



G E N E R A T I O N

FROM PUERTO RICO TO ATLANTA, CHICAGO,
NEW YORK AND L.A., THIS YEAR'S GROUP OF
RISING LOCAL 600 FILMMAKERS HAVE GOT
THE INDUSTRY COVERED - IN SO MANY WAYS.

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next

Omar D. Rivera Abreu and his family were the lucky ones, after Hurricane Maria ripped through Puerto Rico, sparing them serious harm or distress. “A lot of friends and co-workers lost homes and possessions; some lost family members,” he shares. “It’s really hard to talk about.”

Yet filmmaking post-Maria returned soon after the storm. “I was working on *The Oath* Season One and we were right back to work almost a month after,” Rivera Abreu remembers. “2018 was one of our busiest years.”

Keeping the island’s film business healthy requires trust in its government and local crews’ tenacity.

“We are prepared to shoot in anything,” he adds. “If we could make it work post Maria, we can sure make it happen anytime. All who have shot here know this: we are warm-hearted, super hardworking and giving people. You come for the tax incentive, but you stay for the crew.”

Rivera Abreu started in sound, earning an AS degree in Recording Arts from Full Sail University in Orlando and a BA degree in Radio Production and Marketing from the University of the Sacred Heart in Santurce, PR, in 2013. He quickly migrated to images, though, initially working as a digital loader.

When DIT Su-Jeng Sang recommended him for *The Vessel*, in 2013, director Julio Quintano and Director of Photography Santiago Benet, SPC, took him on. Rivera Abreu now works mostly on films and TV, recently wrapping a local indie called *Picando Alante* and now working on a YouTube series.

“I’m a geek for all the tech and workflow advancements, but sometimes we get too lost in camera specs and Ks,” he laments. “It’s all about utilizing the tools we have to further the story. I love taking charge of all the technical details of a project to help my DP and the production just create. I get excited on set for whatever reason – working with a certain DP or actor, or because we accomplished a shot that was an artistic and technical challenge – and I’m reminded of how lucky I am to be doing this job.”

Rivera Abreu and fellow Puerto Rican DIT Alex Ramirez are good friends, “even

though we are competing in a very small area,” Ramirez notes. “We work as a team and usually cover each other when needed. I have called him from set an hour away because I fell ill, and he arrived before the hour ready to work and help. He’s a great DIT and crew member.”

That kind of collaboration is what got Rivera Abreu hooked, and what makes him appreciate his union. “We are all part of this massive and complex undertaking that takes as much artistry as it does technical knowledge,” Rivera Abreu concludes. “When my father died, we were filming *Replicas*, a Keanu Reeves film, and I will never forget the love and camaraderie my fellow crewmembers showed. It was truly humbling. This was my family away from home. It was so amazing.”



omar

D . R I V E R A
A B R E U

DIGITAL IMAGING TECHNICIAN

YEARS IN GUILD: 6
LOCATION: SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO
HOMETOWN: SAN JUAN
PORTRAIT BY: LAURA MAGRUDER

"I've been lucky enough to cross paths with some of the smartest, most creative and inclusive individuals during my journey to publicity," notes Elizabeth Driscoll, who began in the business assisting Producer Jenno Topping.

"I first met Liz when she worked as my on-set assistant in Boston on *The Heat*," Topping recalls. "She literally made it rain every single day. She knew every human in Boston and could do the impossible from locations to restaurants to managing cast."

Driscoll loved the work, but wanted to find a niche of her own, and with mentoring from Topping and Local 600 Unit Publicist Claire Raskind, she settled on publicity.

"Claire selflessly guided me in the right direction and gave me the confidence to follow my passion. With that new confidence, I somehow talked Producer, Marc Fischer into giving me a chance, and I never looked back," Driscoll recalls. Her first job as a publicist was on Fischer's *Game Night*, starring Jason Bateman and Rachel McAdams. She's since gone on to work on multiple feature films and is currently working on *The Suicide Squad* sequel.

"Over the years, I've seen her thrive in the productions she has been a part of," Topping adds. The two worked together again on the upcoming original horror trilogy *Fear Street*. While skills like writing and strategizing are crucial to a publicist's success, another valuable skill is building strong, trusting relationships with all kinds of people under all kinds of circumstances. "Everyone who crosses paths with Liz loves her. She has a fantastic energy that both talent and crew on set are instantly

liz

D R I S C O L L

UNIT PUBLICIST

YEARS IN GUILD: 3
LOCATION: ATLANTA, GA
HOMETOWN: BOSTON, MA
PORTRAIT BY: JESSICA MIGLIO, SMPSP

drawn to. She is passionate, tireless and has a lovely equanimity to boot," Topping describes.

That's vital, since "publicity is all relationship based," Driscoll states. "The most challenging part is being able to successfully navigate through ever-changing schedules, landscapes and personality types. The most important skill is keeping in constant communication with the cast, studio and filmmakers."

A good sense of humor helps, too, and Driscoll isn't lacking in that department. "I've won 'Most Likely to Trip on Set' every year since 2016," she quips.

Topping also appreciates Driscoll's inventiveness. "Liz brings a creative touch to her role, thinking innovatively about ways to capitalize on behind-the-scenes content to support the films she is working on in their respective releases."

Driscoll, who earned a Bachelor's of Business degree from Stonehill College, in her home state, relishes collaboration with unit still photographers "to create new types of content for social media exposure throughout the making of a film. We are able to build an audience much earlier in the filming process, which is exciting," she asserts. "The collaboration between a unit publicist and still photographer is imperative, and I've been lucky enough to work with the best of the best."

She's also energized by having the opportunity to meet new and inspiring people. "The best part of being based in Atlanta are all the amazing crews," Driscoll says. "My job would be impossible without the help of every single department on a film set."





malika

F R A N K L I N

DIGITAL IMAGING TECHNICIAN

YEARS IN GUILD: 4
LOCATION: NEW YORK CITY
HOMETOWN: NEW YORK CITY
PORTRAIT BY: JEONG PARK

"I love being able to bring the coloring suite to the DP on set," says Malika Franklin. "I feel the most creative when the DP asks me to make a cloudy day feel warmer, or dusk to feel like midday. The technology today is always changing, and I love showing the cinematographer the possibilities."

Franklin often dropped in on her father to watch him as the Steadicam operator or director of photography on a variety of films and music videos. By the time Franklin attended the School of Cinematic Arts at USC, she had worked on the Jay-Z video for *Run This Town*, featuring Rihanna and Kanye West.

She fell in love with color grading at USC after taking a color-correction course and began plying her trade on as many projects as she could. After graduating in 2013, Franklin began working on commercials and music videos. Within a couple of years, she put together her DIT cart. After joining Local 600, she worked as the on-set dailies colorist on the 2016 feature *Barry*, shot by Guild DP Adam Newport-Berra.

The Union's protections against pay disparity are especially important to Franklin. "I have female friends in other industries that are still struggling today to earn equal pay. As a union member, I know I am rightfully being paid for the position I am in, regardless of my race or gender," she notes.

Working with Director of Photography Autumn Eakin on the set of the 2019 feature *Someone Great* "was one of the first times as a DIT I felt like I had a say in the creative process," Franklin recalls. "Autumn was very open to my input. We worked together in the post house on LUT's for the film before the first shoot date. Then, while on set, I was monitoring and grabbing stills to make sure the look and lighting were consistent."

Eakin describes Franklin as adaptable, thorough and enjoyable.

"Production hours are long," the cinematographer states. "You need someone who will be just as attentive to detail at

hour one as hour 12. Malika will do that."

Franklin's approach changes from job to job. "There's no one way of being a DIT," she says. "Being a DIT means creating a workflow that works for the show. You have to be flexible and adapt to their needs." Franklin purposely keeps her cart small so she can move easily on set and stay as close to the camera as possible. And perhaps most importantly, she doesn't stay glued to her monitor.

"I like to get up from my DIT cart and see the action," she explains. "I want to see the scene and the lighting with my own eyes. Knowing how it looks in reality can inform how I treat it from my monitor."

As she moves on to new projects – most recently, Season 3 of *The Sinner* with Guild Director of Photography Radium Cheung, HKSC – Franklin is mindful that "a film set can be a stressful place at times," she says, "but at the end of the day we are making art and we should have fun."

jessica

H E R S H A T T E R

1ST ASSISTANT CAMERA

YEARS IN GUILD: 8
LOCATION: ATLANTA, GA
HOMETOWN: ATLANTA, GA
PORTRAIT BY: KYLE KAPLAN

Finding your way into the camera department isn't always straightforward, as Guild 1st AC Jessica Hershatter can attest. She says she knew she wanted to work in film but was unsure about which role would be the best fit. Her first professional gig was as an intern on the film *Project X*. "That job," Hershatter describes, "was a great introduction to how a professionally run set should operate, and a glimpse into the different functions of each department."

Once she joined camera, Hershatter knew she had found her home and has honed her skills over time. Recently, she added drones to her skill set and earned an FAA section 107 sUAS pilot's license. "It's challenging to learn a completely new skillset and having the chance to do something outside of my comfort zone," she says. Drones allow productions of any size and budget to increase their production value "without having all the big toys at their disposal," she adds. "They can produce shots that look like cable cam, crane, or even – sans propellers – like a stabilized gimbal."

Hershatter has piloted drones on everything

from Mercedes commercials to shows like FX's *Atlanta* and Netflix's *Stranger Things*, both of which shoot in and around Georgia's capital, now a booming production city – but, she wonders, for how long? "Recent legislation has negatively impacted both the film industry here and the state as a whole," Hershatter comments. "I believe the appropriate response from our industry should not be to abandon Georgia and move production elsewhere, but rather to stay and fight – and continue to make this state a better place to work and live. We have a ton of extremely talented locals who have been here from the beginning and are among the best at what they do. They make indispensable department heads and additions to crews."

An Atlanta native, Hershatter began working on independent films immediately after graduating *summa cum laude* from Emory University, in 2011. Shortly thereafter the industry in Georgia exploded, and she was able to transition to bigger projects with the help of some "very patient and generous Local 600 members," she smiles. She officially made the jump to 1st AC on IFC's *Stan Against Evil* before joining the *Stranger Things* crew.

"I find that sometimes our industry breeds and empowers the loudest, meanest voices," relates *Stan Against Evil* Director of Photography Timothy A. Burton. "Jessica's work on set feels effortless. Her humility is inspiring. She's the kind of person our industry needs. She's a shining star of the kind of talent that should lead us forward. I have no doubt she will be an awesome DP soon enough."

Hershatter's most recent project was *Amazing Stories*, a reboot of Steven Spielberg's TV series from the 1980s and new original content from the Apple TV+ streaming service.

"I'm proud to be a female in a historically male-dominated position, I'm proud to be an Atlantan, and I'm proud to work in an industry that can affect people as much as the film industry does," Hershatter declares. "I'm lucky to have been given incredible opportunities, and I know I will continue to learn and grow in my career. I can't wait to see what the future holds."





rafael

L E Y V A

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

YEARS IN GUILD: 4
LOCATION: WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA
HOMETOWN: PONCE, PUERTO RICO
PORTRAIT BY: ELISABETH CAREN

Like any cinematographer, Rafael Leyva, a former still photographer, is concerned with how things look. But he's also keenly aware of how the look of things creates narrative and emotion. "Since I can remember, I've always had a profound connection with movies and their psychological impact on an audience," Leyva says. "I'm interested in how shadows, colors and movement off the camera help craft a story. The first question that goes through my head when I step on a set and observe the blocking for the first time is, 'Where do I want my shadows?' It's the best feeling. It never gets old."

When he was starting as a still photographer, Leyva studied the work of others. "Shooting stills for the top commercial directors and DP's of the world and hanging out on studio backlots became my schooling," he remembers. "This opened the road for me as an operator, and it's how I met my mentors."

One such mentor is longtime Guild member Andy Romanoff, ASC, who introduced Leyva to Panavision in 2008. In 2012, Leyva shot the feature *Demented*, his first professional credit as a director of photography. He has since lensed projects for SONY Pictures, Netflix, FOX, NBC, Lifetime and Syfy. His proudest moment so far came on 2017's *The Last Rampage*, directed by DGA member Dwight Little.

"I had full control as the

cinematographer and got the look I wanted," Leyva recalls. "Dwight trusts me and always pushes the envelope. He lets me mold the blocking in favor of lighting and camera, and he's super understanding when it comes to alternative compositions."

Little says Leyva is "able to see the director's vision and then improve on it. He has a steady hand and does not panic or get frustrated. He sees the shot and gets it done artistically. He also has a deep knowledge of the technical side of his craft in both film and digital."

Leyva prefers working in film, shooting roughly half of his projects each year in that medium. And he's grateful that Netflix and HBO, among others, encourage the practice.

"It's frustrating that when we shoot digital there's less prep," Leyva says. It bothers him that a digital set sometimes encourages a "keep rolling" approach. "If they shoot the rehearsal, it's not a rehearsal. By shooting on film, we restore discipline on set."

Leyva is currently on location for an MGM pilot and will be gearing up shortly for *The Foster Ranch*, a sci-fi thriller he calls "a dream project."

To those still seeking their dream projects, Leyva offers this advice: "Find your style, your signature. Learn the discipline of film and find a director you can grow with. Be a leader and always think safety first."

The mix of artistry and activism that’s possible in filmmaking drew Christine Ng to the business. “I’m very invested in social activism, but because we work in this industry, there’s not always a lot of time to be an activist on the streets,” Ng explains. “I’ve been lucky enough to find work that has filled the role of activism I seek. I’m selective of projects that are telling a story that needs to be told, standing up for rights I believe in or highlighting an underrepresented community. My craft allows me to be able to help tell those stories.”

That’s why when Oscar-nominated cinematographer Bradford Young, ASC, contacted her about operating B-Camera for Ava DuVernay’s limited Netflix series, *When They See Us*, Ng jumped at the chance.

“I’m a New Yorker and I knew the Exonerated 5 story needed to be retold – and I wanted to witness Ava’s work,” Ng explains. “She and Brad are both about fostering artistry. They’re really in touch with the actors and the technicians. Brad keeps it

loose – a lot of his work is intuitive, so there was no shot list for each scene, except for a few specific crane moves or lighting cues. Most days allowed room for creative improv because Ava respects what the actor needs to get there; the blocking is a collaborative process for her. I was free to find things,” Ng recalls. “We’d do coverage of the room, and eventually Ava and I would have a rapport where she’d look at me and say, ‘That was great, give me something else!’ There are times when I would provide ten angles for a scene.”

Ng describes operating as a “tough job,” and in many cases, she says, “especially on studio films, you’re basically a robot operator, putting on a 25 and locking it off. There is something to be said about being creative in the operator role. Working with Brad and Ava was freeing. I felt challenged, and heard in a way that I rarely am as a queer Asian female operator in a white male-dominated industry.”

DuVernay describes Ng as “wildly talented. Her eye and her

intention set her apart from many others, and I’m very excited about her work. Her technical proficiency coupled with her creative connection to the story makes Christine an artist to watch.”

After graduating from NYU’s Tisch School with a BFA in 2007, Ng worked at Park Pictures, until she left to pursue cinematography. “The connections I made at NYU and Park were amazing,” Ng says. “Being around people like Lance Acord [ASC] and Ellen Kuras [ASC] was so inspirational, and being considered not just a kid, but an actual operator, was great for my confidence. It was such an inclusive community where I could grow and learn.”

Today Ng balances commercials with documentary work, bringing a vérité style to both. “When you’re holding the camera, the way you lens something is so affecting, the audience is experiencing the world the way you are,” she concludes. “That’s so special and specific.”

christine

N G

OPERATOR

YEARS IN GUILD: 7

LOCATION: NEW YORK CITY

HOMETOWN: HONG KONG AND QUEENS, NEW YORK

PORTRAIT BY: JEONG PARK



erica



"I loved watching the clapper loader on the truck with his arms in a black bag loading the film into a magazine," recalls Erica Parise of her early days in the industry. "There's something so humbling, watching your film get developed and seeing how the natural light leaks while using your hands to physically create something so vulnerable."

Parise started in location work, and the transition to photographer was fairly organic given her Bachelor's degree in Fine Art with a focus in photography and film from the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. "I now find creative engagement in making each shot my own and exploring how a still image can best capture the singular moment of a scene in motion," she explains.

Jennifer Eckstein, a freelance photo editor and manager, says Parise always gets what's needed "and doesn't let you know how hard it was to get. She can figure out every problem by herself and foresees those you didn't. Erica is a complete pleasure to work with."

Human instincts and emotional awareness are the skills Parise relies on most.

"Still photographers can seem like outsiders who suddenly appear for a day or two before magically disappearing again," she laughs. "For me and all of my talented contemporaries, we care deeply about capturing the creative spirit of the show without interfering in the chemistry of that particular set. I naturally change how I shoot given the vibe on set and the genre. I'm looking at how the cinematographer is shooting and translating that into my work."

Last year, Parise shot stills on Season 1 of *Kidding*, starring Jim Carrey, Catherine Keener, and Frank Langella and directed by Michel Gondry. "It was a huge honor to join such an incredible team of people I've admired my entire

life," she recalls. Earlier this year, when her daughter was four months old, Parise got a call to shoot for the final 2 episodes of *Homeland*.

"While I have guilt about being away from her this early, I've also prioritized modeling for her what a working mother looks like," Parise explains. "One of the main challenges is that I'm exclusively breastfeeding. There are legal protections for breastfeeding mothers, but regardless, Production has been amazingly accommodating. Still, I've had to get used to pumping in my car, on set, in random rooms on location, and, whenever possible, within the luxury of a trailer at basecamp. The best days are when my husband, Alex, comes to set with Lucia, and I can spend time nursing her during lunch."

No matter where she's working, Parise never ceases "to be amazed by the complex machine that is a well-orchestrated film set – all these incredibly talented creators and artists putting their heart into realizing a unified vision," she says. "Sometimes in the grips – no pun intended – of one's challenges in life and on set, it can be easy to lose sight of the fact we are just one part of a whole."

P A R I S E

UNIT STILL PHOTOGRAPHER

YEARS IN GUILD: 7
LOCATION: SILVER LAKE, CA
HOMETOWN: LAWRENCE, NY
PORTRAIT BY: ALI GOLDSTEIN

kai

In Kai Saul's hands, the camera feels like an instrument. For the classically trained violinist, this has led to an instinctual understanding of how to master it.

"Picking up an old ARRIFLEX 16S camera for the first time was like being struck by lighting," Saul says. That was as an undergraduate music major at Dartmouth, where he'd been asked to score several student films and found himself on set. He knew little about cameras but instantly perceived that it was another conduit of artistic expression, like the violin or other instruments he grew up playing.

"That's how I found my way around the ARRIFLEX: like learning a new musical instrument, which I'd done countless times."

He consumed the works of Andrei Tarkovsky, Ingmar Bergman, and Michelangelo Antonioni and began shooting his own experimental films. After graduating with a BA in music, Saul entered the MFA program in Cinematography at Chapman University, graduating in 2012.

S A U L

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

YEARS IN GUILD: 3
LOCATION: LOS ANGELES, CA
HOMETOWN: PHILOMATH, OR
PORTRAIT BY: ELISABETH CAREN

He then tried to get work with one of his mentors – Denis Maloney, ASC – with whom he'd worked as 2nd AC on several features in film school. But in one of the most important events of Saul's career, Maloney turned him down because he knew Saul wanted to become a cinematographer. He said the only way was to get out and shoot.

"That rejection was the best advice I've ever received, because it forced me to get creative with my survival and future of my career," Saul reflects. After that, he began shooting "almost anything and everything."

Though he'd originally fallen in love with the camera, it was the thrill of collaboration – with musicians, designers, or other passionate filmmakers – that convinced Saul cinematography was the right path. He went on to lens an official Sundance selection – 2018's *Home Shopper*, which was nominated for the short film Grand Jury Prize – and several other prizewinners at the Los Angeles Music Video Festival, the Berlin Flash Film Festival, and the Austin Film Festival.

"Kai's not only a true artist but a wonderful collaborator," says Dev Patel, *Home Shopper's* director. "He was totally in the trenches with me throughout the process. He has that rare ability to turn the mundane into magical. We should rename him 'Kind Soul' because he truly is an extraordinary human."

Saul recently finished principal photography on his first feature, *Flinch*, a thriller directed by Cameron Van Hoy, and regularly shoots commercials and music videos. Through it all, Saul has preserved the habits of a trained musician, especially when it comes to preparation.

"Prep time is free – the hourglass hasn't turned over yet," he says. "In preproduction, you can change your mind, sleep on ideas, or spend time revisiting your references and inspirations. But once you're on set and the clock is ticking, the worst thing you can do is to second-guess yourself. If you rely on your prep and trust your instincts, you'll be free to do your best work."





During Jeremiah Smith's career, he's confronted a certain kind of reality on shows such as *American Ninja Warrior*, *Pimp My Ride*, *Extreme Makeover Home Edition* and *Temptation Island Reunion*.

And then there was the other reality that helped him remember what was important to him, and why his career behind the camera is something he's grateful to have.

"I was filming in India for a Discovery Channel show," Smith relates. "On the drive to visit an orphanage, seeing such poverty in the streets and poor living conditions was a complete culture shock. But many people I met had the biggest

hearts and would offer their last of something to comfort another. That put a lot of things into perspective. It taught me about the power of gratitude and giving as well as being present."

A sense of amusement pervades the stories Smith tells about himself, especially about his first job: as a camera assistant on a music video. "I had no clue what to do when I grabbed a prime lens out of the case," he laughs. "I removed both caps and nonchalantly carried it across the room as if I were carrying a muffin. Needless to say, the camera op and AC were not happy."

Smith took a winding path from

a kid shooting his friends' rap album covers, headshots, and music videos to his first job as a cinematographer. His stops included a 2003 internship in MTV's Development department during his final semester at Cal State Dominguez Hills. That's where he read the pitch for *Pimp My Ride* and a year later became a P.A. on the show. He moved on to producing rough cuts for the AE's, then to promotions and field producer, producer, and finally to director of photography.

This breadth of experience and readiness for anything formed Smith's credo: "Observe. Adapt. Deliver." He plans for the best and is ready for the worst. "Your instincts

may be the greatest, but if that fresh brick crashes in the middle of a slow-motion finish-line shot, you can't play back those instincts."

Rick Hurvitz met Smith while executive producing *Pimp My Ride*. Smith is a "devastatingly good shooter," Hurvitz states. "He thinks like a producer-director-editor when he's shooting because he has that experience from starting down that road."

Yet it hasn't been easy. "He had to smash through the invisible color barrier, which can permeate Hollywood," Hurvitz admits. "To his credit, he never complained. He just kept at it and rose to

tremendous heights."

Timing, and the variety of ways a plan can change as it happens in real time, bring ongoing joy and mystery for Smith. "We may get a few runs, I may figure out where most of the action takes place, and that's when I can have fun and get tight shots," he offers. "But I'm always ready to pull out wide if something goes wrong."

The reality of his work – shooting a reality that often resists plans – yields, for Smith, sublime moments that make it worth the work and chaos.

"I like catching truly authentic moments from real people," he concludes. "It's humbling."

jeremiah

S M I T H

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

YEARS IN GUILD: 5
LOCATION: LOS ANGELES, CA
HOMETOWN: LOS ANGELES, CA
PORTRAIT BY: TIFFANY ROOHANI

h u n t e r

Hunter Whalen is a practical man, as might be expected of one of the most in-demand focus pullers in Chicago. From where he stands, problems on the set are never theoretical.

"The snow and cold can be very rough," he says of shooting in his native state. "You learn a lot of tricks and spend a lot of time finding the best weather gear."

Whalen is also grateful for his Guild membership, which he says provides insurance for his family and the opportunity to collaborate with highly trained filmmakers, especially on projects in and near the Windy City. That's led to a wide variety of shows, including *Chicago Fire*, *The Boss*, *Fargo*, *Empire* and *Proven Innocent*. He recently

finished a gig on the *Candyman* crew.

"I love the city of Chicago and our crews around here," he says. "We get to work with people from all over because we're right in the middle of the country, and I think that makes us better for it."

Though he has plenty of things to brag about, Whalen stays humble and connected to his roots. When asked about the recognition he's earned, the first thing that comes to his mind is becoming the February 1998 employee of the month at the Dairy Queen in Sherman, IL!

It was a fascination with making movies, "specifically the process of how it was done," Whalen says, that drew him toward pursuing

film as a career. He broke into the business on small jobs, while earning his Bachelor's degree in film from Columbia College.

"I thought of working in a few different roles, but ultimately I wanted to work around other people and in different places more than sitting at a desk," Whalen remembers. That's when he learned to study everyone he worked with, how they did their jobs and where their ideas came from. Turned out that camera was his favorite department, and after graduation, he earned a chance to work on *Chicago Fire*, where he bumped up from 2nd to 1st AC on extra camera days.

"It was a lot of long lenses and a lot of action," he remembers. "My first real test."

Today Whalen keeps his approach to the work grounded and technical. He jokes about having a hard time remembering the previous week, but the immediate future is never in doubt, at least on the set.

"It's important to always be looking ahead to see what's coming next, so that no one's waiting on you to do your job," he concludes.

Chicago-based Director of Photography Andrew Wehde (*First Look*, page 26) says that having Whalen around on set always makes the day better. "Hunter is one of the kindest individuals I have worked with," Wehde describes. "His technical knowledge and ability to hit focus consistently all day make him an asset to any project."

W H A L E N

1ST ASSISTANT CAMERA

YEARS IN GUILD: 11
LOCATION: CHICAGO, IL
HOMETOWN: WILLIAMSVILLE, IL
PORTRAIT BY: PARRISH LEWIS

