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IDIS 491V – Summer Internship 2005

Before I left West Lafayette at the end of the semester, I went in and talked to Bill Callison about possibly doing some gigs over the summer. He wasn't sure how things would work out, but that he would give me a call. In the middle of the week before the Virginia Beach gig, I got that call and I was on my way, setting up a busy but great couple weeks.

### **2005 Virginia Beach Patriotic Festival**

#### Thursday, May 26

I met Jess Hebda, Louie, Emily, and Abby at the Hall of Music early in the morning on Thursday, and we set out for Virginia Beach. The drive took the entire day and was mostly uneventful. By the time we got to our hotel, we met up with Bill, Quentin, Randall, and Barry Otto then went to bed.

#### Friday, May 27

Load in started pretty early on Friday, as there was a show that night. The guy who brought the LED from Michigan, Eric, showed up and Bill had Quentin and I help him. Setting up the wall was particularly difficult because the stage and scaffolding that the LED wall was to be suspended from were on the beach and we couldn't roll cases through the sand. We flagged down a forklift operator and had him carry all the cases over to the tiny platform we were building the wall on. The LED wall was going to be built row by row, so we had to connect 4 panels, lift the wall, move all the cases around to make room for the next 4 panels, then attach that row. We were as efficient as we could be, but the space restrictions slowed us down and we spent most of the load in just working on the LED wall. It was my first time building such a wall, though, and I learned a lot about the technology of the panels as well as practical tips for building and working with them.

The sand was a major issue for everyone because the ends of cables and equipment would be damaged if they were pulled across the beach. This required a lot of bagging, but we all worked together and things went smoothly. In all, we had the LED wall, two front of house cameras, and three handheld cameras set up for the show. The control room was the back of the equipment truck, but provided adequate room for us to hang out before and after the shows.

For the first show that night, I was a relief camera operator, but I ended up just watching Bill direct for a while. I ultimately want to direct someday, so I always enjoy opportunities to watch how other people cut shows. After a while, Emily started having problems with people bumping into the scaffolding that her camera was on, so I went out to let everyone know they couldn't do that. They listened for a while, then started causing problems again. Eventually we got the security guards to help out and create a barrier, but I had learned a lesson about how stubborn and oblivious people can be sometimes.

The rest of the show went well, and we spent the rest of the night hanging out in the lobby of our hotel. Jess Hebda and I went ghost hunting around a haunted hotel, but we didn't find any ghosts.

### Saturday, May 28

We arrived at the gig late in the morning after being held up by traffic. Virginia Beach was a busy place during the Patriotic Festival, and it took about half an hour to go a few miles. The stairs that we had at the back of the truck/control room were gone when we got there, and we found out that Wayne Newton's crew had "borrowed" them (without telling us). The crew eventually returned our stairs. For the show at night, I ran the wider front of house camera. Everything was really clicking, and at the end of the show Bill said it was one of the best shows he had cut in the last few years.

We had a great night after the show on Saturday. A few of us even stayed up until 6am and watched the sunrise over the Atlantic. It was a neat experience, and luckily we had a late call for Sunday so we could still get some sleep.

### Sunday, May 29

We showed up at the gig around 12 on Sunday and went through our usual setup routine. The biggest show of the weekend, the Rascal Flatts, was Sunday night, and they apparently needed to move some of the scaffolding around to accommodate their performance. Unfortunately for us, those changes involved us having to tear down and rebuild the two front of house cameras. It was a little stressful for a while, but we got it done, as always.

For the actual show that night, I got to run handheld. I started out on the stage right camera, then got moved down to the pit cam right before the show started. Because we had a one-person engineering crew, I was only able to shoot the crowd rather than moving back and forth between the stage and crowd. This was a learning experience because you always take the crowd shots for granted on tv, and sometimes forget that a person is filming that shot the whole time. The best thing about running the crowd cam down on the beach was that I was able to really interact with people and could see them getting excited about the video and being up on the LED wall.

As soon as the show was over we started load out, and encountered similar issues to load in. Quentin and I helped Eric tear down the LED wall and we had to keep flagging down the fork operator to move the cases because space was limited. The cases for the panels had to go from being upside down on the beach (to keep sand out of the wheels) to the deck, loaded up, then sent to the truck. Overall though, the load out went pretty well. It's always amazing to me how fast everything gets torn down after a show.

We were all exhausted by the end of the night, and tried to squeeze in a decent amount of sleep back at the hotel before the long drive home on Monday.

### Monday, May 30

Since we had loaded everything out the night before, all we had to do on Monday was get up and drive. It took 16 hours to get back, but everyone slept for part of the trip. The Virginia Beach Patriotic Festival was absolutely great and I hope I get to go next year.

## 2005 CMA Music Festival in Nashville, TN

### Monday, June 6

Because I was driving from Evansville, Bill had me head down to Nashville on Monday morning instead of Sunday afternoon. As luck would have it, everyone was headed out to the vehicles to go to the stadium just as I pulled into the hotel parking lot. Space was somewhat tight, so I ended up taking four other people over to the stages.

The first thing we did at the Coliseum (the main stages) was clear out what would be the control room. We moved out all of the football gear be stashed away and rolled in rack after rack of monitors, switchers, and engineering equipment. After the major moving was done, several people headed over to the river stage to load in there. I stayed at the Coliseum, and did various things like wire internet across the control room and organize Bill's business area. The rest of the day consisted of more small things like that, and occasionally battling rain. Around 9pm we called it a day and went back to the hotel. It was a pretty relaxing night and we got quite a bit of sleep for the long day ahead.



### Tuesday, June 7

Tuesday was a busy day over at the Coliseum, a lot of the lighting was being hung, and were putting three huge LED walls. I was put on the LED crew, and I knew what I was doing since I had built the one in Virginia Beach a week and a half before that. Putting together the screens was much easier in the Coliseum than the beach though,



because we could wheel all the cases right up to the motors to hook the panels up. Specifically, I ran the "pickle", which is the controller for all the motors. All that time spent playing video games finally paid off, as using the pickle was exactly like using a controller for a game. It was a little nerve-racking knowing that I was in control of very expensive LED panels that were heavy enough to crush someone, but I was told that I was doing a pretty good job running everything.

Because of all the other activity going on and a couple minor issues, building the three screens took a decent portion of the day. The late afternoon and early evening were spent running triax and other cables underneath the stage. This proved to be somewhat of a challenge because everything had to be laid down in a way that would make load out fairly easy. There were also puddles and water bins (to weight the stage) that we couldn't let the cables be in. Overall it was an exhausting day, but we got a lot accomplished.

### Wednesday, June 8

I left Wednesday morning to attend my grandmother's funeral back in Evansville. Most of the major work was finished at the stadium and River Stage, so I didn't miss out on anything too important.

### Thursday, June 9

I got back to Nashville a few hours before the first set kicked off in the Coliseum. After sitting around for a few minutes, Bill assigned jobs for everyone and I was to run the high and wide camera at the very top of the stadium as far away from the stage as you could get. It was quite the view in person, but proved to be too wide of a shot for video and was only used a couple times the entire night. Still, I had fun being on the crew and listening to all the direction being given. Being far away from the stage, I could see how everything came together on the video end and integrated with the live show.

### Friday, June 10

Friday was my first time working at the river stage, and I had a lot of fun rotating positions throughout the day. Because the shows ran from late morning until late afternoon, there was a constant shuffling of camera operators to keep everyone fresh. I ran handheld on both sides of the stage, the pit cam, and the long lenses. I enjoyed the river stage all week because the show was done just like the one on the main stage in the Coliseum, but the pressure wasn't quite so high. This allowed me and the other interns to get lots of camera time.

When the river stage shows were over, we headed over to the Coliseum. I was again assigned the high and wide camera, but it had been moved much closer to the stage and my shot was used several times throughout the night. Still, the lens didn't have a huge zoom, so my shots were limited. The Rascal Flatts performed that night, and it was particularly fun for me to film a different angle of the show. Later on that night, several of us went to the Waffle House as we had done earlier in the week, and had a nice meal before bed.



### Saturday, June 11

Saturday was largely identical to Friday. I started at the river stage, ran all of the various cameras, and have a great time doing it. The only major issue we faced was a lot of humidity on the equipment at the river stage because the power had been shut off at

night, preventing the air conditioner from running. Fritz worked really hard to dry off the equipment, and got it all running before the first show. The rest of the day was just like the other days at the river stage.

When I got over to the Coliseum, I was set on not running the wide camera for the show since I had run that camera the past two night. I actually ended up still running one the wider cameras, but it had a much bigger lens than the other cameras and I could get a lot closer to the action. My shot was used a lot during the show and I enjoyed that. There was a little rain that night and I spent part of the show under a tarp, but I had a great time as always. Like the previous nights, we all hung out a little bit at the hotel and rested up for Sunday and load out.

### Sunday, June 12

Sunday morning was really rainy, and the shows in the morning at the river stage were postponed. The show eventually started at noon, and all the sets were shortened to make up for the lost time. I ran all the cameras again and had a pretty typical day again.

When I was in the control room taking a break, I mentioned wanting to cut a set. Bailey was out doing something else, so Fritz and Em had been directing all day. They said it would be fine if I directed for a while, so I hopped in the chair and cut away. This was highlight of my week, because I was finally getting to direct a show that a lot of people were watching. I cut one set, then gave the seat back to Em. It was a fun experience and made me want to direct even more.

After loading out the river stage, we all headed over to the Coliseum to get ready for the big load out. When we showed up, they had been having a lot of problems with moisture getting in the handheld cameras from all the rain and humidity. I happened to walk in right as Cole was returning a wet camera, and I was sent out with it a few minutes later. I had been wanting to run handheld on the main stage all week, and I finally got to. The camera ended up having more moisture problems, so I wasn't out there for too long, but I got the experience of being up in front of the crowd filming the show, and it was a blast.



After I returned the handheld to the control room, Bill sent me and a few others to start rolling cases down near the control room to get load out started as soon as the last act finished. I almost ran into Gretchen Wilson as she was walking up the ramp after her set, but Cole pulled me out of the way at the last second. We let some people clear out for a few minutes, then went to work. I had just drunk 2 Red Bulls, so I was ready to go. Most of what I did during load out was pulling cables—a task made complicated by the maze of other people's cables wound all through the scaffolding under the stage. I was amazed at how efficiently everyone worked. Every time someone walked across the field or down the tunnel, they carried something with them. Finally, after four very short hours, we were done. Everyone was amazed at how well load out went, and we were all

in a good mood as we headed to the Waffle House. Food never tasted better. At roughly 6am we were back at the hotel and in bed after a really long day and night.



### Monday, June 13

Monday wasn't really a new day, as we hadn't slept much from load out. Even though I was driving back separately, I just woke up with everyone else and we left Nashville at the same time. The entire week was extremely exhausting, but one of the best times I've ever had. This is what I want to do with my life, and even working as an unpaid intern was great. Hopefully next year I'll be able to go back and be on paid status. Working at the CMA Music Festival is something that no class can ever create or teach, and I learned countless things about the live video world that I'm sure I'll be using for years to come.