Chapter 11 – Line Producing Quiz

Film Connection

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1. Discuss Line Producing and the importance of staying on budget.

No business can survive or flourish when there is waste. The Line Producer has no creative control but he must exercise some authority over the creative members of the team by holding them accountable for their spending and regulating their spending. The LP plans for the long term duration of the pre production, production and post production and is even focused on the day to day events of the shooting schedule unlike the Executive Producers who mainly funnel money to the project without directly making choices such as paying for daily needs.

In “The Hurlblog” which I found from the link on the textbook, the author suggests that at some point a person who fills the shoes of a Line Producer will intuitively know the WHAT-HOW-WHO of the budget. He or she will have enough experience that he will know WHAT is required in the script (page by page) HOW much it costs and WHO will pick it up and operate it. Making estimates as a green LP may not be accurate without some additional research. The more accurate your estimates of cost per page are the better off you’ll be in fixing a budget.

1. Discuss the Wachowski’s career and why they “needed a hit”.

The Wachowski’s had a massive amount of success when “The Matrix” took off. Then unfortunately, they sunk 200 million dollars into “Speedracer”which wasn’t successful and then rather than playing it safe and downsizing for a while they got investors to sink another 140 million dollars into “Cloud Atlas” which was a failure. Recovering from a loss like that is very difficult in Hollywood because who in their right mind would ever loan them money again?

After two failures like that I’m sure they had worn out their welcome in many realms. It takes a lot of ego and delusional grandiosity to raise that kind of money. “Cloud Atlas” is on record ad the most expensive independent movie ever made and no one has even heard of it.

1. What was the creative process for “The Blair Witch Project” and why was it so successful?

A lot of the dialogue was improvised. The actors were able to create believable scenes based off of general premises. The main reason that this movie is considered so successful is that it was profitable domestically and overseas and the budget to make it was minimal so they were able to recover every penny.

If you think about it there are no special effects to tie up the post production phase. There were not expensive scenic or costume elements. It was, from what I gather, a quick shoot that was able to create momentum and escalate tension that engaged the audience and made it a success without a bunch of expensive visual effects.

1. How did Tom Cruise prove that he was still commercially viable when he “needed a hit”?

The whole Katie Holmes obsession had made people skeptical about him as a viable means of entertainment. “Tropic Thunder” was a very strange film but it was extremely profitable. He was able to capitalize off of the craziness of that time. His character required a fat suit. The wacky nature of that film seemed to agree with him and they raked in the cash as a result of that film.

The textbook cites the importance of “customer perception”. If an audience is less likely to take an actor seriously it could possibly impact whether or not they want to support the actor’s work. Something about Tom Cruise in that fat suit told audiences that this man is able to laugh at himself and that somehow won a great number of people over.