Production Guidelines for Correspondents Cannabis News Network

Please read this document carefully. This document contains all relevant technical information for acquisition, production and delivery of video material for Cannabis News network.

General Guidelines:
This is a news project, aimed at telling real stories from all over the world, therefore: staged or re-enacted scenes are not allowed.
Make sure you can be recognized as a Cannabis News Network correspondent by using our stickers and Cannabis News Network microphone flag. Our reports are usually without stand-ups or reporter on screen but if you think you can do "stand ups", let us know. Use the native language of your country/city as the default language in your report unless the English of your subjects is (near) fluent.

Filming tips:
If you are not a professional cameraman than follow these guidelines to prevent obvious mistakes. Know the rules for framing and camera moves. And keep in mind how it all has to fit together in the edit.
== Camera ==
Definition of footage: 1080p25 OR 720p25. Take note of the "p". Please do not use interlace video. If your camera cannot set these specs then decide on the best setting in this order: First try to set Progressive, then the best frame/rastersize and then the framerate.
- Preferably use manual focus to eliminate autofocus hunting.
- Don't overexpose! Please keep in mind that the person you're filming must be well lit, but not over-exposed. Keep it save by under-exposing just a bit when unsure. But heavily compressed codecs like AVC1 are not really suited for that, professional codecs (Avid DNxHD, Pro-Res) can handle this just fine.
- Do not use 4k or higher if at all possible. This may be unavoidable in the case of drones and gopro-like camera's but rescaling such footage down to 1080 HD can lead to artefacts in small details.

== Audio Recording ==
- Please pay attention to the audio quality in your reports, make sure that there's not too much background noise or music and audio is not clipped. (Normal recording levels are around -12dB).
- Switch-off background noise like music or chiming clocks.
- Make sure that your subject sounds clear without too much reverb from the location itself. This almost always necessitates an external microphone, like a lavalier or a good shotgun microphone to keep them unobtrusive or off-screen. Or a handheld mic with the CNN foam cap. These are always clearly in shot and used near the mouth of the interviewees.

- Do not mix your microphones on the same recording track. Keep them separated.
- Use a good headset to monitor the sound during recording. Do a record test before you really start to check your connections and the quality of both video and audio.
- If you use a still camera for video (not recommended) then use an external audio recorder. Still cameras are bad audio recorders even when used with external mics. Do let the still camera record audio, this will serve as an extra guide for synchronization later. At the start of recording clap your hands visibly in frame. This will give a clear syncpoint.

The first good interview with bad sound has yet to be made!

== On location filming ==
- When filming, be aware of your surroundings. If you film a person or an event, think about the setting in which this takes place. The background should preferably give an impression of the environment you're in (a specific landscape, a village, someone's living room) instead of for example a wall. But not too distracting. Not in front of a bright window in a dark room.
- If you interview someone stand next but near to the camera. So his/her eyeline is slightly off to the side the screen when they look at you. Set subjects with opposing views on different sides of the screen. So framed slightly left or right. This aides story telling.
- Make sure you shoot the street questions (voxpops), they are obligatory with each commissioned report. It's a great element in the show and highly appreciated by the viewers!
- It's important for us to have enough establishing/B-roll footage, so don't forget to include it in your report or send the establishing shots as extra material. These also include covershots for edits in interviews.

Edited reports:
==Formats==
- MOV/MP4 1080p Avid HD codec 8bit, stereo 48k/16bit or Apple Pro-Res 422 LT or standard (No HQ) 48k/16bit.
- MOV/MP4 H264 1080p video with very high bitrate (higher than 5Mbps) with AAC stereo 48Khz/min. 256Kbps. (we recommend Handbrake).
- Audio stereo mix normalised to -0.1 dB. Video broadcast level limited if possible.
- Enable options as fast streaming or web-optimised in your software during export. This puts the info header at the top of the file and provides smoother YouTube upload and conversion.
- We will provide you with graphics for the final edit.
- If necessary, and in consultation with us, our postproduction staff can do these last finishing steps for you. Or provide you with info tailored to your situation/setup.

Voice-overs Text:
Show, don't tell, is our motto! Keep your Voice-Over text short, business like and factual!

Compiling footage:
*If you do not edit the report yourself but send us the raw footage then please follow these guidelines.*
- No log/raw footage! You are filming news, not the next Star Wars.
- Please don't use editor's tricks such as wipes, fades and such. We want your footage to be as straight-forward as possible. Also: keep your image 'clean': don't use titles etc in your image. -

Please keep 2 seconds extra in front and end of each shot/quote for us to have more editing "meat" for dissolves and crossfades.

DO NOT EDIT!

- Select shots and parts of shots and place them on a time-line with 2 tracks of audio panned left/right. Do NOT make inserts in shots but add them separately on the time-line after the main/master-shot (usually interviews). Omit only that which is unusable or unneccesary.

== See this FCP7 example ==
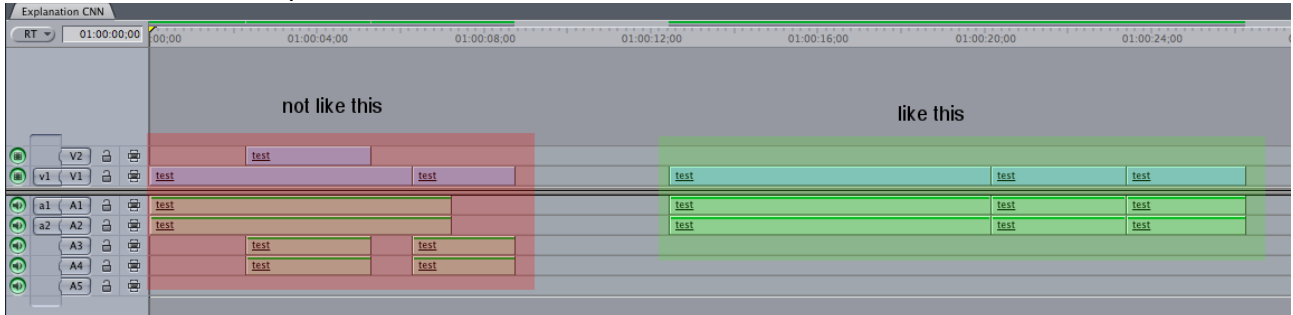
- Include the setnoise, especially with b-roll/atmospheric shots. If you include a bit of roomtone you get a kiss from our editor!
- You may order shots and quotes in the way you feel the edit should flow in the story. This may help us to more quickly build the final edit.
- Do not add/overlay graphics of ANY kind. Send an explanatory text-file with the time-line export. Base TC on 00:00:00:00 from beginning of file/timeline. State TC and info on a per shot basis. Make a translation per spoken sentence of the non English speakers and include TC IN/OUT ACCURATELY for the subtitling (INCLUDE FRAMES!). Write short sentences for translating. (For a protest march a more general idea of what is being chanted and when).
- Do not include recorded voice-over. Just write those in a file, again with timecode where they should go.

REPEAT!! PLEASE DO NOT EDIT. COMPLETE SEGMENTS OF SHOTS!

Transcript and/or subtitling:

Please separate all forms of (sub)titles from your footage and include them as a transcript in English with time codes in a separate text file. Include the TC and names/functions of interviewees. This way we can overlay an uniform (sub)titling on the finished edit instead of having a multitude of different title styles. So after you've finished editing please reserve ½ day for this. Make this transcript as (frame)accurate as possible as we will use it as the basis for the subtitles in a language the postproduction crew themselves may not understand. You can also choose to send an extra low-res version of your items with subtitles burned in. This is very useful to check our accuracy and eliminate timing and translation errors.

NOTE: The spoken language in your film is preferably the native language where you live.

Audio preparation:

- Since we'll be incorporating your material in our program, please be aware that we might alter your cut significantly and/or use different music.
- Please keep additional music in separate upload files.
- Export your movie with the regular sound only (always panned left/right) and export extra audio as a separate audio file, again panned left/right.

- Also: pay attention to the audio levels of your tracks. Generally around -12dB for speech. Be especially wary of distortion. Make sure all two channels are properly separated.
- Separate setnoise from interviews by panning and/or deleting unnecessary audio clips so everything can be cleanly exported.
- Record some roomtone. This helps with smoother interview edits.

Extra footage:
- Please send us your item with the footage cleanly compiled and if possible, also send extra material that you think might be usable during our final editing (extra quotes, shots, a rough version of the edit etc). Please add suggestions for design-graphics in a separate file and/or upload. PSD layers with transparency or PNG with transparency in full HD. If possible, take some pictures of your main character/subject which we can use for publicity purposes or to put up on our website (HD resolution, preferably higher).
- Please include an English written transcript (text + timecodes) with your report.
- Mark your files properly. Footage might get lost if it's not marked properly. Always include the theme, country and version. Please don't include 'final version' in your file name.

Final delivery specs:
We accept the following formats as raw footage but we really prefer progressive with an absolute minimum resolution of 1280x720 in 25 frames.

mxf 720p25 XDCAM HD 422 50 Mbps
mxf 720p25 AVC-Intra 100
MOV xdcam HD 1080i50/1080p25 OR 720p25
MOV hdv 1080i50
MOV DVCPRO 1080i50 OR 720p25
MOV Prores 422/(LT). No HQ, that is unnecessarily large (10Bit video!).
MOV/MP4 H264 1080p video with very high bitrate (higher than 5Mbps) with AAC sound 48Khz/min. 256kbps.

Cannabis News Network has a dedicated FTP server. Logins will be provided on request.