

Producing Knowledge

Since the dawn of human history mankind has been driven by the instinctive desire to answer the question why? This innate curiosity has been one of the most important forces which has driven human knowledge to the staggering levels it has reached today. It was the wish to tend to this human desire for knowledge which led me to Los Angeles, California and the company Flight 33 Productions.

The technological revolutions which have occurred during the past hundred years have made information more accessible than ever before however, they have also improved entertainment and this combination has enabled a new style of learning in the form of documentary films. The majority of these shows are aired on big networks such as The History, Discovery, or Weather Channel but are initially filmed by smaller companies which work under contract. Flight 33 is one of the many such companies and their works include such famous productions as *The Universe*, *Life After People*, and *Shootout!* Working as their intern gave me a behind the scenes glimpse into the process needed for these shows to be produced and gave me valuable experience for a future career.

My first day as an intern did not begin smoothly. My home was less than two miles away and although I left with nearly 45 minutes to get to work I was immediately caught in a giant LA traffic jam. Furthermore, I had not yet been shown our company's main parking lot which was located about a half block from the office and was therefore

forced to find my own parking. I arrived fifteen minutes late after running the 4 blocks from where I had parked. Fortunately, my late arrival was not a problem but it was an introduction to trials of Los Angeles traffic, and would be far from the last! Later, my supervisor Joel took me on a tour of the building and introduced me to the crew. Our offices were divided between 3 floors which grouped their various roles. The 3rd floor was the main office and the place where the researchers, administrative heads, and company archives were located. The 2nd floor was for the editors while the 1st was for the graphics department. My desk was on the 3rd floor where I worked as a researcher gathering the information necessary for the show as well as a PA, ensuring the the office could run smoothly and assisting with any other required tasks. This meant that over the course of my internship I was to be involved in everything from researching ideas for episodes of a new season and helping build sets, to answering phones and ordering supplies. This kind of diversity was not restricted to myself however, and most members of our team had talents which they used to fill a variety of roles which enabled our small company to function with maximum efficiency.

During my stay at Flight 33 we were primarily involved in the production of 3 shows which were each in a different stage of production. The 1st show was *Secrets of the Earth* and it was for this show that the majority of my research was devoted. The program was being created for the Weather Channel and was in the early stages of production. It tells a history of earth's natural phenomenon in a way as it might be taught to an alien to our world. My research was primarily based on the various

locations and phenomenons but it also included locating people for potential interviews and finding usable images. Copyright legality is an issue with any film production and I learned how much of this issue is handled. Normally any image or video belonging to the network for which the show is being produced can be used without payment, as can any on the public domain. All others must have their rights purchased which can be done on specially designed websites which sell these rights on either a permanent or single use basis.

The 2nd show was *Hurricane 360* which uses recreation to depict the valiant struggles of hurricane survivors. During which I experienced the demands of the set and I spent many hours moving and cleaning equipment and wardrobe. Unfortunately, I injured my knee during my first week in LA and it continued to plague me for the remainder of my stay there. Nevertheless, it was incredible to see how a few pieces of furniture and wall could be placed in a river and constantly repositioned to create the illusion of a flooded building.

The 3rd show was the new season of *America's Secret Slang* which aired shortly after I arrived. It was here that I was surprised to learn how much work a show could still require even as it is beginning to air on screen. The show is heavily narrated which is the result of an intricately planned process. Before a script can be recorded it must first be carefully read and edited multiple times. After this, a count of how long each segment of speech should take is measured and marked. These final script preparations ensure that all dialogue fits seamlessly within the film and were yet

another one of my many duties. Since it is often unnecessary to hire actors for a simple scene production members are often called to fill the part and it was in *America's Secret Slang* that I made my debut as an actor. My part was small but it was still rewarding to see myself on TV.

Overall my experience at Flight 33 was very positive. The people that I had the privilege to work with were brilliant and talented individuals that make such interesting shows possible. The experience and advice which I attained during my internship will be invaluable for my future career and I hope their friendships will last a lifetime.