

PRODUCTION EXAMPLES

In this section I'll show you several ways I've set up productions for specific needs. Whether using an iPhone or conducting a remote interview, make sure you keep in mind the main ideas about audio, lighting, and positioning.

Shooting with an iPhone

The worldwide popularity of smartphones—especially the iPhone—has created havoc in camera-land. More and more folks are turning to their smartphones for their everyday still and video chores and leaving often better-performing cameras at home.

Why not? The iPhone 4S, in particular, does a great job. And one is always available—because it's just about the most popular device on the planet. Plus, you can easily obtain anything you need to augment it, including microphones, lights, etc.

I'm certainly expecting many of you *Video Nation* readers to use the techniques explained here with the iPhone. I've shot many of my *USA TODAY* videos with the iPhone, and in good light, the results have been terrific.

Here's how I married an iPhone with a digital SLR for a recent *USA TODAY* video, featuring the folks from the Flipboard iPad app, who came to visit me in my Manhattan Beach garage studio.

Flipboard was originally available only for the iPad. But for this visit, Flipboard was debuting a version for the iPhone, so it just seemed most appropriate to shoot it with—what else?—the iPhone.

I used the iPhone to focus on Mike McCue, the CEO of Flipboard, along with a Sony A77 to show the two of us interacting. I sat Mike on a stool in front of a photographic backdrop and put a wireless microphone on him (*Figure 6.19*).

I opened the blinds to let in some daylight, turned on my LED light, and positioned it to light him. It was too bright, and with the iPhone, there was no way to adjust the exposure on the camera. (I didn't yet know about apps that would do that for me.) So I kept moving the light back until I got it right.

Figure 6.19 Flipboard CEO Mike McCue gets the one-man band setup.





The iPhone was in a tripod holder on a tripod, and the Sony was on a second tripod to get the shots of Mike showing me the iPhone app. I asked Mike's wife, Marci, to stand behind the A77 and help me out, making sure we all stayed in the frame and in focus.

We began the interview with me directly in front of Mike, visible in the Sony camera frame. Mike looked directly at me, making good eye contact. I asked him the obvious questions—about the new app, what new features he added to Flipboard with this release, and how many people use Flipboard.

After about five minutes, I was more than satisfied with the replies. All I really needed was a minute-and-a-half to two minutes for a quick video showing off the new app.

For some B-roll footage, I yanked the iPhone off the tripod to get shots of the app in action. I stuck the iPhone into an Owle Bubo (now called ALM mCAMLite), a rig described in Chapter 3 that helps you steady the shot. Then I came in close to Mike's iPhone as he flipped pages across the screen.

In editing, I put the piece together, including narration, the B-roll, and video of Flipboard that I pulled from its website. After adding opening and closing credits, I had an (almost) quick one-camera shoot with just a little help, recorded in less than ten minutes that required less than an hour to edit. And it looked great.

Interviewing and Collecting B-roll on Location

Let's say you're doing a video interview at a local bookstore. You're writing for a local blog and want to meet the women who operates the local independent book shop, fighting to stay in business in a recessionary era that's gone digital. You decide they should be either at the counter or in the middle of the store, with books visible everywhere you look.

I dropped by my local bookstore in Manhattan Beach, called {pages}, to illustrate where the owners—Margot Farris, Linda McLoughlin Figel, and Patty Gibson—should be positioned (*Figure 6.20*). I also snapped a bunch of photos at {pages} to show the type of B-roll cutaway shots that would be helpful to give the feeling