



GEAR GUIDE

FOR MAKING A

FILM

WITH NO CREW



~ He's making a film with no crew.

~ Um, this is getting awkward.

WHAT GEAR DID I USE TO MAKE A FEATURE FILM WITH NO CREW?

Yes, I made a feature film with no crew. It's called, **THE CUBE**. You can check it out at www.thecubemovie.com.



You might want to do that first, because after watching the trailer and the first 7-minutes of the film for free, you might come to the conclusion that, *"No wonder he had no crew ... it sucks."* I have low aspirations. If audiences come away from the film thinking, *"Hey, that didn't suck as bad as I thought it would."* Then I will have accomplished my goal!

Anyway, when I say I didn't have a crew, I must clarify that majority of the time, I just set up the equipment and jumped in front of the camera with my fellow actors and just acted. Any shot that I wasn't on screen as an actor, I would man the camera and try and get more interesting shots. On occasion, I would ask friends to operate the camera after I showed them what I wanted them to record. So, in essence, I really had no crew.

Without further *adieu*, here is the gear that I used to make my feature film with no crew ... and by the way, the whole film cost me about \$500 to produce ... that's because I had spent years acquiring all the equipment that you will see listed!

FILM TROOPER

FILMMAKING FREEDOM *for the* **INDEPENDENT**

FILM TROOPER

This FREE GEAR GUIDE is brought to you by Film Trooper, where we try and help filmmakers become entrepreneurs. Become a trooper at www.filmtrooper.com

There is a more extensive resource list over at www.filmtrooper.com/resources/

BECOME A TROOPER

My goal with film trooper is to share with you how to make a feature film with the available resources that are in front of you, find an audience for your film, and learn ways on how to sell your film directly to that audience.

- No crowd funding campaigns
- No film festivals
- No distribution companies.
- Just you, your imagination, your talents, and a lot of *smart* elbow grease.



Be a trooper and join our community over at [Google+ Community](#):

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Now let's get to the **FREE GEAR GUIDE** on how to make a feature film with no crew!



[CANON REBEL T3i \(Estimated Price \\$500\)](#)

This DSLR camera can record HD 1080p at 24 f/s onto a H264 codec. Good enough for indie filmmaking meant for distribution online or on a large screen television.

Four major reasons why this camera was perfect for a no crew setup.

1. **Interchangeable lens option.** I don't think indie film could be where it is today without this option to change lenses in order to get the right look for the right emotional moment.
 2. **LCD flip screen.** A built in flip screen was crucial, and I mean crucial for someone as stupid as me to make a film with no crew. I needed to have an ability to flip the screen around to see whether or not I was in focus.
 3. **Light weight.** The T3i has similar tech specs to the Canon 7D, but it is made with a lighter plastic body. Because it was smaller and lighter than the more desirable Canon 5D Mark III, I was able to put in on a smaller, lighter tripod rather than having to lug around a larger, heavier tripod.
 4. **Cheap.** You can pick a T3i up now for about \$500. That's insane. For a quality DLSR camera, that's ridiculous. The lenses will cost you more than the camera!
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[VELBON VIDEOMATE 607 TRIPOD \(Estimated Price \\$79\)](#)

It was important to find a lightweight tripod with a fluid head swivel base that was just large enough for the Canon T3i. And it came with a portable travel case, perfect for the backpack filmmaking production.



[BATTERIES \(Estimated Price \\$20\)](#)

You can never have enough backup batteries. So be sure to have these in your stash for an all day shoot. Wasabi makes an inexpensive package for the Canon cameras.

LENSES

This is where the real magic happens and why you'll pay for good quality lenses that will be more than your camera!



[Canon EF 16-35mm, f2.8 lens \(Est. \\$1,699\)](#) This is great for wide and medium shots. Having a zoom lens allows you to quickly setup shots in tight quarters. The "f" represents the f-stop, so the lower the number like a 1.2 or 2.8 means more light can get into the lens, rather than a higher number like a 4.5 or 5.6. The lower the f-stop the higher the price.



[Canon EF 50mm f1.2 \(Est. \\$1,600\)](#) This is the "go to" lens for all indie DSLR films. This gem of a lens creates a shallow depth of field, creating that "filmic" look that has revolutionized the indie film scene.

LENSES (CONTINUED)



[Canon EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 \(Est. \\$199\)](#) This lens usually comes standard with the Canon Rebel T3i, but in case you buy just the camera body and need an inexpensive lens that will give you the wide shots and the sweet depth of field, you might want to go with this lens. Just be warned that you'll need a lot of light to make this lens look good.



[Canon EF-S 55-250mm f/4.0-5.6 \(Est. \\$299\)](#) I needed to grab a few long shots, so I had to use this inexpensive lens that came with my T3i package. Again, the high f-stop of 4.0-5.6, I needed to shoot outdoors to maximize the lighting as much as possible.

[FILTERS \(Estimated Price \\$15/package\)](#)

Make sure you pick up some basic screw-on filters to protect and enhance your lenses and shots.



- **Ultraviolet (UV) filter.** Just a good standard filter to protect your lens and reduce the haze. Make sure to get the correct lens sizes, be it 72mm, 77mm, or 82mm, etc.
 - **Polarizer filter.** This is a great filter to add when the outdoor skyline is bright and washed out, or if you want to reduce the glare when filming an actor behind a car windshield to reduce the reflection of the sky.
 - **Neutral Density (ND) filter.** These filters come in different grades and are a simple fix for really brightly lit shots, especially exterior day shots.
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[Kata KT PL-E-702 Rain Cover for DSLR \(Estimated Price \\$69\)](#)

I live in Portland, Oregon, which means it rains up here ... it rains a lot. So, I had to be prepared for the elements.



[Rode NT3 Microphone \(Estimated Price \\$269\)](#)

I was able to pick this microphone up online used for a fraction of the cost. It does a good job of picking up all the sound in a room when you have several actors doing their *thang*. I just popped it onto a boom mic stand and set it off camera. Ideal? No.

What I should have done was at least bought a shock mount for the microphone. Instead I just held it with a regular old mic clip. Why a shock mount? Well, for the simple reason, that by not having one, I was picking up all the deep bass sound of footsteps as we actors were walking around. More work in post ... errgghhh.

[Zoom H1 Handy Portable Digital Recorder \(Estimated Price \\$99\)](#)



At the very end of production, I finally started to use these portable audio recorders. What's so great about these little guys is they can be hidden on each actor. It requires no wireless signal to record, so there would be no interference, like I had with one set of RF/VHF wireless lavalieres that was used for one scene. Not good. Should have used these guys more often.



[Audio-Technica ATR-3350 Lavalier Microphone](#)
[\(Estimated Price \\$19\)](#)

The only way to really use the Zoom HN1 is to pair it with these small battery powered lavalieres.



[On Stage Stands MS7701 Tripod Boom Microphone Stand](#)
[\(Estimated Price \\$25\)](#)

Not only did I use these stands for the Rhode NT3, but I used it as my stand-in. On shots were I was alone, I still needed to have a marker or say, a stand-in to approximate where I would be standing so I could focus the camera. I hit the record button, remove the boom stand off screen and acted ... and I acted *hard* ;-)



[XLR Cables \(Estimated Price \\$10\)](#)

Sometimes we forget about the most simplest things. But we need them thar cables, right?



[Audio-Technica ATH-M30 Closed Headphones \(Estimated Price \\$50\)](#)

It's still good idea to listen back on your recordings with a good set of headphones or *cans* as the pros call it.



[ePhoto 10 x 12 Green Screen Studio Video Lighting Kit \(Estimated Price \\$115\)](#)

Most of the lighting I used for my movie would come from natural light, so I knew that if I was going to add any interior lighting, it would have to be at daylight temperature (5600K).

If you ever tried to use tungsten or halogen lights (3200K) and mixed that with the light coming in from outside ... well it can look “sucky”. The interior color would look correct, but the outside light would be ultra blue. So, by matching the interior light with daylight temperature lightbulbs it would make the shots look normal.

On top of that, going with a daylight fluorescent lighting kit, the overall power draw would be much less than that of a tungsten or halogen lighting setup ... and it wouldn't get too *damn* hot to touch, as fluorescent lighting runs much cooler.

I settled on using, believe it or not, the lights that came with a green screen kit I bought for some other video projects. The big fluorescent light bulbs and umbrellas that came with the kit allowed me to cast a large fill light in all the indoor shots.



[ePhoto Fluorescent Light Bulb 5500K H105W \(Estimated Price \\$20\)](#)

I made sure that I had backup bulbs, since these puppies can't be found at the local hardware store.



Household Fluorescent Lightbulbs

(Estimated Price \$50 for a bunch of them)

In addition, I replaced all the house lights with ugly white daylight fluorescent light bulbs that I picked up at the *Home Depot*. Those bright white lights sure make real life look ugly, but when the camera does the ol' white balancing trick, it looks amazing.



StudioFX Sand Bag (Estimated Price \$16)

The boom mic stand and the cheap lighting stands I had were in need of serious stability of not falling over. Grab yourself some of these sandbags. Now, here's a trick to make sure that the sand stays out of these canvas sandbags. Huh? Let me explain, if you want to keep these bags travel worthy, pick up a package of play sand at *Home Depot* and scooped a few cups into a sealed *Ziploc* bag, that way the sand won't leak out all over the canvas sand bag holders.



Extensions Chords & Power Strips (Estimated Price \$12/each)

Yeah, kind of obvious, but you'll need a few extensions chords and some surge protector power strips.



SDHC Memory Cards (Estimated Price \$16/each)

Be sure to pick up a few extra SDHC Memory sticks to ensure you'll always have enough recording space for a day's shoot



Lowepro Fastpack 250-Red (Estimated Price \$75)

I have always wanted to make films from a backpack. The ability to have all your gear stored into a convenient backpack, that is the kind of filmmaker I aspired to become. Thank goodness for the DLSR revolution, because that dream is a reality. Easily stuff all you gear into one of these backpacks. You can even shove your laptop into the open sleeve and have your editing gear right there at your finger tips.

THANKS FOR READING

I can't thank you enough for taking the time to read through this gear guide.

If you want more resources, especially the tools I use to build an online business to help sell my film, then head on over to: www.filmtrooper.com/resources/

WANNA HELP?

If you see anything on this **FREE GEAR GUIDE** that you're thinking of purchasing, then I'd love for you to use my affiliate links to *Amazon*. Yep! All the links in this guide go straight to *Amazon*, and if you use my links I get paid a little bitty bit ... but the cool thing is you aren't charged anything extra. No cost to you. Just a few pennies in my pocket from *Amazon* thanking me for sending you their way.

Again, I can't thank you enough for checking out this **FREE GEAR GUIDE!**



About **Scott McMahon**

Scott McMahon is a Fellow Film Trooper. Film Trooper was ranked the **#1 podcast** in filmmaking. **Film Trooper** is a web resource designed to help the über independent filmmaker achieve filmmaking freedom.
