



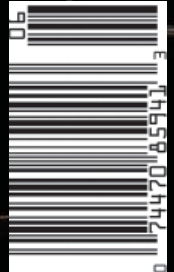
CAMERA OPERATOR

The Journal of the Society of Camera Operators



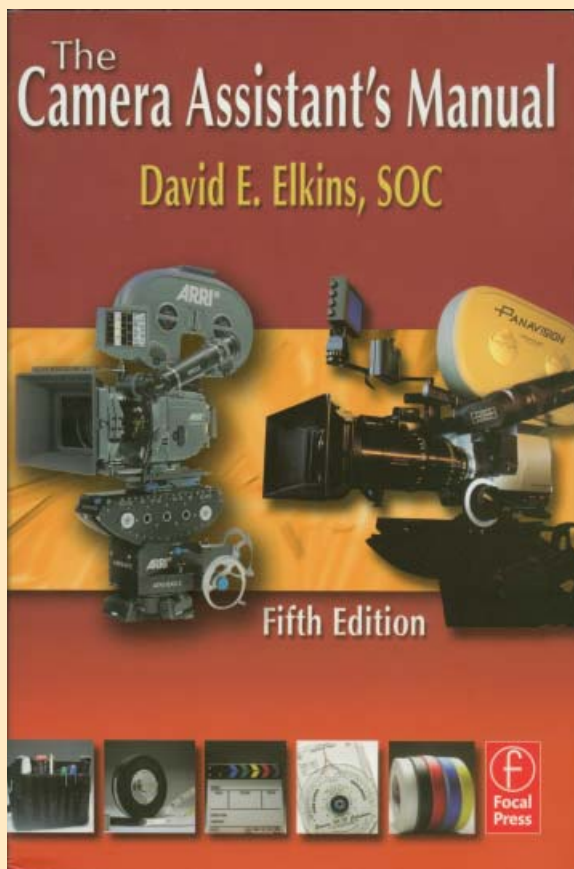
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The Camera Assistant's Manual, 5th Edition

written by David E Elkins SOC
published by Focal Press

Review by Georgia Packard SOC

This expanded fifth edition of *The Camera Assistant's Manual* is based on the experiences of author David E Elkins SOC and other trained camera assistants who bring a wealth of information, both technically and “on-the-set.” Job classifications for Loaders, 2nd Assistants and 1st Assistants are well delineated in complete detail covering all necessary duties and procedures. The “Tips” section is very helpful for experienced assistants as well as those starting out. The more knowledge a technician acquires problem solving, troubleshooting and working under production pressures, the more valuable they are to the camera crew and the project.

The book outlines important checklists and procedures so you can confidently go into Camera Houses for tests, to prep equipment, and to ensure a successful shoot no matter what equipment is being used. This is the type of information I needed when I took the camera union test to qualify as an experienced assistant. Equipment modification and updates constantly demand that we reacquaint ourselves with the gear through detailed hands on training.

Although the book is intended for the “film” assistant cameraman, there is expanded information on the job responsibilities when working in SD or HD video. All the chapters have been updated to include the most current techniques, procedures and equipment.

Even with these changes, I would recommend keeping older editions of Elkins' book because they include “older cameras” that may have not made this publication. Often these cameras are found on smaller films or whenever modified personal equipment is used.

The “Formulas” section is invaluable, and certainly should be copied onto index cards for easier carrying in your assistant's kit.

Cinematographers, Production Managers and Line Producers will benefit from reading and understanding the bigger picture of the camera department classifications so that film crews are properly staffed for the most efficient and effective production demands.

The Camera Assistant's Manual is well written and easy to comprehend—an essential read for all interested in doing a camera job well done.

David E Elkins SOC is currently a working Operator, moving up through the camera ranks as an assistant for more than 25 years and 100 credits of professional camera experience on feature films, television, commercials, music videos, educational and industrial films. In addition to his production experience, Elkins has taught numerous film production classes and workshops throughout the United States. He is an active member of the International Cinematographers Guild Local 600 and the Society of Camera Operators. He is also the author of *Camera Terms and Concepts* published by Focal Press.

