

Jacob C. Whatley

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY. COLORIST. SOCIAL MEDIA CREATOR. DRONE OPERATOR

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EDUCATION

Duke University, NC

Aug 2021 - May 2025

Bachelor of Arts, Visual and Media Studies: Cinematic Arts | Certificate in Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Awards/Screenings: Benenson Awards in the Arts (2023), Students Cinematic Arts Showcase (2023), Student Team Research Grant (2024).

Skills: Licensed 107 drone operator; experience filming on ARRI, RED, Sony, Canon, and Blackmagic cinema cameras; color grading and color correction; DaVinci Resolve; Adobe Suite (Premiere Pro, After Effects, Lightroom, Photoshop).

EXPERIENCE

Duke University Communications

Aug 2021 - Present

Multimedia Creator

- Photographing and filming student events, athletics, university architecture and behind-the-scenes content.
- Conducting interviews with students and faculty to pitch and create short-form and long-form content.
- Responsible for prepping equipment; created lighting diagrams, story boards, shot list and mood boards for shoots.
- Created some of the highest performing reels for the university's official Instagram generating 100k+ views.
- Revamped the team's in-studio lighting setup by introducing Sidus Link-controlled Aputure lights.
- Utilized the DJI Drone Systems for drone videography; served as a visual observer for drone shoots.
- Mentoring new team members on equipment usage, workflow and best practices.

Duke Creator Lab

Aug 2023 - Present

Director of Production

- Co-founded the Duke Creator Lab, providing support on the technical aspects of social media content creation.
- Advising creators on lighting and camera equipment purchases, ensuring they have the necessary tools to produce high-quality content and stay competitive in the creator economy.
- Collaborated with on-campus influencers like @tulio_sasaya (600k+ followers) and @natisstyle (260k+ followers), providing guidance and assistance in content filming and editing.
- Filmed and edited vlogs and brand partnership videos and photos for athlete @emilycole (300k+ followers).

DFI Rentals

May 2024 - July 2024

Camera Prep Intern

- Cleaned, inspected, and fixed camera gear, ensuring proper handling and functionality of equipment.
- Provided technical consultations to clients, recommending appropriate bundles tailored to their specific needs.
- Collaborated with company executives to recommend integration of new technology into the company's inventory.
- Proactively enhanced the company's social media presence by creating engaging video reels, achieving over 20k views and boosting brand visibility.

Blue Devil Network

Aug 2023 - Aug 2024

Student Intern

- Captured high-quality footage of Duke Athletics events, including games, practices and behind-the-scenes content.
- Edited and produced short-form sports videography content, ensuring timely delivery for different platforms.
- Assisted in lighting and camera setup for podcasts and interviews.
- Provided expertise in equipment purchases by conducting research on latest technologies.

PROJECTS AND FILM CREDITS

A Funeral for Ice (Ongoing) | Director of Photography, Editor

- Won grants totaling \$18,000 to film a documentary on funerals for glaciers in Iceland, Mexico, and Oregon.
- Hiked and filmed on 5 glaciers, conducting 40+ interviews to capture diverse perspectives and narratives.
- Played a key role in preproduction by creating lighting diagrams, mood boards, shot lists, and pitch decks to support project vision and execution.
- Organized and managed footage; currently serving as the lead editor for the documentary project.

40 Years in the Making (Ongoing) | Independent Project

- Independently shot a mini documentary chronicling the 40-year journey behind the making of the hand-animated film *The Burial of Natty Bumppo*.
- Led creative direction and storytelling for the documentary, overseeing all aspects of production and handling logistics from start to finish.

Malaise (Summer 2024) | Director of Photography, Co-Editor, Colorist

- Served as DP for a heartfelt slice-of-life short film exploring themes of nostalgia and transition.
- Captured a reflective, intimate atmosphere using minimal lighting to enhance the film's emotional tone.
- Created and released the film's trailer on social media, generating 12.3K views.

I Prefer Not To Leave (Spring 2024) | Director of Photography

- Served as DP for a bilingual short film focusing on a conversation between a Mexican immigrant housekeeper and a Korean immigrant grandmother.
- Collaborated with the director to craft intimate, meaningful shots that emphasized the shared experience despite linguistic and cultural differences.

A Fate Worse Than Death (Spring 2024) | Director of Photography, Colorist

- Served as DP for a 20-minute psychological coming-of-age film set in early 2000s England, capturing the tension and existential themes of a man fearing death on his 23rd birthday.

Oxytoxin (Spring 2024) | Director of Photography, Colorist

- Directed photography and color graded a dramatic 20-minute short film about two couples uncovering darker secrets, using Dutch angles, high contrast lighting, and juxtaposition of bright and dark to amplify tension.

Darkest Stroke of Midnight (Fall 2023) | Director of Photography, Colorist

- Shot a no-dialogue short film with a modern take on film noir that captured a stalker's descent into madness.
- Color graded the film to amplify its dark, psychological tone. Took photos for posters and branding.

SKETCH (Spring 2023) | Key Grip and Digital Imaging Technician

- Responsible for rigging lighting equipment for 3-episode TV series at USC's School of Cinematic Arts.
- Contributed over 40+ hours/week on set in testing equipment, pre-lighting set and transferring/organizing footage.
- Led a team of 5-6 grips; responsible for communicating with Gaffer and Director of Photography to light the set.

Sound Not Noise (Fall 2022) | Independent Project

- Independently wrote, directed and shot a silent short film on restorative powers of nature; created mood boards and shot list for powerful visuals.
- Edited and colored the film, collaborating with a sound editor for compelling sound design.

Freewater Productions | Director of Photography and Gaffer

- Filmed and gaffed 10 different short films at Duke's student-run production company on RED/BlackMagic cameras.
- Utilized complex camera and lighting setups; trained new filmmakers on equipment usage and set etiquette.

TEACHING

Filmsets and Failure | Student Instructor

Fall 2024

- Incubated a semester-long course titled *Filmsets and Failure* through the *Introduction to College Teaching* course, learning to design syllabi, create effective assignments, and provide constructive feedback.
- Trained as a student instructor, designed the course as a group-learning experience simulating various filmmaking roles to foster hands-on, collaborative learning.

Internet Filmmaking: The Production Journey | Speaker

Fall 2024

- Presented to the Duke filmmaking and creator community on harnessing the power of internet film to tell compelling stories. Led an interactive exercise on taking an idea through all three stages of filmmaking- preproduction, production, and postproduction- with a focus on building technical skills.

Orientation Program Project Media | Speaker/Mentor

Summer 2022 - 2024

- Mentored 60+ incoming freshmen each summer on photography and videography, conducting workshops during orientation week to introduce them to campus media resources.
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