



JEFFREY WALDRON

Home: Los Angeles

Education: Bachelor of Arts, Production, USC
Master of Arts, Cinematography, AFI

Favorite film: Walt Disney's *The Jungle Book* (1967)

Coollest gear: Ricoh Theta S Camera + VR headset for remote mid-season tech scouting

Latest DP gig: *Dear White People* (Netflix)

Union love: Being a Guild member means I can concentrate on the cinematography. I'm proud to work in the company of the great camera-folk of the world.

Jeff Waldron, who dreamed of being an animator, says his play materials as a child were cutouts, toys, sand, and paper drawings. "I was always making little movies," he remembers about his family travels to different countries and cultures. Once he started volunteering on indie features, he replaced his animation goals with cinematography.

Earning a Masters in cinematography at AFI allowed Waldron to be "immersed on the sets of amazing cinematographers' projects, and being able to ask questions and understand their instincts, habits, and ideas, provided constant breakthroughs." As an undergraduate at USC, Waldron had William Fraker, ASC, BSC, as his prime mentor. "We used to meet up at Musso's & Franks. I'd have a list of questions," he adds, "and he'd have a vodka tonic. [Fraker] encouraged me to take risks, mix color temperatures and experiment."

Waldron, who says he's a "big fan of formal cinematography rooted in natural situations," and loves the idea of "playing up and down the spectrum from very formal to very natural, based on a given story," describes some of his first jobs as "Craigslist specials: shady real-estate seminars, corporate videos, cheap music videos. My first feature had a ten-day schedule, and I got paid \$50 a day." His first union job was operating on a Justin Bieber concert doc. "Yes, I was front row at a lot of Bieber shows!"

A comedy feature that premiered at Tribeca opened the door to cable pilots, one of which was picked up. "The speed and ingenuity required to pull off a visually innovative indie film on a restrictive schedule and budget has been great training for TV," he says. "I had already been photographing indie features on what was basically a TV schedule, and learning how to ride that tension between quality and time has been invaluable."

Waldron says his work in the half-hour format requires a DP to "create quickly and flexibly. You have to choose your camera and lens package wisely," he says. "On a recent mini-series called *Crunch Time*, these college kids discover a way to enter somebody's subconscious brain. It was a playground of different looks and genre homages, creativity and flexibility."

He's also had a lot of fun on his current show, Netflix's *Dear White People*. "We combine in-shot zooms with studio-style camera movement," Waldron explains, "which becomes an unconventional variable for already complicated compound moves. There is nothing better than collaborating with directors who push you to unfamiliar places."

Waldron says the explosion of episodic content and the demand for visually engaging TV is at an all-time high. "Pay cable and the streaming services, with alternative revenue models, continue to pave the way for greater risk-taking in the episodic world," he concludes, "and there's an enormous push for quality work. I'm incredibly thankful to be a small part of this growing industry. I learn something new every day!"

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