

## **Interviewing**

### **Prep:**

Real settings or chromakey?

- Real bgs:
  - Can add to character development
  - Easier in post
  - Take longer to shoot, if multiple setups needed
- Chromakey:
  - Allows different bgs even if all interviews are shot in one place
  - Bg can vary by topic
  - Audio should be clean
  - Be careful about trying to fool viewer (authenticity)
  - If going for realistic look, be realistic and consistent with depth of field

Framing

- If real setting, subject in environment or shot tight, or mixture?
  - If environment is appropriate, can make it more interesting
  - Tight for emotion
  - If shot tight, one office can provide several bgs
- If chromakey, may want to keep framing the same so relationship to bg doesn't change
- Shoot loose enough for ID!

Eyelines

- Off-camera or to-camera interviews?
  - Subject comfort
  - Appear as impartial or paid talent?
  - Cue cards? (Rarely)
  - Interrotron (Errol Morris)
- Subject, camera, interviewer height (default is all the same)
- Other than cam op, don't have crew members or others within eyeline of subject
  - especially not advisors or peers – subject will look to them for approval
- Nobody but interviewer should look at subject; everybody else watches monitors, etc.
  - interviewer fixes on subject, checks monitor between questions

Angle subject's body slightly away from camera

Have them sit in non-movable chair

Light on interviewer, too

Decide whether to provide topic list beforehand

Notes for between questions

Production:

Usual spiel to subject:

- **Good eye contact** with me; forget your public speaking training to make eye contact with everyone in room
  - If you refer to your **notes**, look back to me before you begin speaking;
  - Finish sentence, then refer to notes
  
- **Be energetic** - the more enthusiastic you are, the more interesting it will be for the viewer
  - The **louder you talk**, the fewer times we'll have to redo things because of background noise
- **Be passionate** - this is probably something you have a passion for or you wouldn't be here. The more it sounds like you care about what you're talking about, the more it will seem like something the viewer should care about
  - Feel free to **use your hands** - the more animated the better
  
- If you make a **small stumble**, but gloss right over it, it will probably be fine; only if you look self-conscious about it will it be a problem
  - If, however, you say something you don't like or make a mistake, feel free to **start again**
  - (When **jump cuts** are not a concern:) If you're near the end of a long answer and make a mistake, just **re-start the sentence** you made the mistake on

Verbal ID

Questions:

- Start by prompting with topics, not questions; explain that viewers won't hear your questions, so we're looking for standalone statements (John's example)
- If subject is uncomfortable, switch to organic conversation, not list of questions; check at end to see if everything was covered

Answers:

- Ideally, they give you Intro/learning point; Details; Wrap-up/learning point again (then just use what you need)

Tone: Diplomatic, de-personalized direction

Final Thoughts? (for Wrap-Up or Intro)

Other:

Have fresh water for each interviewee  
Good body language feedback  
Silent facial feedback  
Clean start: finish question quickly  
Clean finish: like negotiation, silence draws response  
Plenty of sleep

**On-Camera Spokes**

Teleprompter (easier to make quick changes; only choice for non-ear users)  
vs. Ear Prompter (cheaper; easier to move camera)

**Non-Actors vs. Actors**

Often stuck with amateur by client  
Non-actor playing themselves is usually ok; playing something they're not is usually not ok

**Acting in General**

Getting the take you want:

1. Try giving them comments/notes
2. Try getting them to give you an alternate read / "play with it"
3. Last resort: line reading