

## **Topic 103**

### **Director's Camera**

A director's viewfinder or director's finder is a viewfinder used by film directors and cinematographers to set the framing of a motion picture or movie camera. There are three types of director's viewfinder.

The most traditional director's viewfinder looks like a short telescope, can be held easily in one hand and is often seen hanging from a lanyard on the director's neck. Sometimes called a "Tewe" in Europe (after a German company that manufactured them), the most common viewfinder of this type is still manufactured by Alan Gordon Enterprises, known as the Mark Vb. The functionality of these devices is limited in that they only assist in observing the field of view of the lenses that will be used on the motion picture camera but not the characteristics of that lens. This type of viewfinder allows the user to select multiple camera formats, aspect ratios and focal lengths within a specific range. Devices of this kind vary in price from \$300US-\$700US, depending on size and features.

Early blimped motion picture film cameras like the Mitchell Camera BNCR were not reflex finder cameras. Instead a viewfinder similar in concept to the Alan Gordon Mark Vb bolted to the side of the camera was employed by the camera operator to frame a shot when filming. In between takes, the camera could be "racked over" to allow viewing of the actual taking lens.

## **Lens Finder**

The second type, also called a director's viewfinder but sometimes referred to as a lens finder, is a larger device than the traditional viewfinder and employs the lenses that are intended to be used on the motion picture camera. These allow both the director and cinematographer to not only observe the field of view but also the character of the lens in terms of depth of field, optical aberration and general subjective "feel". These devices are still very common on film sets, allowing shots to be framed without having to use the motion picture camera as a viewing device. Lens finders are camera format specific and require the lenses that will be used in production. These devices are considerably more expensive than the traditional viewfinder, selling for between \$2,000US -\$6,000US.

Variations exist for different lens mounting systems, most typically Arri PL, Panavision PV mount and Mitchell BNCR mounts. Other additions such as the addition of video assist have been made available on models such as the Kish Optics Ultimate Director's Viewfinder.