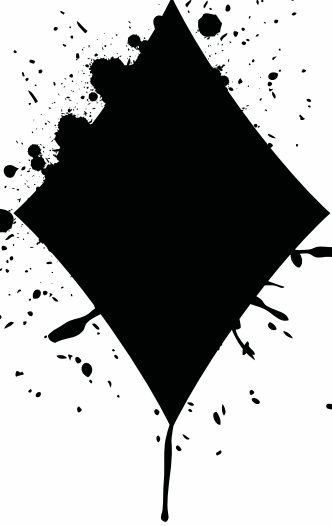


APA Masterclass 2025

Location Manager/ Production Designer/ 1st AD



Jeremy McWilliams

Location Manager: Algy Sloane

Production Designer: Sophie Jacobs

First AD: Ina Luders

Shooting on location

- Why shoot on a location rather than in a comfortable, weatherproof Studio?
- In what way are Locations limiting?
- With so many amazing Location Libraries do you really need a location manager?

Shooting on location

- Studios versus Locations:
Authenticity, cost, speed
- Locations can be limiting:
Bathrooms, sound, planes, owners
- Location libraries only show you pictures of locations – they won't manage your location for you

What does a Location Manager do?

- Apart from finding a location why do you need one?
- How many days to put in your budget?
- What could be the tricky aspects of locations?
- Have you got the time or expertise to deal with them?

What does a Location Manager do?

- Location finding incl Unit Base
- Bringing creative ideas
- Permissions
- Dealing with issues that arise on location - 'troubleshooting'
- Contract pricing & negotiation
- Owner liaison
- Crew logistics, parking and facilities
- Door knocking
- Pamphleting
- Insurance claims

Location search for Audible “The Breakdown”

- Is there any way to shoot this in a totally controllable studio?
- What’s going to be tricky about shooting this on location?
- What are the dangers?
- What are the practical considerations of the scenes you need to shoot here?
- How many days filming will this involve?
- How long is it going to take to find this location?
- How many other days for the Location Manager on the production? Why?

Location Manager: Audible

“The Breakdown”

- Scenes needed - 6
- Location search – 3 days
- Location Management – 3 days
- Number of locations - 1
- Location Manager needs to find one location that:
 - Could be used for all six scenarios since the car remains static throughout
 - There are lots of resets so artiste/wardrobe facility must be close by
 - The video viewing village and all unit vehicles must be able to be parked out of shot
 - There must be room for rain/practical effects to park a crane and lift the rig out of shot
 - Must be safe so road will need to be closed to all civilian traffic (if only intermittently)
 - May need an area for a stunt to happen beside the car

Production Designer / Art Director

- What's the difference?
- Do you always need one?
- The “Fix it in Post” fallacy

Production Designer / Art Director

- What's the difference?

They are the same thing

- Do you always need one?

Yes, almost always

- The “Fix it in Post” fallacy

This is the one area of your budget where things get out of control fastest. Never guess at things. Never underestimate what needs to be done. Always speak to your production designer/art director while budgeting

What does a Production Designer do?

- What is their role in the production?
- How much influence do they have?
- How do they work with the director?
- How do they work with you as a producer?
- Won't we just arrive on location and use what's there?
- Who is in the art department and what do they do?

What does a Production Designer do?

- The entire “look” of the film is in the Production Designer’s hands
- They work with the DoP and Costume to the Director’s brief
- Directors dream, Production Designers make it happen
- Producers need to support the vision for the project but keep control of the finances
- Everything in shot has been chosen to be there. You won’t find things on the location on the day. What is usually there on location is usually not right for your film
- Some people on the Art Department team are Prop Buyers, Prop Masters, Stylists, Construction (Carpenters, Plasterers, Painters)

Production Designer brief for Audible

“The Breakdown”

- There are a lot of practical/physical effects in the script. Does the director want them to seem real or heightened.
- What impact will these practical/physical effects have on continuity?
- How many different resets does the director think are going to be needed for this commercial?
- What is an important consideration in terms of storytelling and the order that shots/sequences are filmed?
- How many setups/sequences in how much time?
- What will the art department need to do before shooting?
- What will need to happen after you've finished filming on that location?

Production Designer: Audible “The Breakdown”

- Scenes needed –
- Number of locations -
- Production Designer – ? days
- Props Buying/Hiring – ? days
- Practical Effects, Art Dept Assistants – ? days
- Production Designer brief:
 - What will be required of them?
 - What personnel will they need?
 - How much time will they all be needed?
 - How much money can they have to do it all?

Production Designer: Harry's "Satsuma"

- Scenes needed –
- Number of locations - 1
- Production Designer – ? days
- Props Buying/Hiring – ? days
- Practical Effects, Art Dept Assistants – ? days

- Production Designer needs to:
 - Establish a uniform and authentic look within an existing office space
 - Work within the colour palette briefed by the director
 - Work in concert with the DoP and Costume Designer
 - Needs to prop and dress each of the scenarios
 - Budget: £7,500 purchase, £7,500 hire; Transport, mileage & OT

What does a First do?

Why can't directors call it?

What is their most important function?

In what way is the 1AD function similar to a Producer's?

1 ADs and Producers

Shooting schedule

On set directing talent and crew

Timings: adhere to sked, 1 or 2 steps ahead

Protecting the creative integrity

Set the tone of the shoot

1 ADs and Producers

First ADs

Shooting schedule

On set directing talent and crew

Timings: adhere to sked, 1/2 steps ahead

Creative integrity

Set the tone of the shoot

Producer

Production scheduling

Managing crew and talent

Time is money

Creative integrity

Swan-like at all times

Transforming your Production Schedule into a Shooting Schedule

- What's the difference between the two?
- Does the shooting schedule have to follow your production schedule? Won't the agency producer expect it to?
- Shouldn't the director decide the schedule?
- Do you do the final Shooting Schedule before or after the Tech Scout?
- Will a short or quick shot always be fast to shoot? Why?
- For timings, what are the two things to think about in every scene?

Transforming your Production Schedule into a Shooting Schedule

- A Shooting Schedule is the masterplan for each shooting day.
- Forget about your Production Schedule. Like your budget, too much has changed. Leave it to the 1AD to plan the days.
- Never let the director decide the schedule.
- Do the final Shooting Schedule when you have all the info from all the heads of department – usually after the Tech Scout?
- With every scene there are two elements:
 - Set-up time
 - Shooting time

Shooting is always the easiest and shortest of the two

Questions to ask before starting your schedule

- What has been budgeted in terms of days and overtime?
- Are there any scenes that are location and/or time of day dependent?
- Are there limits on cast or location availability?
- How long will the cast take in wardrobe and hair & makeup? Has the wardrobe already been selected?
- Are there background cast? Do they need wardrobe and hair & makeup?
- Are any of the scenes weather dependent?

Questions to ask before starting your schedule

- Do we have any animals?
- Are there children?
- If on location: are there unit moves during the day? Will you need a unit base?
- Is there enough lighting equipment to jump ahead? Do we have enough Sparks?
- What camera are we shooting on? Are we handheld or on sticks?
- Are we using any specialist equipment? Crane/dolly/jib/Steadicam etc. (This affects setup times for shots)

Questions to ask before starting your schedule

- Do Art, Electrical and Glamour need early calls to setup?
- Are we limited on how many takes due to Art Department resets?
- What is the catering situation?
- Do we have product shots/consumption shots?
- Are the client attending the shoot? Will they be reviewing remotely?