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CATHERINE GOLDSCHMIDT ON QUIBI SHOW *DUMMY*

DP Catherine Goldschmidt wrote in with details about her work on *Dummy*, a new show for US short-form mobile video streaming platform Quibi. *Dummy* was created/written by Cody Heller, directed by Tricia Brock and headlined by executive producer and star Anna Kendrick. It tells the story of a struggling female writer in Hollywood who befriends her boyfriend's sex doll. It was the first original scripted series to be shot for Quibi.

"I'd never read anything like *Dummy* before. It was hilarious, wildly original and boldly honest. The self-referential and self-deprecating jokes Tricia put on the page are something I associate more with British comedy. I was thrilled to shoot something that blended Hollywood tropes with a more British sense of humour.

The trick in shooting *Dummy* is that Quibi releases its shows in two different aspect ratios at once: 16:9 and 9:16. Quibi's content is made specifically to be watched on your phone, but they wisely want to maximise the viewer's experience by having the show play full-screen in both landscape and portrait mode. The Quibi app streams both versions of the show to your phone simultaneously, both sharing the same soundtrack. The act of turning your phone chooses between these two versions.

Tests we viewed before shooting had all been shot in 16:9, and the 9:16 versions were crop-ins. My experience of looking at these tests, as a viewer and a DP, was that the 9:16 version offered so much less. I wanted the vertical version of the show to be as interesting to watch visually as the horizontal.

Although we shot the show in LA, I am based in the UK and went in to Panavision, Greenford, to play with large format sensors, different crop factors and ways of setting-up my framelines that would somehow allow me to frame for these two opposite aspect ratios in the best possible way. Taking on-board some very helpful advice from George Rumsey and Lee Mackey at PV London, Mike Carter at PV Woodland Hills, fellow DP James Rhodes, and DITs Francesco Giardiello and Peter Brunet (who happily worked on the show with me), I eventually decided on how I would proceed.

We shot Sony Venice 6K full-sensor, but cropped the sensor to a 4K 1:1 square, using the maximum height of the sensor, but not the width. Within that square, we framed for 16:9 and 9:16 in a crucifix-like orientation. I initially thought of framing with a common top, but after scouting using the Artemis Prime viewfinder with these framelines, I realised the 9:16 frame was bottom-heavy in this

orientation. By off-setting the framelines a little, the 9:16 could have a little more head-room and a little less foot-room, which was definitely an improvement.

I settled on Panavision PanaSpeeds, and flushed out the set with de-tuned Primo 70s. I love how fast the PanaSpeeds are, and what that wide-open aperture does on large format. My hat is tipped to my focus pullers, Lauren Peele and David Edsall, for always keeping it sharp and never complaining!

Everyone was wary of doing something they hadn't done before, me included. After the first day of shooting, I was delighted when everyone from the 1st AD to the line producer to my operators came up saying, "Wow! It worked!"

The combination of lensing, format, framelines and compositional choices did all magically come together into something everyone could be proud of in landscape and portrait mode.

The journey, however, did not end on-set. Our dailies and final colour were all handled by Light Iron, who worked alongside myself, my DIT Peter Brunet and editorial, in coming-up with the post workflow. We watched dailies in 16:9 only, but the editing and the final grade encompassed both horizontal and vertical versions of the show.

I am incredibly grateful that I was an instrumental part of the final grade, which, in this case, was also the final reframe. Although the vast majority of our shots did work on-set framing-wise, having the ability to move things around in post was incredibly valuable in maximising the potential of both frames to tell the story.

Working with colourist Nick Hasson at Light Iron, during prep and in HDR post, was great. Watching it together in the grading suite with Nick, Cody and our head of production Mads Hansen, we've all been surprised at how well we respond to the 9:16 version of the show. As filmmakers, we started this journey sceptical. As we ended this adventure, I'm grateful my horizons were broadened!"

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CATHERINE GOLDSCHMIDT

