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Culmination Reflection

When I began the Millennial Mile-High Club (MMHC) series back in April of 2019, I never could of fathomed the outcome; this amount of success, this surrealistic cloud that I find my head in, but I also would never of imagined the level difficulty, and of stretching experienced on this project. It is odd to me that I am no longer an aspiring filmmaking but am one, doing what I love and learning on the way. The experiences, euphoric and melancholic that I have journeyed through while working on the MMHC series have definitely brought a resolve and focus to mind. Episode 2B of this production has been the most challenging of the shoots thus far, as I was pushed psychologically, emotionally and physically to my limits.

I came into pre-production for episode 2B with the mindset that issues from episode 2 would be rectified, and not occur again. I discussed this with my AD and production manager who both agreed. We began to smooth out logistical kinks for the upcoming shoot, trying to not repeat the same mistakes, but clearly made new ones. As a team, we failed to conduct multiple production meetings to hash out any problems in our plan or flaws to our workflow, and to clearly communicate responsibilities and tasks. At a point, working as the director on this episode became extremely stressful, as I started to take on jobs that were delegated to other members of the crew, due to the fact that they became laxed in their work. I reached out to the specific teammates to address and correct the issue, and was successful; however, over time, they reverted back to their old ways, failing to work in a manner conducive of the urgency for this production. Understanding, that the production of episode 2B was time sensitive, I pushed forward and took on the work of those crew members, handling the overall logistics for the shoot; scheduling, ordering food, composing and organizing paperwork, i.e. equipment list, prop list, deliverables. This taxed me heavily and took me away from doing my job as the director. I

was unable to devote my full-time and attention to being creative and guiding the shoot in the aesthetic of how I envisioned it. I also did not work with the cast on set as much as I would have liked because I was occupied, managing the areas that the AD and production manager should of.

Personally, the experience of directing episode 2B has been bitter-sweet, a venture that taught me a lot about myself and others; a journey that resulted in me having to distance myself from some associates who worked on set that I considered friends. There was a fallout during day one of the shoot when a key member of the production crew became grossly neglectful in their duties. They were not on set when they were scheduled to, disappeared from set without any notice, and engaged in an illegal activity while filming. I had to cut ties with another key member due to their lack of work ethic and a behavioral issue. They were reprimanded for multiple infractions of the production crew Code of Conduct. When I reached out to them to explain their disciplinary process, they simply refused to communicate with I or the rest of the team. This was very hard and burdensome, as I no longer was able to socialize and collaborate with them but now had to replace them. I enjoyed working with each of these crew members, but their continued, sub-par work and behavior warranted a separation.

In hindsight, as the series comes to a close, and this chapter of my life wraps up; as I am graduating in the upcoming weeks, I reflect greatly, especially in the wake of the global pandemic. I have come to realize all the more, that it is best to have healthy conflict than to sacrifice the integrity of a production for peace sake. I wish I would have smiled more and connected with the cast and crew on a more personal level. Yes, it is about getting work done in our industry of entertainment technology and film, however, it is also about having fun in the process, building connections and making friends. Technical takeaways would be to allow for enough time to work at a steady, efficient pace to be well prepared, conduct production meetings via video chats, as people are very busy and cannot always carve out time to be physically at a location. My third takeaway is a mental-note to self, not a technical or aesthetic note but one that definitely affects both areas. It is to be versatile and be ready to transition to the right or left, when a project or a task for a particular job calls for it. “The narrow-minded who undertake any work will never be satisfied. They cannot understand the actions of those who are large hearted and broad-minded”, (Sathya Sai Baba, n.d.).

