

# Strategies for Interview-Driven Productions

Monday April 15 | 9-10:00am PT

**Amy DeLouise**

©DeLouise Enterprises LLC. All Rights Reserved.  
No distribution without permission.

# Today's Agenda

**Interview as Story**  
**Interview Prep**  
**Leveraging Sound**  
**Authenticity**



**Slides & Stuff**

# Amy DeLouise

Creative Director | Producer

DELOUISE ENTERPRISES



**My Links**



Participants can join  
at **slido.com** with  
**#1829405**

<https://app.sli.do/event/u8PVB9PCyoxBXfKUiYLL31>



slido



**What kinds of interviews do you usually conduct?**

slido



**What scares you the most?**

slido



**Have you taken one of my interview workshops before?**



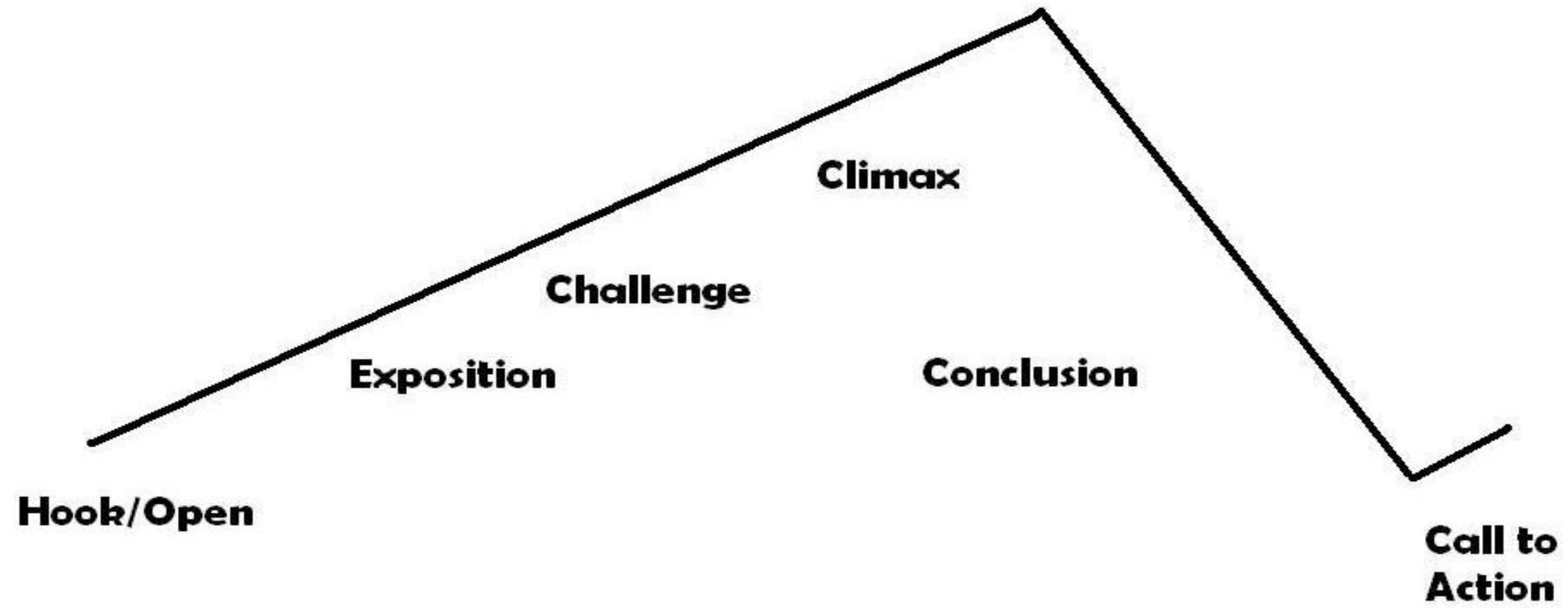
# Interview as Story

# Ask Yourself at the Start



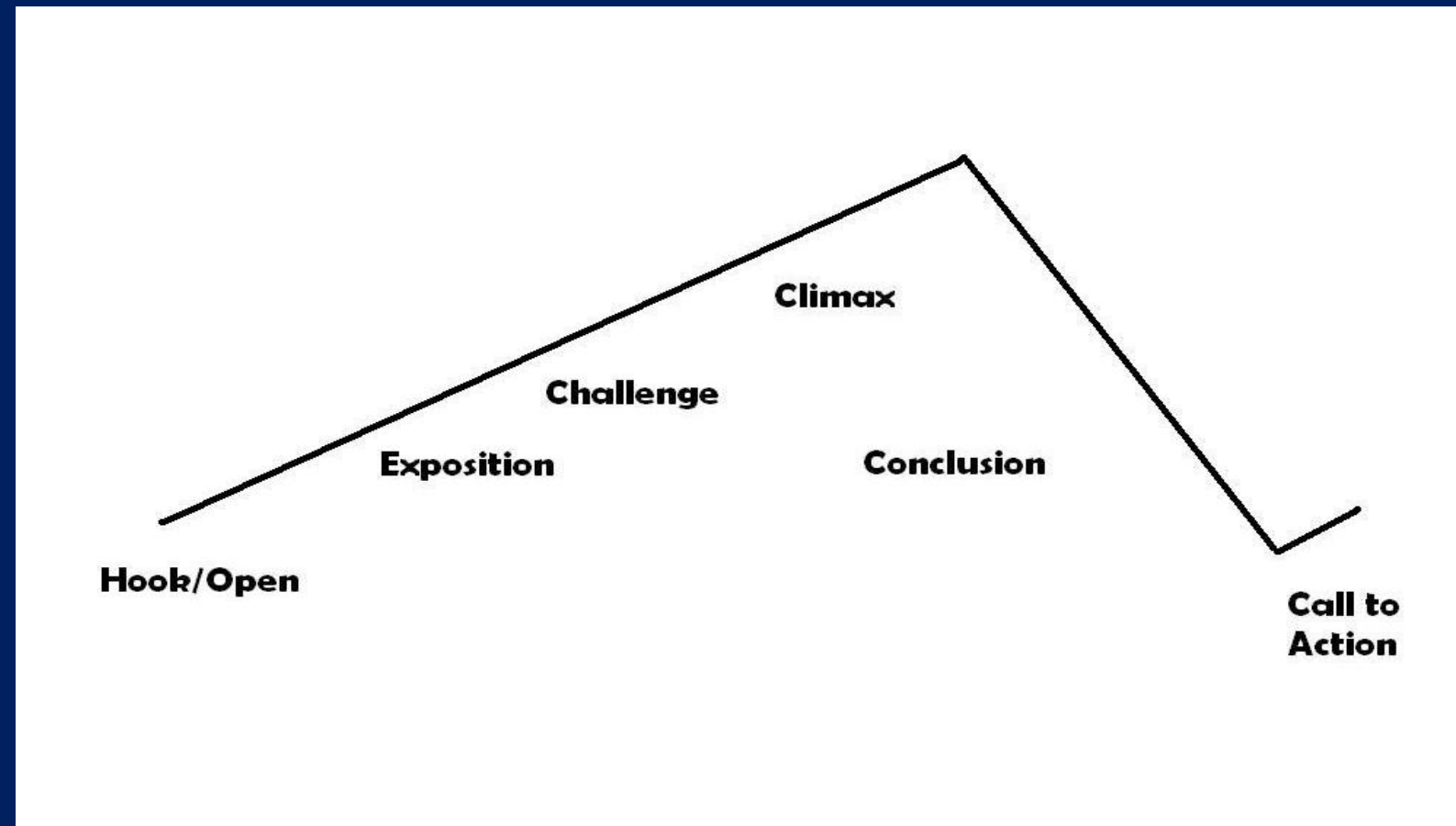
1. How will people **connect** with this story?
  - What audio and visual information will they need?
  - What background on the subject?
2. Who is the **primary** audience?
  - What information (or misinformation) do they already have?
3. What's the **turning point** in this story?
  - What is the challenge to be overcome and how?
4. What's the **point of view**?
  - Does the interviewee stand in for the audience?
  - Do they offer a new perspective?
  - Are there multiple interviewees with different vantage points on the same story? Or opposing stories?

# Story Arc





# Liz's Story Arc



- What theme is established in her opening hook?
- What key elements in exposition?
- Is there a secondary exposition? Why?
- What is the central challenge?
- What's the turning point/solution?
- What ending theme links back to the hook?
- Is there a CTA?

# Interview Preparation

# Preparation is Key

- Prepare Yourself
- Prepare Your Interviewee
- Fix it in Production

# Creative Brief

- Goals
- Audience
- Target Length
- Main Character(s)
- Key Scenes and Settings
- Style and POV
  - Mood boards
  - Story boards
- Schedule
- Budget
- Approvals





# Technical Brief

- Delivery specs
  - Audio: Speakers, headphones or live event?
  - Video: Projection, mobile or desktop?
- Shooting specs
  - Frame rate
  - 1080, 4K, 6K
  - Need to “punch in” from 4K to 2K?
- Other considerations?
  - Room for captioning/translations?
  - Alternate versions/delivery specs?



# Creative & Tech Brief Templates





Multiple documents are scattered on a wooden floor, many featuring the name "AMY D" written in blue ink. The documents include:

- Meeting Notes:** Several pages with typed text and handwritten notes, some containing bullet points and dates.
- Event Schedule:** A document titled "SUNDAY" with a table listing activities and locations.
 

TIME	LOCATION	REGION	DEMOGRAPHICS	CONTACT
11:00AM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
11:30AM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
12:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
12:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
1:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
1:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
2:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
2:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
3:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
3:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
4:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
4:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
5:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
5:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
6:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
6:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
7:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
7:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
8:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
8:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
9:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
9:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
10:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
10:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
11:00PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
11:30PM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
12:00AM	Eden and South (Lightman, Kara Lightman, and Kara Lightman)	MID-ATLANTIC	Eden and South	Eden and South eden@lightman.com
- Meeting Agenda:** A document listing topics for a meeting, including "APAC POC", "APAC POC", "APAC POC", and "APAC POC".
- Meeting Description:** A document titled "DESCRIPTION" providing details about a meeting, including the name "Arndt Lampert and Family" and contact information.

# Preparing Yourself to Interview

## Research

- Prior interviews, podcasts, speeches
- Potential stories
- Minefields
- Gatekeepers
- Stakeholders

## Refine & Review

- Story Arc
- Back story
- Turning point
- Outcome
- Themes
- Versions
- The One Big Thing

# Pre-Interview

- Learn the **story arc**
- **Connect** in person before on-set
- Tell them **why** you want their story
- Identify crucial story **elements**
  - Key anecdotes
  - Sounds/Music styles
  - Locations
  - Existing assets
  - Other characters



# Other Ways to Get to Know Your Interviewee

- Talk to “validators”: colleagues, spouse, friends
- Read articles, blogs, book summaries
- Social media channels
- Watch other recordings, interviews, YouTube videos
  - Cues for learning styles

# From Pre-Interview and/or Research

## Asset List

- Visuals to support story
  - Existing photos/video
  - Archival or stock needed
  - B-roll of the interviewee
- Audio to support story
  - Sync sound
  - Foley sound
  - Music ideas
- Locations
  - Places to scout if you can

## Story Arc

- Opening Hook ideas
- Back Story/Exposition
- Turning Point/Challenge
- Resolution
- Framing of CTA, if any

# Shooting Script

1.	XXXX footage and interview	We hear the sounds of the cattle and ranchers, and the voice of XXXX over footage of him working, before we see his interview shot: "I'm a third generation Acoma farmer and rancher."
2.	Ranch hands and XXXX with the cattle, signage, etc.	XXXX talks about how he has 17,000 acres, and took over the ranch in 2008
3.		Sound up of XXXX showing us one of the fields on the ranch
4.	XXXX shows us around the ranch and their water resource projects, such as the 5 livestock troughs and 2 livestock water storages, 2 Solar Pumps, and 4 livestock pipelines	XXXX interview – he continues, speaking about how adapting ranching techniques from generations before has helped him to make a profit with the cattle business, and what it means to be a "hybrid" rancher facing the water management and sustainability challenges of the present moment in ranching
5.	photos of him presenting at the USDA Council for Native American Farming, shots of his Outstanding Ranchers of the Year Award	XXXX speaks about how he doesn't just ranch for his own living, but also works to help other native American ranchers and farmers through work with the US Department of Agriculture
6.	XXXX in the fire house (if at all possible, we will try to get footage while there for our shoot, or get him to take some photos/footage with his phone, worst case)	XXXX talks about being involved in his community as a volunteer firefighter, what it involves, and why he loves that job, too.
7.	Final shots of XXXX on the ranch	XXXX closing soundbite about how he has learned from ranchers in Mexico, and thinks it is important to exchange information and best practices across nations and countries

Helps you think through...

- Story arc
- Scenes
- Transitions
- Audio story
- Music ideas
- Themes for questions





1.	XXXX footage and interview	We hear the sounds of the cattle and ranchers, and the voice of XXXX over footage of him working, before we see his interview shot: "I'm a third generation Acoma farmer and rancher."
2.	Ranch hands and XXXX with the cattle, signage, etc.	XXXX talks about how he has 17,000 acres, and took over the ranch in 2008
3.		Sound up of XXXX showing us one of the fields on the ranch
4.	XXXX shows us around the ranch and their water resource projects, such as the 5 livestock troughs and 2 livestock water storages, 2 Solar Pumps, and 4 livestock pipelines	XXXX interview – he continues, speaking about how adapting ranching techniques from generations before has helped him to make a profit with the cattle business, and what it means to be a "hybrid" rancher facing the water management and sustainability challenges of the present moment in ranching
5.	photos of him presenting at the USDA Council for Native American Farming, shots of his Outstanding Ranchers of the Year Award	XXXX speaks about how he doesn't just ranch for his own living, but also works to help other native American ranchers and farmers through work with the US Department of Agriculture

**And yet...Don't over-prepare**



# Prepare Subject

1. Content
2. Appearance
3. Gear



# Content

- You're the expert
- We want you to look and sound your best
- Don't over-prepare
  - Share themes and reminders about anecdotes
  - Avoid sending specific questions in advance

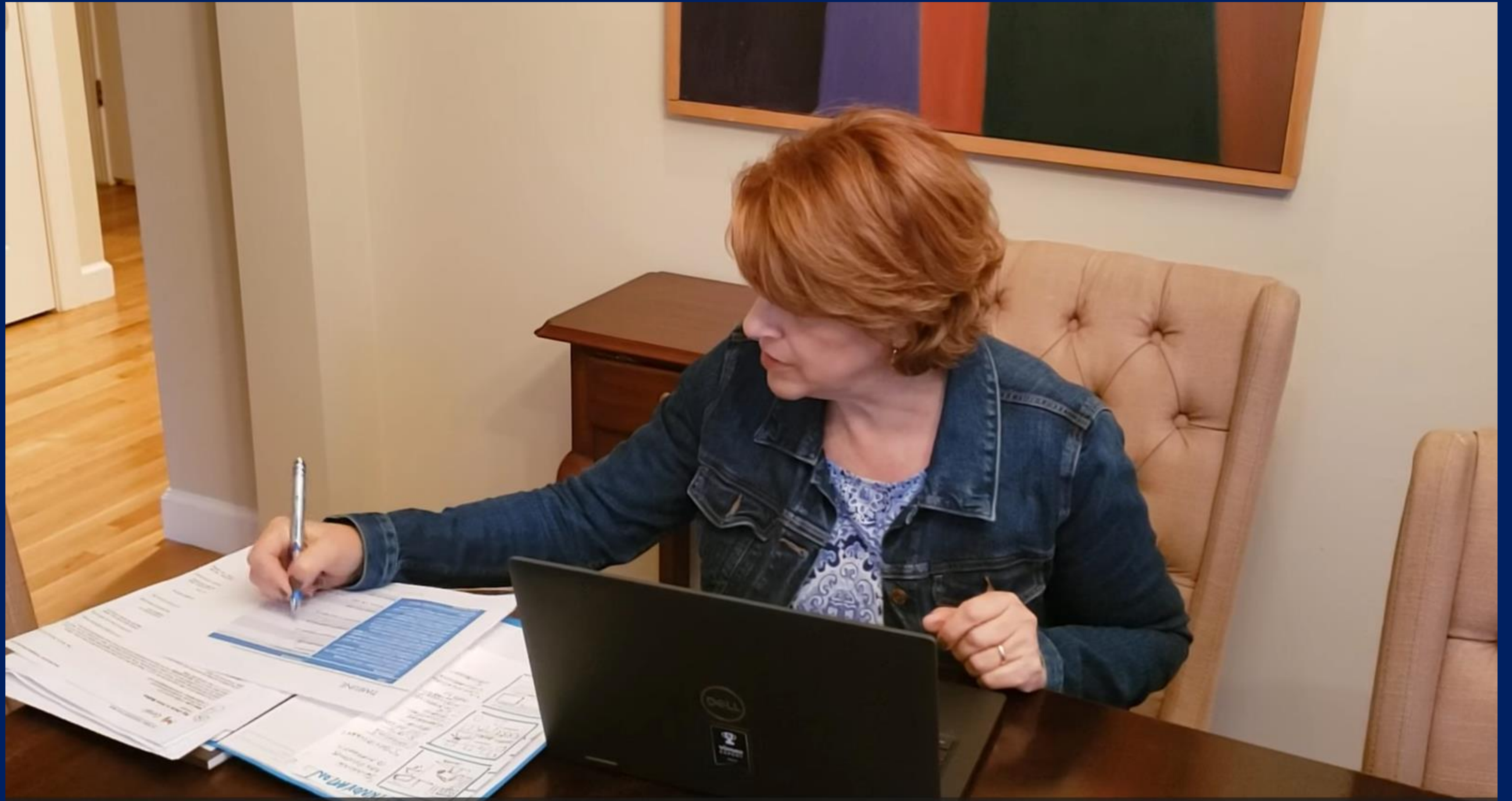


# Appearance

- Send in writing
  - repeat 24 hours before shoot!
- Personal grooming
  - Men may need to shave closer to “go time”
  - Women do own makeup/hair and you’ll just touch up
- Ask for multiple options
  - Includes extra ties, tops, scarves, jackets



# Day of Interview Prep











# Hide Gear/Crew

- When possible, keep crew out of eye line
- Have a Conversation
- If you're relaxed, interviewee will relax
- Don't look at your notes if possible
  - Discreet floor monitor
- Keep guests out of interviewee eye line
  - Off set monitor





# Leveraging Sound

# Four Roles of Sound

1. Delivers information
2. Reveals human characters
3. Elicits emotions
4. Cues about place/context

# Scouting Includes Sound

- Plan ahead for obstacles
  - Sirens
  - Busy times of day
  - Indoor noise that can distract (when does the cleaning crew come?)
  - Parking, load-in, staging area for gear
  - Location permits and permissions
- If you can't scout, use digital tools
  - Websites
  - Flickr
  - Google Map street view
  - OpenStreetMap
  - Foursquare
  - LightTrac



# Build Shoot Schedule with Lighting, Picture **AND Sound** in Mind

TEMPLATE FOR TIME OF DAY AUDIO PLANNING

Location	Optimal Lighting Times of Day	Bad Audio Times of Day (for Sync Sound)	Best Audio Times of Day (for Sync Sound)	Wild Sound Times of Day	Notes/Decisions
Woods	Afternoon light is best	Morning—birds very loud	Mid-afternoon	Bird calls pickups in AM?	
School	Mixed lighting—east side classrooms nicest	Bus drop-offs 8AM Bus pickups 2:30PM	9AM-2PM	Could do sports fields pickups in afternoon	
Home	Early afternoon	Dinnertime (unless we decide to shoot a meal)	1-2PM before school pickup	Could get dog barking, various family sounds early am?	



photo credit Kevin Wolf, from DeLouise *Nonfiction Sound & Story*

**Use sound and mixed environments to  
deliver texture, personality and context**



**Mic 'em up!**



**WARNING** **RESTRAINTS** **AIRBAGS**  
Always Use Proper Buckle Technique  
Do Not Drink and Drive  
Do Not Use Alcohol or Drugs  
Do Not Use Cell Phone While Driving









**Authenticity**

# Tip: Discover Learning Styles

1. Visual – can give you great visual examples
2. Auditory – conceptual thinker; wants to review questions on a Zoom call, hear them aloud
3. Kinesthetic – learns by doing; can walk you through a process

**GETTING BETTER ANSWERS**

# Nervous Speaker Technique

1. Get them to share a more personal anecdote
  - Why did you decide to become an engineer?  
What do you love about it?
2. Do b-roll first and let them walk-and-talk
  - Sit down interview after they've gotten used to you and the crew
3. Worst case, let them take a break, go do some emails, come back in 20 minutes

# The Contradict Me Technique

1. Some speakers are very reserved
2. They will not show emotion unless they feel they need to correct your misunderstanding
3. Then they can get very passionate!

# The Shorter Answer Technique

1. Some speakers have a LOT to say
2. Let them get it out of their system
3. Then ask “if a student was trying to understand this process...”

# Two “Do-Over” Techniques

1. The part about *X* was really great. But we had a little bit of noise, do you mind if I ask you that one more time?
2. Lean in as if you didn't quite hear the answer, and they will repeat it. (Only works for the last part of what they said.)



# The Finish My Sentence Technique

1. When all else fails...
2. Can you finish this sentence: “The biggest value we bring at ABC Company is...”

# Challenging Interview Situations

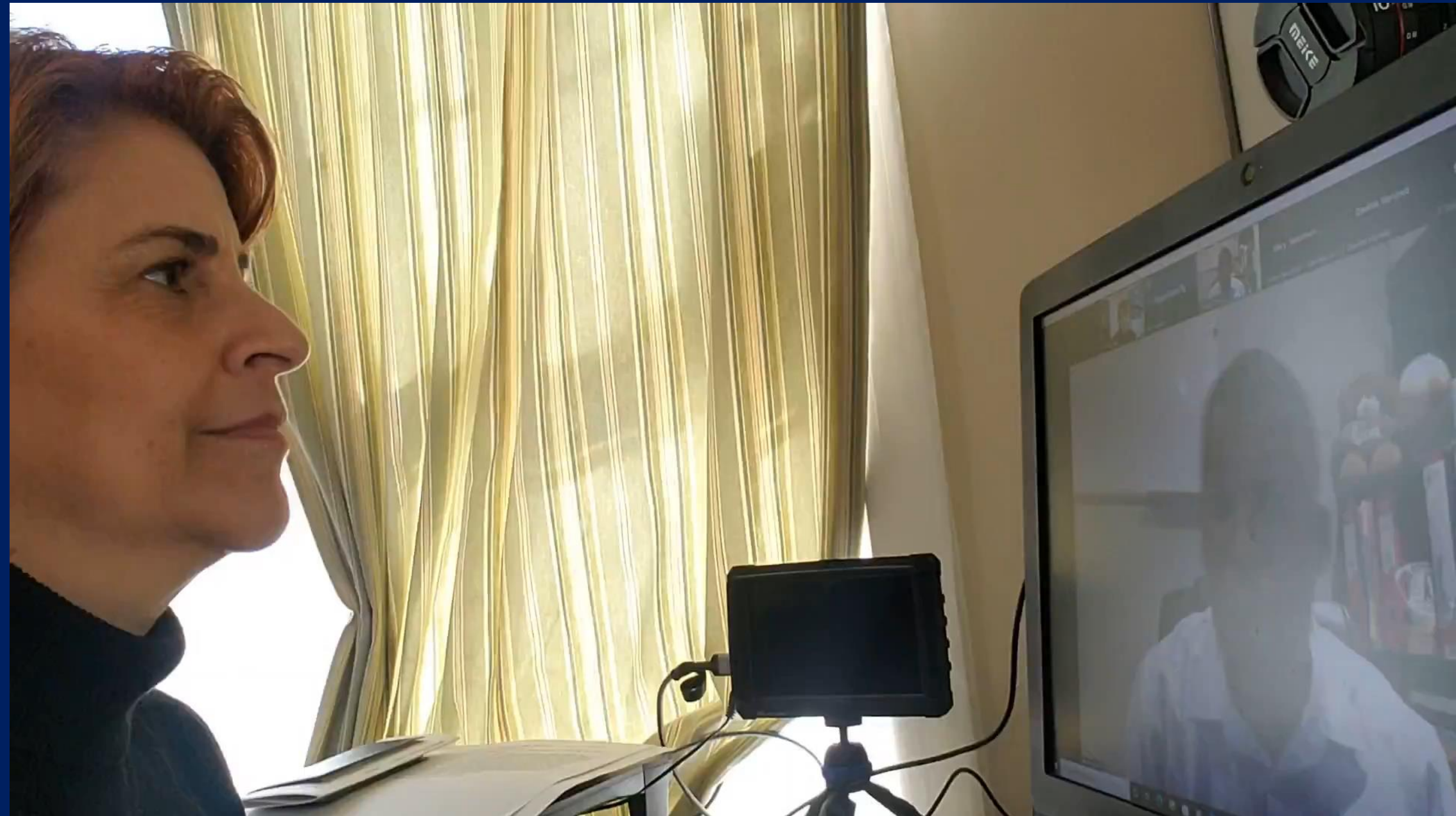
# Experts/Limited Time

- Build rapport during release-signing or walk to “set”
- No more than 4 questions
  - Your turning point/crux question is one of them
- 2-cam setup
- If they give a thesis ask
  - “For laypeople...”
- Keep handlers out if you can
- Big picture wrap-up
  - “What’s the **one thing**?”



# Remote (Ugh)

- Your face and head nods have to be **EXTRA** responsive to provide positive feedback!



# Pairs

- Get to know their style together
- Signal who goes first on an answer
- Position one camera for a 2-shot and second camera for “chase” shots
- If only 1 cam, cue who should answer first



# Wrapping Up

- Develop story arc
- Prepare yourself & your subject
- Be a Coach not a Director
- Know learning styles
- Anticipate challenges
- Authentic storytelling with Impact is the goal!

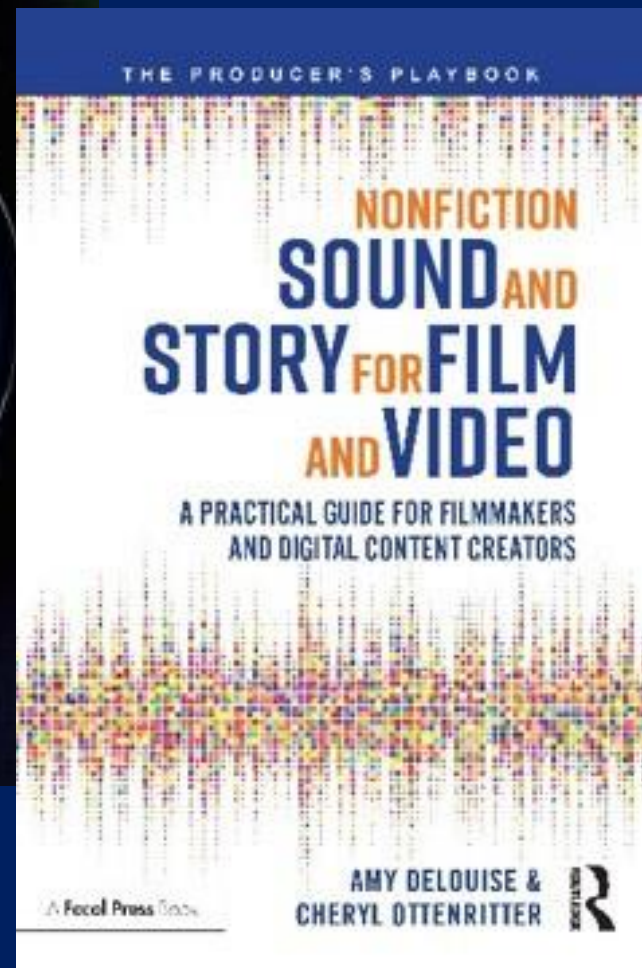
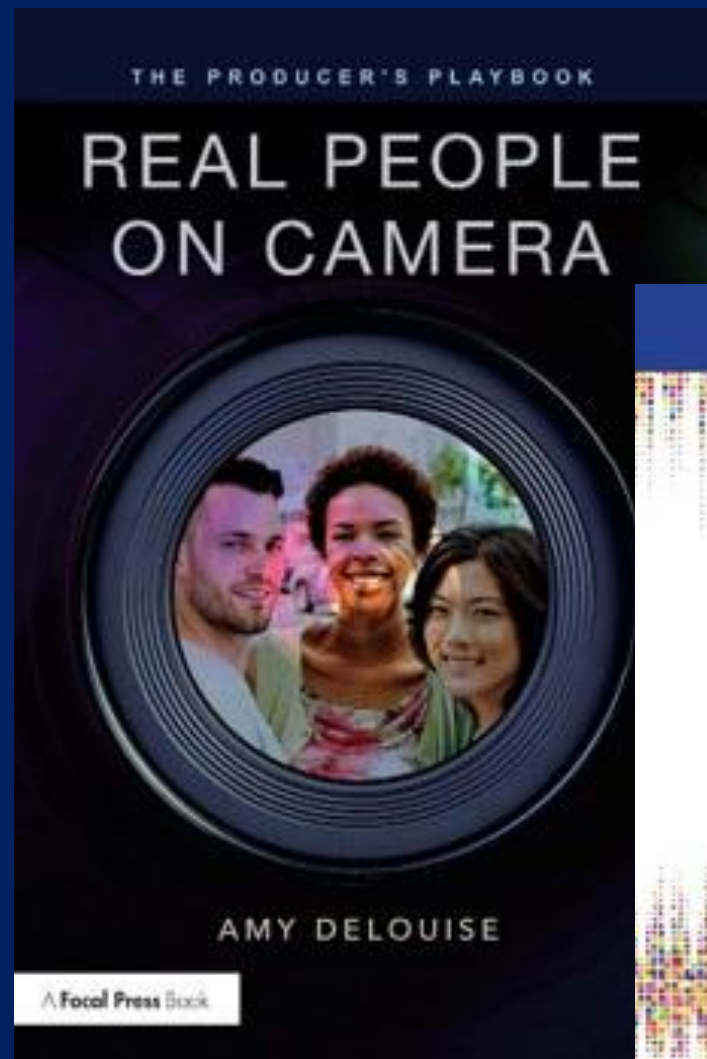






Routledge  
Taylor & Francis Group

# LinkedIn Learning



[WWW.AMYDELOUISE.COM](http://WWW.AMYDELOUISE.COM)



# Amy DeLouise

Thank you! Let's Connect



**My Slides**



**My Links**



We hope you enjoyed this session.

Please be sure to **fill out your attendee evaluations** which provide us with valuable insights to improve future conferences!

Please hand them to your room monitor at the end of each day to enter the raffle prize draw.