

John R. Bradley

Professor Steve Reiher

Comm 1010, Section 53

November 7, 2011

“Interview Analysis Memo”

TO: Professor Steve Reiher

FROM: John R. Bradley

SUBJECT: Interview Analysis Memo

DATE: November 7, 2011

I met with Carl Gundestrup at 6 P.M. on September 29 at his home to conduct an information gathering interview about his career experiences in the electrical department in the film industry in Utah over the past 30 years. He was referred to me by a mutual friend at our church, and he agreed to meet with me after I had contacted him by phone.

I've wanted to get the education and experience to work in the film industry for quite a while. Mr. Gundestrup was able to provide me with quite a vast list of experiences and knowledge to gain some insight into what it would be like to work in the film industry outside of the major production locations like California or New York. The job that I want to obtain in the film industry is a Director of Photography, and that job requires knowledge of camera, lights, and equipment that effects light to get the type of shots you and the Director are looking for.

This memo explains and analyzes what I learned from him during our interview.

Summary

Getting Started in the Film Business

I learned from Mr. Gundestrup that most people get started in the film industry either from film school, or just volunteering on movies or commercials without pay and just learning the ropes as you go. If you do a good job, then the people you worked with will typically call you to work with them on their next project.

His own personal experience was a little more unique. He attended school at BYU where there is a professional movie production studio. He tried working at the Missionary Training Center, but hated the constrictive schedule and atmosphere. He felt from his creative writing experiences in high school and a lot of soul searching and prayer, that his life calling was to work in creative arts. He got a job at the motion picture studio and learned about lighting and electrical work. After school, he just started doing freelance jobs, mostly commercials in Utah, and has been doing that ever since.

When I asked him about the value of getting a degree in film, he explained that film schools can be good places to get experience, but having a degree will not get you hired. Producers want a

resume of your past film work to look at to determine how much experience you have. They will not entrust you with millions of their dollars because you have a degree, but no other experience.

A Typical Work Day

When I asked Mr. Gundestrup about his typical workday, he explained that can vary quite a lot depending on what the project is. He said if it's a movie, the shoot can last anywhere from 1-3 months, and may or may not include Saturdays. He will usually have to arrive between 6:30 - 7 A.M. to start getting lights, cable, and other equipment out of trucks to start setting up for the first shot of the day. After everything is set up, he will patiently watch the shooting process to make sure everything is safe and converse with the Director of Photography between takes to see if any adjustments need to be made before the next take is made. He will wait for the 1st Assistant Director to inform the crew that the Director is happy with the take and to start the process of moving everything to set up for the next shot. This process will continue throughout the day, with a 1 hour break for lunch, and the day will probably end between 9 – 10 P.M.

I was curious about how his career had affected his family life, marriage, kids, mortgage, etc. He explained that there were pros and cons. He enjoys not having to go to a 9-5 job in an office building every day. He likes doing things that allow him to explore his creativity. When he is working, he does not see his family as often, but when he is in-between jobs he has unlimited free time to spend with his wife and kids. Because he chooses when to work, and when not to, he has never missed any important family events.

He further explained that he has always been able to earn enough to pay the bills and not have his wife work, but there have been a number of times when work was hard to find and sometimes bills would have to be put off for a month or two until he earned enough on his next job to catch up.

The Future, Trends in the Film Business

When I asked Mr. Gundestrup about the future of film jobs he said that he sees a time when film will be completely replaced by HD Video. He said that won't affect people in the electrical and grip department as much as it will the camera department. He said the big thing to stay up to date is follow trade magazines about the industry, read about new equipment, see what makes it unique, and then find rental houses that have it and experiment with it on your own. He said you always need to keep teaching yourself and stay on top of what is current.

Another thing he is starting to see is that Producers and people who make the money decisions for film work are choosing to hire younger people who have a little less experience than he does, because the new guys are willing to work for less money.

Interview Analysis

Analysis of Film Work as My Career Choice

Before I met with Mr. Gundestrup, I had already done a lot of my own research about jobs in the film industry. I felt like I had a good idea about the pros and cons of having a career in film, but it was enlightening to talk to some who has lived it, and not just read about it in a book.

He encouraged me to communicate with my family and make sure they understood the pros and cons and were willing to support me in this career choice. He also encouraged me to make sure I felt this was what God wanted me to do, and I wasn't just pursuing this because it looked fun and exciting and treat it like a hobby instead of my lifework.

Speaking with Mr. Gundestrup left me feeling more determined to keep working toward my dreams of working in the film business, to give it my best effort and never give in to despair and keep trying my hardest and that I will find success.

Analysis of my Interviewing Process

As I reflect on the interview, I feel that it went well but I need more practice to still get better and more comfortable with interviewing.

I felt my preparation was good. I had given good thought to my questions and possible responses and that my outline was good. I had practiced before hand, but still felt nervous because I was going to be talking to someone I had never met before. The nervousness increased when he asked if we could move the interview location to a church where his daughter had a volleyball game. He could be there to support her and still talk to me. I agreed because I felt nervous about finding a time to reschedule that would work for him, but looking back on it, I wish I had rescheduled. The game was noisy and there were lots of other people around so it was hard to concentrate and stay focused and also to hear each other clearly.

I definitely need to work on controlling the interview better. I found that after one or two questions he would continue to talk and move to a new topic. I'm not the kind of person that likes to be seen as pushy or aggressive so I would just let him continue to speak his mind. He covered all the topics I was going to ask him to, and I got the information I wanted, but it didn't always come from me prompting him to speak about it. If I do future interviews, I will have to make more of an effort to be more assertive and in control of the conversation.

Closing

This was a challenging assignment for me, but I'm glad I did it. It gave me an opportunity to make contact with someone who works in the industry I want to and was able to give me some good insight into what to expect as far as a future career. It also gave me an opportunity to practice a new skill, interviewing, and examine my strengths and weaknesses in this area. Completing the assignment has shown me that interviewing is not one of my strengths, but it is something that I feel I could get better at with practice. I can also see how having good interviewing skills can be a beneficial skill to have in any workplace environment, even in film. When I'm looking for film work, I need to be able to research and ask good questions of prospective employers, and speak confidently to show them that I can do the job they are looking for.