Lydia Sestak

Los Angeles, CA | Willing to Travel
1st AC / 2nd AC / Cinematographer
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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Versatile 1st AC and Cinematographer with extensive experience across feature films, short films, music videos, and corporate productions. Highly skilled in camera operation, FIZ systems, and on-set coordination, with deep technical proficiency in ARRI, RED, Sony, and Blackmagic systems. Proven track record of strong leadership, precision under tight deadlines, and seamless collaboration with DPs and crew.

CREW EXPERIENCE

Dolly Grip/Crane Operator - "Crazy Rich Arabs" (Feature Film)
Nov 2026 | Los Angeles, CA

- As a Dolly Grip, I operated and maintained the J.L. Fisher Model 11 Dolly, laying precision track and executing flawless, smooth camera movements synchronized with actor staging and the DP's vision.
- As a Crane Operator, I rigged and operated the jib attachment on the J.L. Fisher Model 11 Dolly, controlling dynamic sweeping pans and high-to-low angle transitions in close coordination with the Director of Photography.

2nd Assistant Camera - "Billy Talks Too Much" (Short Film)
Oct 2026 | Los Angeles, CA
Streamlined on-set camera operations for an ARRI Alexa Mini LF paired with ZEISS prime lenses. Managed media transfers, battery management, and equipment organization while ensuring fast, accurate mark pulling and slate execution.

2nd Assistant Camera - "REMNANTS" (Proof of Concept)
Oct 2026 | Los Angeles, CA
Managed camera media, batteries, and cart setup for an ARRI Alexa Mini LF package paired with Leica primes (operated with an EasyRig), while supporting the 1st AC with lens changes, marks, and meticulous camera reports.

1st Assistant Camera - "Mime Your Business" (Short Film)
Oct 2026 | Los Angeles, CA
Assembled and maintained an ARRI Alexa Mini LF equipped with an Angenieux EZ-1 30 to 90mm lens, overseeing lens calibrations and managing focus marks during complex tracking shots.

1st Assistant Camera - "Brave Cowgirl" (Short Film)
Oct 2026 | Los Angeles, CA
Configured an ARRI Alexa Mini LF and ARRI Ultra Prime lens package with Tilta Nucleus M for precise focus pulling, collaborating with the DP on camera setups and lens changes.

1st Assistant Camera - "Climbing My Everest" | PAE Studios (Feature Film)
Aug 2026 - Sept 2026 | Los Angeles, CA
Operated RED Komodo cameras and assisted the DP with camera setups, lighting, lens changes, CF card management, and tripod setups, and operation of the DJI Ronin 2 Professional Gimbal.

2nd Camera Operator/Drone Operator/Script Consultant - "the noise beneath" (Feature Film)
Jun 2025 - Dec 2025 | Gastonia, NC

- Operated the Sony FX3 to capture cinematic visuals aligned with the film's emotional tone and visual style. Collaborated with the Director of Photography to ensure consistency in lighting, framing, and movement across multiple locations.
- As a Drone Operator, I flew the DJI Mavic Mini 2, Mini 3, and Mavic Pro systems under FAA Part 107 certification to capture smooth tracking shots and aerial sequences that elevated production scale and atmosphere.
- Contribute as a Script Consultant during pre-production and filming, advising on dialogue flow, pacing, and visual storytelling to enhance continuity and character development.

Swing (Grip/Electric) - "Joseph Shabason & Tom Gill - Fire on the Ridge" (Music Video)
Sept 2025 | Mount Holly, NC
Collaborated with the Grip and Electric team to execute creative lighting and rigging setups, supporting the DP's visual goals while maintaining a fast, efficient, and safe production environment.

Director & Director of Photography – "Silhouettes and Spirits" (Branded Content)
Jul 2025 | Charlotte, NC
Directed and shot "Silhouettes and Spirits," a cinematic short film series capturing the artistry and rhythm of cocktail creation, using a Sony A7R and an EdelKrone SliderONE for dynamic, cinematic motion shots.

Cinematographer – "Bienvenue au Défilé Noir" (Short Film)
Dec 2024 | Charlotte, NC
Shot on Sony A7R with versatile lens kit (18mm probe, 24mm, 35mm) to achieve dynamic, cinematic visuals. Managed lighting and camera movement while maintaining consistent creative communication with the director and post-production team.

Camera Operator – "The King's Gambit" | Thingamajig Media
Apr 2024 | Charlotte, NC
Executed visual composition using Sony FS5 based on a detailed shot list. Captured footage that contributed to five successful episodes and ensured seamless handoff to editors.
1st Assistant Camera and Camera Operator - "Démission " (Short Film)
Mar 2024 | Gastonia, NC
Utilized a Sony A7R with a Venus Optics Laowa 24mm f/14 Probe and Sigma zoom lenses. Executed precise camera moves, full camera rigging, and critical focus pulling, notably navigating the extreme depth of field demands of macro cinematography.
Producer – "Twelve"/ "In The Stillness" (Short Film)
Mar 2024 – Apr 2024 | Charlotte, NC
Developed shot lists, schedules, and on-set operations. Coordinated communication between director, cast, and crew to maintain an efficient workflow and positive production environment.
1st Assistant Camera & Production Assistant – Various Music Videos | Jessenia Mills
Apr 2021 – Dec 2021 | Greensboro, NC
Assisted camera department on multiple shoots using the Blackmagic Pocket 4K. Managed rig setup, battery swaps, SD card management, and troubleshooting technical issues during production.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Art in Media Production and Entrepreneurship **Aug 2017 - May 2021**
High Point University High Point, NC

STAFF EXPERIENCE

Master Control Operator & Broadcast Engineer – TEGNA
Aug 2022 – June 2026 | Charlotte, NC
Supported master control operations for 60+ stations nationwide (NBC, ABC, FOX, CBS, CW), ensuring seamless 24/7 broadcast delivery. Coordinated live and local events including the Super Bowl, award shows, and breaking news. Provided on-call technical support and led the rollout of Harmonic, Evertz, and Crispin automation systems to reduce downtime and revenue loss.
Cinematographer & Production Coordinator – Captivate Media
May 2021 – Jul 2022 | High Point, NC
Shot and coordinated high-quality corporate interviews and B-roll under tight deadlines. Collaborated with producers to determine shoot logistics, ensuring alignment between creative vision and execution.

SKILLS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Post-Production**: DaVinci Resolve, Adobe Premiere, After Effects, Photoshop
- **Cameras & Gear**: ARRI, DJI Drones, RED, Sony, Blackmagic
- **Broadcast & Automation**: Crispin, Harmonic, Evertz Microsystems
- **Technical**: Making CAT6 & SDI Cables
- **Languages**: Fluent in English and Proficient in French
- **Certifications**: Licensed FAA Drone Pilot
- **Awards/Activities**: Best Arthouse/Experimental Short at Stranger Days Independent Film Festival, 2024 MarCom Gold Award, Official Selection for Longleaf Film Festival