frame right.
6) 13E: MLS (*hand held)* K. enters right. Packs up. Follow to door. Exit right.
7) 13F: MCU (*hand held)* K. enters right. Packs up. Exit left.
SET-UP 4: ANGLE ON DOOR
8) 13G: MS K. enters right w/backpack. Listens. Registers noise. Bolts right.
****Kiarra is done for day and can go home****
9) 16A: MLS 2 SHOT MASTER Smith & Vogler. Break in. V. exit left. S exit right.
SET-UP 5: 10) 16B: ANGLE ON VOGLER: CU reverse shot
SET-UP 6: 11) 16C: ANGLE ON SMITH: CU reverse shot

CONTINUED:

Figure 5-9 Shot list for two production days on *Kiarra's Escape*. A shot list is a list of all of the shots for each scene in the order in which they will be shot.

studio apartment with no additional room. Scene #14, in fact, was shot a week earlier and miles away in a different apartment where there was also the BACK ALLEY location (scene #15) and the front gate for the first shot in the scene #17. So all of these shots were placed on their own shooting day (see **Figure 5-9**, Shot List 7/11/10).

For scenes that use natural light, day or night becomes a significant organizing detail. These sample scenes all take place during the day, but for the rest of the film one would cluster all EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY scenes together and then shoot all EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT scenes at another time, regardless of where they occur in the script.

You'll also notice in **Figure 5-9** that each shooting day begins with the exterior locations and then the production moves indoors. If it's possible, we try to shoot exterior scenes first, taking advantage of fair weather when we can, but have an interior set ready to go as

a backup should the weather turn inclement. An interior scene that can be used in case your exterior shoot is cancelled because of bad weather is called a **cover-set**. By scheduling exteriors first, we have our interiors as backups and we waste less time. But if we shoot all of our interiors first, then when bad weather strikes all we can do is postpone.

2. *Camera setup angle.*
   As we mentioned earlier, a camera setup is the placement of the camera for each principal camera angle from which we can shoot one or multiple shots. Once a camera placement and angle is determined, a great deal of production time is spent dressing the set, lighting that area, and wiring it for sound. For this reason, we cluster all shots with the same general setup together on the shot list (the same way we did on the overheads; see Figure 5-3). This way we move the camera, position the lights and microphones, and all the rest of it, fewer times. Scene #13 has four shots taken from the camera angle on the table: shot 13A, 13B, 13E, and 13F. Even though there are shots (13C and 13D) between these shots, we will take the four shots in setup 3 back to back so that we set up the camera, lights, sound, etc. for the angle on the table only once. The same is true for the two shots from exactly the same POV angle out of the window even though they are from completely different scenes (setup 1: 13D and 18D) The two shots (13G and 16A) in setup 4 will also be taken back to back because they share the same angle on the door. (see Figure 5-9, Shot List 7/20/10).
3. *Shot size.*
   Generally speaking, we further organize our shooting to go from wide shots to close-ups. For example, we would shoot a wide master shot, before we shoot the close-up reverse shots or cutaways in a two-person interaction. You can see this with scene #16 (see Figure 5-9, Shot List 7/20/10). The master shot 16A is first to be shot, followed by the reverse shots 16B and 16C. We do this for several reasons. First, the master scene generally covers more of the script and shows more of the space, so it therefore requires more attention to set details, lighting, and so on. If we run out of time and have to abandon a shot, it's usually easier to reshoot a close-up later or even do without it. Most close-ups also require fewer cast on camera, so fewer people need to be call back to reshoot. And it's also much easier to begin with the broadest lighting setup and slightly adjust lights as you move in closer than it would be to light a close-up and then have to relight the entire scene for a wide shot.
4. *On-set logistics.*
   On-set logistics is where common sense comes into play. It is important to avoid keeping your cast waiting for hours needlessly until you get around to their shots. For example, if we have a scene in which a teacher is lecturing to a class of 25 students and we plan to cut back and forth between the teacher at the chalkboard and the class taking notes, we would shoot all shots that involve the class first (i.e., master shot of class with teacher and the reverse shots of the class). Then we can let the class go home—preferably before lunchtime to save on our food budget!—and shoot the reverse shots of the teacher without the 25 people hanging around on the set.

   In the *Kiarra's Escape* example, we don't need to have Smith and Vogler on set while we shoot Kiarra's shots for scene #13. However, the camera setup that they all share is setup 4 (angle on door). This setup includes Kiarra's last shot of the day (13G) and she can go home, and then, using the exact same camera setup, we can shoot 16A, Smith and Vogler's first shot off the day. This is why that particular setup is placed where it is in the shot list.
5. *Pickup shots.*
   Pickup shots are quick shots that are often not part of the original script previsualization but that are taken after (and sometimes during) production to fill in gaps, to make editing smoother, or to add something that, in retrospect, can improve the scene. Pickups are not to be confused with **reshoots**, which means reshooting significant shots or scenes for one reason or other. Pickups are usually taken with a skeleton crew and often don't require actors; pickups include shots of landscapes, location-establishing shots, and shots of objects and cutaways. There is no need to have a sound recordist on the set while you shoot cutaways that require no synchronized

sound and no need to keep actors waiting while you shoot an ECU of some still-life detail. Often these shots are done after everyone goes home or on another day.

Kiarra's Escape has a good example of a pickup shot that you will not find in the lined script, overheads, or shot list, but you will see it in the film online. That's because the shot was an impromptu idea on the part of the director at the time of shooting. During the final takes of shot 13G (scene #13, setup 4, in **Figure 5-9**), Smith and Vogler were already in costume and makeup ready to go for the next shot in that camera setup (16A). According to the shooting script, shot 13A shows Kiarra at the front door as she hears "heavy footsteps coming fast up the stairs." She then dashes off to the back-room. But the director had a little extra time and thought, why not shoot a quick pickup shot of Smith and Vogler, guns drawn, stalking up the stairs? If he didn't like the shot, he could always just use the audio portion for the off-screen "heavy footsteps" sound effect. For slating and logging, when you add impromptu pickup shots to a scene they are marked "PU" for pickup. So the shot of the thugs coming up the stairs was slated as #13 PUa. If the crew happened to shoot another unscheduled pickup shot, then that would be logged and slated #13 PUb, and so on.

6. *Exceptional considerations.*
Every now and then (or a little more often than that) you'll have no choice but to organize your schedule around exceptional considerations. Actors' schedules, location restrictions, prop and equipment availability, location sound issues, weather conditions, and other factors can force you to stray from your ideally efficient shot list schedule. In these cases, you just roll with it and do what you need to do—but keep the rest of your scheduling as efficient as possible. While shooting the film *Chop Shop,* director Ramin Bahrani's location was an actual, working auto repair shop, so he had to be sensitive to the needs of the shop owner to run his business (see the box on page 127). He ended up shooting many interior scenes at night after the shop had closed and shooting day scenes around normal business activity, which could change unexpectedly from day-to-day. He was also always ready with contingency scenes at other locations.

In the case of *Kiarra's Escape,* the exceptional consideration was the car. The film needed an appropriate car for the "spy hunters" Smith and Vogler. Luckily, one of the crew knew a guy who worked at an auto dealership and was willing to provide the movie a floor-model, black Mercedes sedan for free. The catch was that he had to get the car back to work before noon. Shooting day 7/20/10 reflects this special case and all shots involving the Mercedes were taken first, from the scene #17 attack on the driver to the POV shots of the car (13D and 18D).

One other special circumstance to consider, and this one supersedes all others, is the directorial and performance approach. There are times when a director needs to preserve the momentum of the cast's creative and interpretive energy by shooting a scene more or less in order. It may be inefficient, but if you get better performances from sequential shooting, then it is worth the trade-off. This is especially a factor when dealing with nonactors or actors not familiar with single-camera-style shooting.

in practice

Scheduling around Extenuating Circumstances

A friend and colleague of mine, Andrew Lund, shot his short film *Finders Keepers* (2006) on the beaches of North Carolina. In the movie there are several scenes that take place under a long pier. Weather during the month of the shooting was wildly variable, so for continuity's sake all of the pier scenes had to be shot on the same day. Additionally, Andrew had to carefully consult the online tide charts and weather reports to determine the exact minutes when he could get the framing he wanted, which included a shot from the ocean to the beach, with the water's edge in the foreground. As they say, "time and tide wait for no man," and you can see in **Figure 5-10** that the margin of error was very narrow between getting the shot he wanted and having the shoot washed out.

in practice

Scheduling for Special Performance Considerations

Most of Andrew's earlier short film, *Snapshot* (2005), takes place in a much more controlled filming situation—two guys in one room. The drama unfolds around the kidnapping of a celebrated photographer by one of his subjects who is disgruntled about how he is portrayed in a widely reproduced photograph. Although it was not the most efficient use of time, Andrew chose to shoot the scenes in chronological order because he anticipated the real exhaustion of the actor, Henry Darrow, who portrays the photographer and who remains tied to a chair. The fact that his actor would truly be getting more and more fatigued (and anxious) as shooting progressed, Andrew felt, would add something to the scene. The extra shooting time to accommodate this performance strategy paid off. By the time they shot the ending, the lead actor was worn out and at the end of his rope, and the climactic scene contains a truly visceral sense of the frantic anxiety that only a man who has actually spent hours and hours bound to a chair can have.

Figure 5-10 Sometimes it is necessary to accommodate the shooting schedule around location considerations, such as the depth of the tides in Lund's *Finders Keepers* (2006, *left*), or around the consistency of a performance, such as the one achieved by Henry Darrow *(right)* in Lund's *Snapshot* (2005).

DAY-TO-DAY PRODUCTION SCHEDULING

As you can see, creating a shot list already anticipates the day-to-day film production scheduling because it divides the script into the smaller production units of location, time of day, setup angle, and shot and then organizes them into an efficient order. The next step is to schedule your production by dividing up the shot list tasks into specific production days and to generate call sheets. **Call sheets** (Figure 5-11) are simply forms for each shooting day that they detail: what portion of the script is being shot on a specific day, who needs to be on the set, when each person needs to be there, and how to get to the set. Arrival times include setup times for the crew and makeup and rehearsal times for the cast.

On very simple shoots involving a crew of three and a cast of two, the "call sheet" might simply be an email to everyone involved. But on more elaborate shoots, it's good to hand the schedule out in hard copy form (and maybe follow up with emails). These days, filmmakers often create facebook pages for each project to keep cast and crew informed of the shooting and rehearsal schedules by posting call sheets online and to discuss other production details. It's the duty of the production manager (and assistant director [A.D.]) to create the call sheets, to see that everyone gets them, and to make sure that the production stays on schedule.

The length of time for a shooting day, of course, varies. You should never schedule a shooting day longer than 10 hours. On rare occasion you might need to schedule a 12-hour day. In these cases, do not schedule long days back to back. It's imperative that you allow time for your crew to rest. You must have *a minimum* of 10 hours of **turnaround time** between the

PRODUCTION CALL SHEET

Title: *KIARRA'S ESCAPE*	**Shooting Date:** 7/20
Producer: Madgate Productions	**PM:** Sharine M.
Director: Miles Adgate	**AD:** Michelle H.

SET	SCENES	PAGES	LOCATION
EXT. CITY STREET	#17	pg. 6	867 Riverside Dr., Apt 3-G. NYC
INT. KIARRA'S SAFEHOUSE	#13, #16, #18	pp. 6, 7	

CAST CALL TIMES

CAST MEMBER	ROLE	MAKEUP	SET CALL
Jessica Krueger	Kiarra	8:30 am	9:30 am
Victor Varela	Driver	8:30 am	9:30 am
Robert Youngren	Vogler	10:30 am	11:00 am
Rick Varela	Smith	10:30 am	11:00 am

EXTRAS & STAND INS	MISC. INSTRUCTIONS
N/A	Victor is also bringing car @ 8am

CREW CALL TIMES

CREW TITLE	NAME (S)	SET CALL
Director	Miles A.	7:30 am
P.M.	Sharine M.	7:30 am
A.D.	Michelle H.	7:30 am
Art Dept.	Gus M., Jenni P., Michael C.	7:30 am
Makeup & Wardr.	Michael C.	7:30 am
D.P.	Nick V.	8:00 am
A.C.	Richie U.	8:00 am
Elec. & Grips	Nico P., Jenni P.	8:00 am
Sound Dept.	Tristan A. (sound mixer), Eric S. (boom op.)	8:00 am
Other: P.A.	Donna C.	7:30 am

NOTES & DIRECTONS:
Location is between 158th & 159th streets. (take the 1 or 9 train) Very important: the building is not facing the water (west), it is facing east, on the other side of the complex.

Victor is bringing car @ 8am, must be done by 1 pm.

Fire, Police, Ambulance emergency: 911
NEAREST HOSPITAL:
Columbia Presbyterian 608 W 165th street New York, NY 10032-7901 (212) 781-8640

Figure 5-11
Call sheet for *Kiarra's Escape*. Call sheets are printed for each shooting day and tell cast and crew when they are expected to arrive on set.

end of one call and the beginning of the next, but 12 hours is standard (12 hours is also the minimum for minors on the set). Don't expect your crew to pull all-nighters—they'll make sloppy mistakes and these mistakes can potentially put people at risk.

Deciding how much (or how many script pages) you can do on a particular day depends on many factors: the amount of coverage, the style of shooting (e.g., moving cameras take longer to set up than do stationary cameras), the shooting environment (e.g., controlled interior set versus uncontrolled exterior location), the size of the cast and crew, and the shooting style of the director. The more films you make, the more you will come to understand your own particular production pace and the better you will be able to predict how much you can get done in any given day. One general rule, however, is that it takes some time for a film crew to find its groove and work at maximum efficiency. For this reason, the first day is usually scheduled very lightly. It's a great morale booster

for a film production to accomplish everything on the first day's schedule. Conversely, if you try to pack in too much on the first day and you do not succeed, your crew will feel like they're already falling behind on day 1, which can be a drag. But a light, accomplishable first day allows everyone to get to know each other, hit their stride, and fly for the rest of the project.

When you're creating call sheets, it's easy to write down that you'll do 30 setups in a day, but in reality that might be impossible to accomplish. So be realistic. It's counterproductive to be overly optimistic about how much can be accomplished in a day. If your film clearly requires six days to shoot, then budget for six days. Don't try and cram a six-day production period into four days.

Blank storyboard forms and production call sheets can be downloaded from the *Voice & Vision* companion website at www.voiceandvisionbook.com. In addition, you will find all of the production paperwork for *Kiarra's Escape* available to download as well as the video of the excerpted scenes used in this chapter.