

This document was compiled from several posts made on facebook about heading back to set in the world of Covid. These are not the words of an expert or a scientist but rather a crew person with years of experience who is interested in how we can move forward safely. Feel free to share this if you think it can help.

**Day 1** Back, Pre-light (warning this is gonna be long)-



Woke up and went onto the studio lot link to answer a few questions (do I have symptoms, have I been in contact with anyone, have I been tested, etc). Got the greenlight screen for the day and took a screen shot to show at work.

Opened the 3rd party app that our show is using and answered similar questions letting them know that I don't pose a risk.

Arrived at the lot at 8 AM. Had to show the screenshot to get into parking, again to get my pass, and again to pass through security. Went to a stage where my temp was taken and I was given a sticker to show that I had been screened and an arm band that shows that I am in Zone A. Throughout the day there are separate areas, bathrooms, places to sit for crafty, and lines for Zone A and Zone B in an effort to keep people apart. Zone A is anyone who may encounter the actors. Zone B is everyone else on set.

Headed back out to parking to grab my car because as a steadicam op I needed to drop my gear. Pulled onto the lot and showed my pass and screenshot so they knew I was clear, dropped gear and parked again.

Headed back to the stage to start building gear and then at 9 AM went back to the original check in stage to get tested for Covid for the day. They are doing 2 tests on Monday Wed and Fri and one test on Tues and Thurs (so 8 a week), basically being way over protective (which I am fine with). Nasal swabs (relatively non invasive). The first is the Abbott test, which is done on site and comes back in 90 minutes. 80% accuracy. The second is sent out and cultured over a few days and offers 95% accuracy. Basically they aren't screwing around. The tech mentioned that statistically 2 out of every 10 tests will come back negative when it is actually positive but that through repeated testing that chance is greatly diminished. Makes sense to me and I get why they are being so precautious.

After testing I head straight back to our stage. The idea is that I'm clean because of my previous test and that once I hear back about this mornings test I'll be clean for the next 24 hours, so I'm able to go back to work. 90 minutes later I get a text that tells me that I am negative and that the info has also been shared with the office. BTW, I was tested on Thursday and Friday and we were told that if we tested positive we would not be working on this show (and yes, we were paid for our time).

We slowly finish building cameras and getting things into the set. Today is really a pre-light kick the tires day - it's smart and shows that the producers recognize that there is going to be a learning curve. Green zone workers are wearing KN95 masks all the time. I was told by the expert they hired that N95s are the gold standard and that KN95s are Korean knockoffs that are just a step below but more than effective -

the only reason we use them is because the N95s are saved for front-line responders. We aren't working with actors today (meaning people who don't have masks on) so it's only the KN95s but tomorrow we will be wearing KN95s and shields when anywhere around the actors.

Only two people on the camera truck at the same time. While this seems daunting it really isn't much of an issue. Most of us are in the same pod and interact somewhat and we just keep track of who is where. Occasionally there are three on there for a minute. Doors are all open and air is flowing. 6 feet 10 minutes. 6 feet ten minutes. That's the key.

Truthfully work sort of starts to take off like it usually does. We keep our distance but interact when necessary. People are careful but not always and occasionally there are reminders. The zone system is not really as much of a thing today because no actors but the pod system that has been discussed seems sort of non existent (more on that later). Everyone is doing what they normally do to an extent just a little slower and with a little more effort. If anything the set is much quieter than normal which honestly I think is kind of nice.

Crafty is outside and roped off with an attendant inside. You ask for what you'd like and they hand it over. Single tables are set up nearby under open tents where you can sit socially distanced and have your coffee etc. It works fine but I have to wonder how a studio lot could do this when working at full capacity. There simply isn't enough room. One positive note is that having to ask someone for everything makes you more conscious of the crap you are eating, so there is that.

One thing that I notice quickly, which is no surprise, is that talking through the masks takes a physical and mental toll. It's really important to think about that, limit small talk and take breaks outside for both water and more importantly, air. Stepping away by ten feet from the group it's fine to sit down and take your mask off. As I've said elsewhere figure out how to keep your glasses from fogging up, work out your mask wearing and shield wearing, get used to things while gardening long before you come on set. Every little annoyance becomes a huge one by hour ten and trust me they add up.

We work for the day, break for an hour walk away (the commissary is open for orders) and then at about 9 hours have a meeting with the producers, AD, and most importantly, the specialist that was hired to look at how things are being done. This is a genius move in my opinion.

Some things that I learned about the new set world we live in today.

- Everything is about 6 feet and ten minutes. They use ten instead of 15 to err on the side of caution. Obviously 6 feet plus is always best but they realize we can't all do this.
- There are all sorts of pods listed (I'm in the camera pod) and it's understood that some pods will have to interact with others (when shooting I will interact with the Directors pod which includes the actors). The pods are really all about contact tracing and limiting exposure. Exposure is considered less than 6 feet for more than 10 mins. So the idea is I may very likely have to break that rule with someone in my

pod but I hopefully won't have to with someone outside my pod. Why? Because according to CA state law, if I come down with Covid, everyone I have come into contact with (less than 6 ft for more than 10 mins) has to quarantine for ten days, no questions asked. No testing out, nothing. Mandatory. So the pod system is about limiting the collateral damage should someone get sick.

- Safety comes down to three things - hygiene, PPE and distance. There is no reason to believe that with those three things in place anyone should be catching anything from anyone else.
- Ventilation is key and one of the things that was discussed was the importance of outside air vs canned recycled air. They had already inspected our systems on stage and were told that they had MERV 13 filters in place. They found out that there were MERV 10s and had them replaced and also that the systems can be vented with 100% outside air, which helps a great deal. They also said that the fact that we are in a huge sound stage helps because a lot of this is about the volume of the air that can circulate. We have open sets, no ceilings, so it's not as much of an issue. He cited another show that had closed ceiling sets and said that even though they are on a sound stage with a high ceiling, the sets themselves were key to the question of air quality as people are still inside a box.
- Folks with facial hair are going to have to take one for the team. As expected it was explained that with facial hair you can't make a good seal with your KN95 so it has to go. The doc we are working with explained it like a scuba mask and having hair caught in it. The seal is broken, so water streams in. Same goes for air and the virus. It sucks for those who have facial hair they have been grooming for years but sadly it's the luck of the draw and safety should be the first order.
- Water breaks - as I mentioned, getting air and water when wearing these masks is key (we are interior, I can't imagine what exterior Atlanta must be like) and stepping off set is the best way to go. However, if that is impossible due to circumstances, there are two designated areas on set where people can pull down their masks and have some water, with signage explaining that we need to be 10 feet apart.
- Actors coming and going - There are green arrows on the floor that the actors will be walked in on and due to them not having full PPE on like we do, we are alerted when they are coming to set and are to keep clear of this path. Less than a ten minute break means they are taken to a closed area on the set and more means they go directly back to their trailers.
- Entrances and exits on stage - doors are marked as entrance/exit, one way only to direct flow of traffic. Beyond "first day trying to figure it out" I found that most people respected these signs and there was no instance I saw where two people were going through an entrance/exit in opposite directions. We shall see how this works as we get into shooting and everyone starts to move fast.

Considering all the testing and considering that we are the only gig on the lot, I have to say I feel safer on set than I do at the grocery store. Tomorrow is an 8 AM call with a 30 minute precall for testing. Single test tomorrow. I'm guessing that there

will certainly be hiccups and there will be a learning curve but I have to say that seeing what I saw today I have more confidence that we can pull this off safely. I should note that I didn't see anyone not adhering to the mask policy and we were told that the consultant was impressed with the level of adherence that he does not see in other settings. Good to know.

One final note, I asked him if he thought we'd be doing this a year from now. He said he didn't think so because we are already seeing so many positive things coming from the vaccine side of things. While he admitted it could go either way he pointed out that six months in we have a 90 minute test that is 80% accurate and how impressive that was. I'm still assuming this is a long haul situation but I have to be honest, it's nice to hear that from someone who knows what they are talking about.



**Day 2** (well really day 1 back to full production...and yes, this will be long too).

Woke up and did my studio online check in and the third party app check in. By now it's second nature and I don't even really think about it beyond trying to remember where I left the thermometer the day

before (doh).

Drove to the studio, checked in with my screenshot showing I cleared the apps, and headed to get my temp checked again and nasal swab. This was 30 minutes before call using my pre-call, so yes, it's on the clock. Checking in and getting swabbed took about 15 minutes tops. Not sure if it's because people are staggered or what but it seems like they have streamlined things. Nice.

Headed to work. Unlike yesterday there is a catered breakfast. Tables set up with clear shields and the food crew behind. Order what you want and they give it to you to go. No contact. A crazy amount of waste and packaging. Same system is set up for lunch which is a walking lunch due to the 10 hour day.

The day started relatively normally and people pretty much know what they are doing Covid wise. There is no orchestrated "camera comes in, camera steps out, electricians come in, electricians step out" but most people are aware of others and at the same time there is recognition that we are going to have to interact to do our jobs. If we were on smaller set I suspect this would be different. Part of what makes this ok is our testing (extremely limited likelihood that Covid is even on set) and part is due to us all wearing KN95s and doing so without taking them off (if someone had Covid they would not be spreading it). No huge hiccups but basically the day started to move forward and people did what they do.

Announcements are made when actors are coming to stage and space is made but at the same time, people interact as they need too. Any non-essentials are asked to leave to decrease the numbers on set. Hair and makeup do last looks (wearing PPE and masks to protect themselves), wardrobe comes in with lint rollers, ya know, the stuff we are used to.

A fair amount of the camera work was done off the dolly with a remote head, which I suspect is going to become more and more of the norm.

Everyone on set is wearing a KN95 as we did yesterday but with the exception that now that we have actors on set, who aren't necessarily in PPE, we need to have faceshields on anytime we interact with them or come near them. This of course is for our protection. They are protected by our KN95s and we need to make sure that we are protected more because they are not in full PPE. So KN95s all the time and face shields when interacting with actors. Other shows protocols may be different of course.

We have outside tents set up for wardrobe, fittings, etc, as outside air is your friend. Makeup trailers are still a thing, but limited people in there at a single time and doors open. Lots of touch ups are done out in the open air.

There are two areas for Zone A and Zone B workers to be when they don't need to be on set. One has a monitor that at the moment is not working but I believe the idea is that a witness cam will feed that monitor so people can keep an eye on what is going on on set. Bottom line, less people on set is better, so if you don't need to be there, don't be.

We have our own mobile bathrooms, divided into Zone A and Zone B bathrooms. This is so we are not potentially getting virus from people outside the production. There are single station hand sanitizers everywhere including each entrance and exit that are touchless, and there are 4 or so full hand washing stations set up (could be more now that I think of it).

BTW, because I've been asked, start paperwork and timecards are all digital. I haven't touched a piece of paper since I started and there are no sides to speak of. Also, someone asked me if the dolly grip was in my pod and the answer is yes, because we work in close proximity so we would be in the same pod.

Other stuff:

I had a conversation with our Covid Compliance officer and she admitted that the whole thing is a bit of a wild wild west. The company she works for has some pretty serious requirements for someone to be a Covid officer but there is no standard right now. Perhaps this will come out of bargaining but bottom line, ask people what their qualifications are and know what you are talking about yourself. Don't assume that the Covid officer is qualified until you have ascertained that they are. At least for now anyway.

I learned a great deal by talking with our medical consultant, a third party hire who is overseeing what we are doing and making sure we are being smart. He explained a ton of stuff to me and really put it into perspective. I'm going to explain this in my laymens terms so here goes but please know, I'm not a doc and was a bad science student, so do your own research.

Generally speaking a person will get sick when they have been exposed to 1000 particles of the virus (yeah i'm saying that wrong but you get the idea - it's based on the info they have from the Sars and MERS virus). This is why the 6 ft 10 min rule is important. Lets say someone is sick and is exposing me for a few minutes. I get exposed to 500 particles and they walk away. Immediately my body is fighting back, I'm washing my hands, the wind is blowing, whatever, and that viral load starts to

drop. If a few hours later I'm down to 200 particles and he comes back and hits me with 500 more, I'm still below the threshold. But of course on our set, we are wearing KN95s so I'm not getting exposed to anything coming from him anyway. So it's a model to follow, not hard and fast, especially because there are so many factors. Are we inside, are we outside in the wind, is he screaming, is he whispering, does he have a mask on, and on and on. So the idea is, limit that type of exposure through distance and time and if someone is sick and if they aren't wearing a mask, you limit your chances of getting sick.

Now we get to testing. If I get hit with 1000 of these little guys I can get sick. But I'm not contagious yet. It generally takes 36 to 48 hours for me to become contagious as the virus builds in my body and starts to shed, mostly through exhalation. **This is why daily testing with quick turn around is so important.** I can be sick for two days before I become infectious and another few days before I know, so there is a grace period of sorts before I become a problem.

Monday is our Achilles heal. Lets say someone goes out Friday night and gets sick. By Monday morning when they show to work they will probably not know they are sick (symptoms are generally 4 to 5 days out) but they can infect someone else. So they come in, get tested and go to work for 90 minutes. By the time they get their results they could have interacted with people and this is why keeping to the pods is important. The docs know who to check right off the bat and see how much interaction there was. If there was nothing inside of 6 ft/10 mins, than they keep an eye on them but move forward. If yes, you get to go home for ten days.

But now lets look at Tuesday. I come in on Tuesday AM and test positive. I've been with the crew for 90 minutes when I find out, but they know I was negative on Monday so they know I became infected during the last 24 hours. As such I'm most likely not infectious. They still take precautions but they can breath a little easier. So you can see the problem with only testing once a week or using tests that take 3 to 4 days to come back.

Our producers are doing this right and as a result, with the added KN95s, we are hopefully in very little danger. We still take precautions but if a grip has to hand me the camera, so be it, and if makeup needs to touch up an actor, same. Precautions are key but at the heart of it all is testing. We all protect eachother and as a result we all stay safe. If we need to interact closely, we increase our PPE.

Apparently nasal swabs are not all the same. We get mid nasal swabs, so it's only going in a little. There are deeper ones and then the ones that scratch your gray matter too. Each depends on what test it is being used for, which explains why in the past I've had horrible ones and these aren't as bad. I also wonder what metric is being used to know if people are getting an accurate sample. Hmmm.. Apparently the Abbot test that we are taking can detect as little as 10 particles of the virus (again, saying that wrong), so it's a pretty good indication.

It's clear that there is a big cost involved that many shows will not take on. That said, I think the place to start is on high and am thankful that our producers are so carefully leading the way forward.

One final note, we got a memo telling us that when we arrive we should not roll down our windows but instead hold our screenshots and badges up to the window. The lot guards will place the passes for the day under our windshield wipers and then we can grab them when we park. This was brought to the studio by one of our crew as a way to keep the guards safer. Proof that everyone seems eager to figure this out and all better ways forward are being considered.

Onwards.

### **Day 3** Back to the grind

Checking in before work, temp taking and getting swabbed have now become



routine. I forgot my green wristband and got another but I figure I'd probably forget something most days anyway, so I don't think I can blame that on Covid. It's just me.

Someone asked the other day if we are swabbed while on the clock and the answer is yes, we are. As far as I'm concerned, and IATSE for that matter, if it's

something production requires it's on the clock, sort of in line with our CSATF training. We were told last night that we should be tested at the end of the day today because we had background and they needed to be tested right off the bat. I ended up walking over 90 minutes into the day to get swabbed (2 today since it's Wednesday) and was surprised to receive the results of my quick test 19 mins later (negative, thank you very much).

Today was the first day with BG and of course that represents a new set of issues. I can't really say a ton about what was involved but I was told that all BG were tested upon arrival and then waited until they were cleared before hair/makeup/wardrobe etc. I noticed that there were tents set up outside with 8 ft tables and one person sitting at each table so I suspect they were socially distancing and waiting for results. More on the BG later.

Work started and we had a safety meeting where we were told that we were doing well but that we needed to step up the 6 ft distance, especially around camera. People fall back into habits and start doing their jobs and get back into their old ways. Something else that I have noticed, which is subconscious, is that we have all been so shut in that simply being around all these people makes one want to interact. So years of working one way and just being human are all working against us.

The other announcement that was made really hit home and was very intuitive. It was mentioned that the way we work, and why we are so good at what we do, is that we are constantly standing by to jump in and do our jobs at a moments notice. This is why we are on this job, because we are good at what we do and by definition that means we are always there to jump in and help. But CoVID has changed that. In order to limit people on the set, what is actually needed is for us to NOT be standing around and waiting to do our jobs, in essence, to do the opposite of what we think is

needed to be good at our jobs. We were asked to go against our better judgement and instead of waiting on set to jump in, to wait outside and wait to be called in. That is what is needed now and it makes a lot of sense moving forward. We need to rewire for a new reality and recognize that things have changed. We need to change.

Shooting moved forward pretty normally. Everything takes longer. I can't really put my finger on exactly what but its sort of death by a thousand cuts. It's not one thing, but everything. We've made our days but in fairness those days have been designed to ease us into this (I suspect). I can't see an 8 day tv show working on any level and ADs and producers (as well as writers) are going to need to accept that. Moving fast means mistakes, and mistakes means getting shut down.

Wearing PPE, goggles (instead of a face shield since I'd be near actors who did not have PPE) and my glasses while doing Steadicam is simply not fun. We are on a stage so it's by no means hot, but within minutes my breath was fogging up my goggles and glasses and I couldn't see. I had spent a lot of time working on this and then, right off the bat, I'm doomed. After take 1 the goggles came off, and like that, there go the protocols. Just being honest. To be fair, I only felt ok with this because I still had glasses on, there was only one actor at the time in the scene, and that actor was not speaking so I wasn't as worried and made a calculated decision (also the testing, all the testing). But at the end of the day, if I was honest, I simply didn't want to be the one to hold things up. Like I said, we need to rewire. I spent the rest of the afternoon and evening working on how not to have this happen again and will post what I figure out. Suffice it to say, the amount of heat and moisture coming from my mask, surprised me greatly. One of the quick fixes I found was simply taking camera tape and taping the top of my mask to my face. It worked quite well and I mentioned to our 2nd that I wondered how stupid this made me look. He took the quote of the day by responding in a dry voice, "I think we all left looking stupid a long ways back". Amen to that.

One weird moment was walking into stage from the outside and having that moment where your eyes need to adjust to the darkness (we have a pretty dark set). As my eyes adjusted I realized there were twenty or so people (BG) standing silently 6 to 8 feet apart, all over the floor, doing nothing. It was actually a little disconcerting and sort of Invasion of the Body Snatchers kind of weird. I found out they were waiting to be brought into the scene and this was the best way to deal with socially distancing without moving them all through the set. For those wondering, what they had to do did not involve bunching up in groups so I can't say what would happen if it were a rave scene. I suspect it would require testing for a few days and then PPE until the last minute.

On the 6 ft note, a lot of people have asked and one of the things they do to remind us is have the PAs walk around with a six foot pole that's taped up (think Festivus) with a tennis ball on either end. Occasionally when people are too close they will push it between them and point out what 6 feet is. It's a good reminder and everyone recognizes it's not an admonishment but a request to forget our human nature and be safe.

I've noticed that everything we do takes more effort, not just because of the KN95s but because of the constant mental energy to do things right (that's an exit not an entrance, sit in the A Zone not the B Zone, don't walk through that way the actors are being brought in, I need to clean my goggles but I'm holding the rig and can't ask someone else to do it for me, and on and on). Not complaining, just recognizing.

People have asked me what we are doing about our time off and let's face it, that can't be controlled. We were told in our original zoom safety meeting how important it is that we self govern our interactions during our time off and I am hoping that everyone has taken this to heart. On that note, some thoughts I have had on my own, prior to this show, as I've thought about the return to work. These are of course just my musings but hopefully they resonate.

- No one has the right to get offended at anyone asking you to put your mask on, step a little farther away, or do anything related to COVID safety that they see is lacking. This is too important a time for hurt feelings. Think of it this way, if someone ran a red light you wouldn't wonder if you were going to offend them by saying so. In addition, none of this is political. This is medical, scientific, and humane. This is the new norm for a while, so accept it and move forward.
- Everyone is on edge, both from months of losing money as well as being back to work with all of these rules. Consider how you talk to people about everything and give people the benefit of the doubt. Even just talking through a KN95 to do simple jobs is exhausting and as such everyone can snap. Understand, let it go, and instead of being offended, ask them how they are doing and if there is anything you can do to help. Compassion does not slow us down but it can raise us up.
- People have asked if a producer has to have someone back once they have gotten better if they leave due to Covid. This is certainly a grey area because the producers don't have to hire any specific individual at any time. My two cents, be good at your job so they can't wait to get you back and if you replaced someone for a few weeks, don't ever continue a job if the producers have asked you to stay on after that person can return. Or at the very least, contact the person you replaced. If they don't want back on the show, sure, stay, but if they do, tell the producers that you won't take someone else's job away from them.
- We were told early on that if we believe we are sick we have to stay home until we are cleared (or feeling better if it's not Covid) and we will receive our daily rate for doing so. This is key moving forward because we don't want people coming to work sick because they need to pay the bills.
- Be nice, be understanding, be caring, be concerned, be compassionate, be a brother, be a sister, be a union, be a human being. Take lots of deep breaths and count to ten. My personal feeling is that everyone we run into right now is suffering at least a mild form of PTSD. Uncertainty over jobs, healthcare, retirement plans, paying the rent, not to mention the reality of seeing friends get sick and even losing friends and loved ones without being able to properly grieve has left everyone in a state of mild shock whether we realize it or not. This show is really doing it well so tempers are not flaring but I can see shows coming where money and time are tight and level headed people are not represented the way they are here. In those

instances, as in all, kindness and compassion are going to be needed more than we know. So slow down and check in with the people around you. Anything you can do to make things easier is going to make everything better. You'd be surprised how much a small thing can matter to someone at the end of their rope.

Simply put, be nice...be human.

- Speaking with a stand in today (yes we have stand ins and they are tested as we are), I asked what had changed. She told me that they don't really interact with the actors the way they used to so it's hard to see exactly what they are doing in rehearsals. Quick notes they've been asked to give when they come in are a thing of the past because they are hustled out before the actors come in. I asked about the monitors that are set up for people outside to watch and she pointed out that its hard to get more than a few people in front of those monitors and still social distance. Stand ins generally watch rehearsals and take notes (and as an A Cam/Steadicam op I'll mention that they are an underappreciated godsend to us in the work we do) and not being able to do that she feels worried about being able to do her job well.
- From a camera perspective most of us feel that things are actually not tremendously different. There are the masks, and the annoyance factor, but at the end of the day, lens changes happen, cameras change from head to head, rehearsals happen, steadicam comes in, steadicam goes out. What you notice mostly is that everything is a little slower, a little calmer, a little quieter and while this may not be the best thing to some, it's actually weirdly a welcome return to how things used to be.
- There are one or two people going around disinfecting things like handles, surfaces, etc and you see them working all day (thank them if you see them by the way). I'm not sure what department they fall into. As far as gear it's not the constant cleaning that we all thought it would be. The general feeling from the virologists and immunologists that I have spoken to, as well as the cdc, is that the way most people get this virus is not from surfaces but from person to person contact. As such, I have been told by more than one of them that the better way forward is to concentrate on keeping our hands clean more than the gear. I've seen equipment being wiped down as people get the chance but the rule of thumb I have heard is that if you are keeping your hands clean, and so is everyone else, the gear will stay clean and then the occasional wiping down is icing on the cake. Remember, you don't get this virus by touching it, so you can control the spread by simply keeping your hands clean and away from your face.
- In speaking to some extras I have been told that they were first tested on their fitting day and then again the next day before they work. As I suspected from seeing them sitting alone at tables before work, they do not go to wardrobe or come to set before their second test (the one from that day) is reported.
- More than once I heard people calling out six feet and I personally asked two of our crew members who absent mindedly sat on the tailgate to move apart. It's completely understandable and as the newness of all this wears off, the things we've

been doing year after year start to settle back in. We are fighting science but we are also fighting human nature. That seems to be the tougher of the two to beat. That said, as I've mentioned before, I think our producers are doing this about as right as they can and the rest is up to us. I believe we are slowly coming around. And side note, we've wrapped at 10 hours everyday.

- Checking in and testing seems to have fallen into a routine. I've noticed that some of the swabbers dig a little deeper than others so it's always a moment when you turn the corner into the testing area and see who is there. Got my results back in 15 minutes today, which is astonishing. I suspect that since I am in the Zone A, my test gets moved ahead of anyone in Zone B since I am heading to the deep part of the set. I look at the machines that develop our swabs and wonder how I can steal one and give it to a local school district.

- As I mentioned yesterday, my glasses and goggles killed me with fogging and I came to find out that a number of other members of the camera crew were having the same issue. I brought to work this little cloth I got off a gargantuan online sales site whose name I shall not utter that promised with one wipe to stop it forever. I have no idea what kind of nuclear waste is on that thing but darn it all if it didn't work like gangbusters. We have ordered several more for people (look up anti fog glasses cloth and you'll find them) and have that one sitting on a pedestal in the camera truck, lit and waiting to be used tomorrow. All hail the little lens cleaning cloth for ye make our job that much easier.



My father, when speaking to me about his experiences early in life, once pointed out that bad things are necessary because without them you would never appreciate the good in life. As Dr. King said, without the night you wouldn't be able to see the stars. I considered this today after several hours with my mask on. It's not horrid, and you get used to it, but what really resonates is heading to some deep corner of the lot, taking it off, and breathing in cool unencumbered air (and this is SoCal so that's saying something). It occurred to me that I have been doing this exact thing my entire life and never really realized how wonderful it is. I can't say for a second that I enjoy wearing a KN95 mask all day but I'd be lying if I didn't admit that when I put it on in the morning I get a little psyched knowing that within a little while I'll be able to take it off and re-experience the new found joy of a snoot full of fresh air.

Take it as it comes.

Answering some questions and a note from a mixer working on a set right now. As I've mentioned before, I have no expertise so please do your own research.

Today will most likely be my last post on the subject of getting back to work. I think the information is getting out there and my hope is that others who are working will start to share their experiences so that we can all learn the best way forward. This is key. The producers on our show have set the bar extremely high and for that we are all in their debt, not only for keeping us safe, but for showing others how it can be done. I hope that no one has been upset about me sharing what we are learning and

have hopefully done my best to keep specific details about the show out of the public realm.

This isn't about this show, this is about the industry.

If you want this pandemic to be over, the power is in our hands. This is not rocket science and other countries have proven that. Through mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing, we can kick this virus' butt and move on. Listen to science, educate yourself and others, and follow the simple guidelines we know to keep everybody safe. This will end, the only question is, how much is it going to hurt until it does. This virus will destroy a lot more lives than it stops and we can help keep that number to a minimum. Its up to each of us individually and the sphere of influence we all have. So please, follow the science, do the right thing, and implore others to do the same.

- People have asked me how day players will work and I asked the specialist who was hanging out with us just that question. He said that in the scenario where people are getting tested with quick turn around, a day player could come in, get tested twice (this diminishes the chances of a false negative) and then proceed to work once they are clear. Since they would have their KN95 mask on and tested negative twice, there would be very little likelihood that they would be a threat to the crew. Incidentally, one would think this would apply to union reps who have to visit set as well.
- We were given gentle reminders about social distancing on the weekends which I think was appropriate. There needs to be an understanding that if you go out to a bar and come into work you are not only putting yourself at risk, but everyone else as well. Even if this shoot and others right now succeeds without a sick crew member, eventually the concern is that some show is going to be unable to take the amazing steps this show has, or try to cut corners, and the whole show will go down. The potential for everything to come to a grinding halt would be devastating to the industry and we are all responsible for not allowing that to happen.
- Should we be going back to work when the state numbers are skyrocketing? I think that question is going to have to be answered by everyone individually. I thought long and hard about this and the conclusion that I came to is that if I think we are going to stay out of work until this pandemic has passed I'm out of my mind. This isn't going to be over in a few months and already there are people who are getting evicted. People need to continue earning a living and paying bills to survive so work will resume whether we like it or not. I think it is going to have to be on a case by case basis as far as the shows we work on and each and everyone of us is going to have to speak up when we have concerns. To that end, there are anonymous hotlines that most of the unions and studios have and some even specific to COVID now, so use them. Problems cannot be fixed if they are not identified and it takes all of our vigilance to keep this train rolling. Do your research. Ask a lot of questions.

A friend who is a mixer on a show shared this with me. I thought it was worth sharing since sound crews are involved in getting close to actors as much as anyone.

"This has been an interesting time for the sound dept. We have changed the way we do things mostly to be more careful with sanitizing equipment and the ways we hand things off to other departments. We clean wireless microphone packs and microphones, put them in a ziploc baggie and keep them separated to keep them clean. We are doing the same with Comteks. We sanitize the headset and the pack and then put them in a baggie to be handed off to whoever gets them. Director, script, producer, etc. At the end of the day we then sanitize again and put them back in the baggies to be handed out the next day. Each person gets the same set up every day.

When we have to interact with the actors on set my boom operator wears a face shield as well as the usual mask and sometimes goggles as well. I have a 4 person crew on this show. My boom operator gets tested daily and my 2nd boom/utility does as well. She's tested this much so if she does have to go on set, she's ready. The utility and I both get tested 3 times a week. We are in the "B" zone, just off the set. Because we are not part of the "A" zone which is directly on set, we are not tested as much and all of our tests are the rapid tests. This production has been amazing as far as keeping us safe. There are hand sanitizing stations everywhere. Anytime you touch something you can turn and there is some sanitizer! All in all this set is one of the safest places to be in the city!"

This is a lot of brave new world kind of stuff and as situations come up, call things into your local so they can track them and weigh in on them. Everyone is trying to get us back to work and there is so much stuff to consider that things get lost in the shuffle. So let the reps know what is happening because if they don't, they can't help.

Finally, In case it came off as something else, I am not complaining about the situation at hand. I have work, I am healthy, my family is healthy, I truly have nothing to complain about. Do I miss not having to do all of this? Of course, it's a pain, but a pain I am lucky to have to endure. As to the testing, frankly, it's embarrassing to know that this week I will get 8 tests while teachers who head back to school in August will get none. As with most things, everything comes down to money and in this country at least, our priorities are in the wrong place. I am certainly a part of that scenario and I recognize it, but I also recognize that by stepping out of it nothing will change. It weighs on me though because the only reason we are being tested as much as we are is because money could be lost if we weren't. That's the sad truth. If only we as a society valued our children as much as we did our movie stars.

If only...

Be Safe. Be Heard. Speak Up.

### **Questions to ask:**

Is there a Covid safety officer and what are their qualifications?

Who makes the masks that are being supplied and how can you tell that they are genuine as opposed to knockoffs (NIOSH specifications)? How often should they be replaced?

What company is doing the testing, what is the efficiency of the tests and what is the turn around?

How often is air on set being ventilated/exchanged and have the HVAC Systems and filters been inspected?

What is the sick pay policy so that people do not come to work sick?

How are dayplayers brought in safely?

Is there a zero tolerance policy for not wearing masks/wearing incorrectly, what will happen to those who don't comply, and who will enforce it? Also, does this policy apply to everyone without exception?

What is being done about van rides to and from location? What is the policy on number of people per van and how will that be enforced?

Is there a place with adequate space that people will head to in the event of a lightning strike (for regions where that applies)?

### **Things you'll want to figure out ahead of time:**

If you have glasses get some anti-fog stuff for them, put on a mask and go for a run. You don't want to be fogging up on your first day back.

Get some lip balm that smells nice and fruity. New masks everyday isn't a great smell so putting some on your lips before donning a new mask makes it a bit better.

Get yourself an ear protector for your mask so the straps are on the back/top of your head rather than over your ears.

Figure out a face shield or goggles situation that works for you. Flip up, prescription goggles instead of glasses? Trust me, the less stuff hanging off your head the better.

### **On Compliance Officers**

I don't know the way forward but if Compliance Officers aren't trained, autonomous, and fearless, we won't pull this off on a grand scale. We need to design this system like the safety officers they have in Australia. Covid Compliance Officers need to have medical training, set awareness, CoVid training, and be the type of people who would think nothing of telling a director or actor to leave the set immediately. Finally, they need to have the autonomy and support to be able to pull that off without repercussions or fearing for their future employment. We should want hardcore people in these positions and not settle for anything less.

