

[MUSIC PLAYING]

WILLIE DAWKINS: When you're making a film, you never have the amount of gear you want. And then when you have it, you never really need it. One example for me was when we were shooting *The Rock* upon on Alcatraz, we did a scene where Nick Cage runs across this floor, this set. He has this VX gas in his hands and he can't drop the crystals.

Lo and behold, he drops the crystals. One rolls across the floor and everything's going to explode. We did a master shot of the major scene of it at Alcatraz Island, but then we did an insert of that shot at Sony Studios. And when we did the insert, I had a half truck full of lights, because based on the movie, I was thinking, well, I'm going to need all these lights. And we're going to have to light this and that.

When we did the insert of the VX gas crystal rolling across the floor, I ended up using two lights. Had a truck full of lights, spent a lot of money on it. And this was a scenario where I had more than I needed. And it all came down to basic three point lighting.

I took two nights, a bounce card. We shot the VX gas crystal rolling across the floor. Got some nice reflective elements in the crystal. Looked really nice. Michael Bay was happy. And everybody was happy. So it worked out.

So when you're doing your movie, some items to be mindful of to bring to set, a couple of lights. Bounce cards are very important, because you can return light, what I call recycling light. Bouncing a key light and making it into a fill line or an edge light.

Low wattage lights are great, like kino flos, chimera, or jem balls. LED lights, they have small drawing power, so sometimes you're basically shooting with wall socketry in homes and et cetera, sets. So LED lights are great.

When you walk into a set, be it a house or a store or wherever you're shooting, one

of things you can do is always set your talent near a window. That way, you can use a natural light, the God light, come into a window. You can bounce it, reflect it.

Sit them sideways in the window for a sidelight. Bounce that fill, or put a card high up ahead in the back and use it as a reflector or shoulder light, or hair light. One example of key light and recycling light I can show you right now.

I'll have Molly, our producer, step in and she could sit here for a moment. I'll have her-- hey, Molly.

MOLLY: Hi.

WILLIE DAWKINS: This would be an example of what I'm speaking about, of like a key light. We have a couple kino flos set up. And what you would do, if you had one light, you would have say, a kino flo or a key light. It could be any instrument you choose, on Molly.

And what you would do is you would come in the back and return some of that light on her face. You could even go to the offside, which would be the other side, and come low and recycle the same light on her cheek. Mostly used for guys.

That's usually a great cheek light for men, handsome squared jaws. Usually for men, what I would do would be more side-y light, or what we call manly light, coming more from the side to highlight features, et cetera, on men. And then once you do that, you can return the key light from this side and make it still light.

Depends on how much light you want on the face. You can see some under there. When you're lighting women, what I would do is turn off the side light and be more frontal. So it's effectively a frontal key light. You can add a smaller light next to it, it's what we call a wrap and fill in her face.

You can see from the side light, when we did it for a man, it threw shadows on the offside of the face, and then you fill in with the fill light or the card. It only takes one light. You can take the same light, slide it frontal, soften it for women, which is what I do a lot. And fill in her face nicely.

You can also have a back light that's also called hair light. You can raise this light

and get it up on the edge of her hair. It's called a hair light. You could tip it up a little. You can close the door or set a flag to just be the shoulders and the top of the head.

And for women most of the time, I'm trying to keep it off of their face, so effectively I would move it around a bit, take it off of her face. And you see the more around you take it. You can take it higher for a hair light, or a hair and shoulder light. And you can soften or dim it.

And that's a little example of using one or two lights to make a subject look great, like Molly. I'm Willie Dawkins, and I'm a gaffer.

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