

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JACOB PINGER: Check your cameras. Do a thorough camera prep. Learn what that means-- a camera prep. A camera prep is when you go through the entire system of your camera package.

That means the camera. That means the lenses. That means the camera support, the tripods. That means the electronics that will attach to the camera.

That means the batteries. It means the monitors you're going to use. It's the entire system that makes up your camera package.

The most important thing involved in a camera prep is good work habits and thoroughness. You need to be detail oriented and you need to be anal. Don't leave any stones unturned and don't assume anything about your camera package if you're not completely sure. In fact, never assume anything about a camera package.

The only difference between an indie movie and a huge studio movie is that on a studio movie, you have a lot of stuff. For instance, on *The LEGO Movie*, we had a lot of stuff. We had three ALEXA camera bodies.

We had 25 lenses. We had spherical lenses. We had anamorphic lenses.

We had prime lenses. We had zoom lenses. We had specialty lenses.

We had multiple tripods. We had multiple systems of camera support. We had electronics all over the place.

The director of photography had his own DIT station. The directors had their own station. We were even running monitors out for people who were off set so they could see it. And all of this fell under the umbrella of the camera package.

So you can imagine what it took to do a camera prep for *The LEGO Movie*. We only

shot five days for that live action portion of *The LEGO Movie* but the camera prep probably lasted two days because it was that important and there was that much work to do. Every item in the camera package on *The LEGO Movie* got thoroughly checked by two camera assistants.

When you have an actor like Will Ferrell on the set, you don't want to make a mistake. You don't want there to be any delay in shooting because the camera's not working properly. As soon as that happens, 100 pairs of eyeballs go to you. And believe me, that's not a fun position to be in.

If you haven't done your camera prep properly, you might freeze. You might not know what to do. You might not know what the problem is. A big part of doing a thorough camera prep is that when something happens on set, you know what to do to fix it or you know what to do to improvise to get around the problem. But if you haven't done a camera prep, you're going to be unfamiliar with your equipment and you're not going to necessarily know if something's actually wrong or if you just screwed up.

I'm Jacob Pinger. I'm a camera operator in IATSE Local 600. And I'm also a director of photography.

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