

Confidence in Tinseltown



Above:
Alix Saucier watching for deviations from the script, inconsistencies from shot to shot, or anything that looks bad on the movie set.

Below:
A back-lit soldier photographed by Alix on the set of *The Suppression*.



The show I've worked on the most is *Z Nation*, which can be found on Netflix. We shot our last season this past summer, and I was an assistant production coordinator during most of it. Essentially that job is managing all the travel, housing, and additional needs of crew, on top of filling in all the cracks that the other positions on the film don't cover. Like planning the wrap party or standing in as the body double for a nurse being stabbed.

There was a movie we did in Portland back in the fall of 2017 that was crazy to work on. We were in remote mountain areas of Oregon and it was cold, wet and muddy the whole time. I was a second assistant camera, and with that job I have a lot of expensive things to hold and small places to squeeze my fingers into so gloves weren't an option. It's going to be called *Alone* and should make it to the festival circuit in the fall of 2019.

I worked again as a second assistant camera this past winter on a heartwarming film called *Gossamer Folds* based in the 1980's about the relationship between a transgender woman and a little boy dealing with his parent's divorce. It may be released this fall.

My most recent project, and the one I'm proudest of, is a feature film called *The Suppression*, for which I was a producer. It just finished filming and we're looking to make it through festivals early in 2020.

To say producing a feature film was the most challenging thing I've ever done professionally would be an understatement. To be a producer is to be everyone's friend and enemy at the same time. It puts you in a position to have to value someone's work monetarily, someone you may know very well. Since it's a business, you have to manage that all with the budget you have, which is always less than what you need. With all that on your shoulders, it's very easy to get beaten down. You have so many people pulling you in different directions – cast, crew, financiers – and it's your job to make them all happy.

The only way to get through it all is to have confidence in yourself and in your team

that you'll get it all done. If at any point I had lost confidence that we could make it happen, everyone around me would see that and the crew's commitment would have crumbled.

There will always be a million roadblocks, that's just the nature of this business. And if there aren't, you're not taking enough risks to make anything worthwhile. For example, the film *The Suppression* needed a warehouse in which to build our sets. It's a sci-fi film that takes place almost entirely in a box, but not just any box. This box starts as a huge room, that then changes temperature, gravity, position, and size. We needed a space with high enough ceilings to create this massive set that would flop from one side to another.

We had found a warehouse, signed the contract, moved in our equipment, started building and got a call the building owner wanted us out. We then had a day or two to scramble, find a new building and move all of our stuff, while at the same time constantly reassuring our crew they wouldn't lose their jobs. After a few sleepless nights, we managed to find another building, moved everything in, and once again disaster struck. The leasing agent never informed the property manager, and we were once again forced out with all our equipment locked inside.

Now this is when real panic set in, but once again we had to show confidence to the crew that we would make it work. After another two nights of no sleep, we called the landlord and property manager and begged, pleaded, sent a card to their office, and finally they let us back in. If during all that time we had let it show we were unsure, our crew would have dropped out and found other work, and we would have lost everything.

I love my job and I love this industry, but it's extremely hard. I can't ever plan anything personal more than a week out, it takes over your life, it's tough on your relationships and dictates where you live. But the only reason I survive is because I love it, and I'm confident that I'm good at it.

– Alixandra Saucier '12