**Question 1: In your own words, why is a creative spirit the most important quality in a director?**

**Answer:** Creative spirit is the most important quality in a director because it keeps him/her mentally active to explore the human condition deeply. For example, the depths of hell (as it relates to human nature) depicted in “Silence of the Lambs”, or the boundaries of greed explored in “Wall Street”, or the dichotomy of two brothers portrayed in “Rain Man”, are all examples of very risky movies because they show some unpleasant areas of human nature. It’s difficult to watch “cannibalism”, “greed” and “autism” in action. But, due to the creative spirit, these topics are explored and exhibited on the silver screen, are applauded on the big screen and are immensely successful. Creative spirit ensures that we do not shy away from topics that are difficult to explore. The director needs to own and exhibit this characteristic honestly in order to truthfully portray the narrative for the screen.

**Question 2: Were you prepared enough? What part of pre-production would you focus more on next time?**

**Answer:** I was prepared as much as I could be for my directional debut: I broke down the script, I did the shot list, I looked at the location before-hand and broke down what I could and couldn’t’ do during production. However, the one thing I would focus on more next time, would be to get the DOP and the editor more deeply involved in pre-production. I have learned during editing, that production, ultimately, needs to be looked through an editor’s eye. Of course, the actors should be able to give great performances and we need enough coverage. But with discipline, and with the editor’s eye, we can be more economical during production, and can see no surprises during post production.

**Question 3: Do you feel like you communicated well with the other departments on set?**

**Answer:** Yes. I discussed, in front of the DOP, with the actors, the purpose of the scene, the power dynamics and asked the actors to rehearse amongst themselves. I also discussed with them, the camera placement and how they need to move with respect to the camera. I set the proper limitations and the marked the territory that they should walk to, for good camera work. Then, while they rehearsed, I worked with the DOP crew (lighting, included) to properly place the cameras, focus, use proper camera settings. I discussed with the continuity person, asked him to take pictures for the scenes so that we maintain good continuity. I also discussed with the sound person about proper placement of sound equipment. Before we began shooting early in the day, we changed the room settings so that it could work for a night scene. We wrapped black garbage bags outside the windows and ensured that no light came in. We used ambient light along with our lights, for proper night-effect. The picture looked great.

**Question 4: Were you able to communicate clear directions to your actors? Could you answer the six questions for them?**

**Answer:** When asked the six questions, they were able to answer them with great confidence. This made the job easier for me. The actors had a lot of confidence in me and were comfortable around me. They were way both older than I was, so whenever there were disagreements, I ensured that I came down to their level (on the floor, where they were seated), spoke softly about alternatives and convinced them that my way of placing the actors will work out better for the scene. They calmly accepted and were eventually happy with the professionalism exhibited during the production. They said so, as well, to my mentor.

**Question 5: Were you satisfied with your choice of location?**

**Answer:** Yes. The location fit perfectly in to the needs of the scenes.

**Question 6: What was the most difficult decision to make on your feet?**

**Answer:** Based on the calculations I had made during pre-production, for the location, I had conceived of a shot, that would require the camera to move 270-degrees (i.e., show three walls). Due to the placement of the lighting, it was impossible to get that shot. We ended up either showing the lights on tripods and if we took out the lights, the lighting would be inconsistent in the shot. To fix the issue, the DOP and I decided that we’ll stick to two walls and slow down the action. The shot was even more effective this way (as we realized it in post-production, as well). We lost a little bit of time and ended up missing a transition shot. But during post-production, we faded to black, and jumped to the next shot; we trusted the audience to understand what happened during the fade-to-black.

**Question 7: What aspect of production went smoothest?**

**Answer:** The crew, the actors, the costumes showed up on time. Assembling the equipment, setting up the lights and starting out with the scene, all happened within 60 mins. So, the start-up of the production was the smoothest.

**Question 8: Give an example of Murphy's Law in action during production.**

**Answer:** During the first night of the production, the camera’s supplementary equipment was not working as expected. The follow-focus wasn’t focusing properly and the Ronin (camera stabilizer for moving shots) wasn’t steady. The actors had acted out the same shot several times before they started to give me a look. Based on the visual feedback I got from them, I decided to do hand-held shots on the spot. Although the final footage was a little shaky and not as firm as the other footage, we were truthful to the intent of the scene and delivered beyond expectations.

**Question 9: Why do you think the scene you shot is the best representation of your script?**

**Answer:** The scene I shot was not a part of my script. It was for a client, who hired my mentor to deliver a Web series (10-mins each episode, 10 episodes total). My mentor was out for two weekends of the shoot, and that’s when he gave me the reins to direct those two weekends. I did the pre-production, script break-down and shot-list by myself in an “Assistant Director” capacity.

**Question 10: Do you feel confident about your performance on set? What do you think was your strongest trait? Weakest?**

**Answer:** I certainly feel confident about my performance on the set. My strongest trait is my communication and my adaptability. I make everyone feel at comfort on the set, I ensure the food and water is available there on time. When the time comes, the crew and the actors respect me, because I listen to them and take care of them. As for adaptability, I am quick to think on my feet about alternative ways of shooting and convincing the others to follow suit. I also listen carefully to the producer and the DOP and incorporate their ideas in to production and delivering the product. I make decisions in split-seconds, and ensure that production time and effort is not lost. I also ensure to give good breaks to the crew and actors so that they can recompose themselves. One time, I took the crew on a one-hour drive and we talked nothing about the production needs, just so everyone could have a breather. My weakest trait is to compose the shots without consideration to the light. Given that we have only a limited amount of time at the location, I should have considered how the light would impact my shots and then composed my shot list. These are some skills (putting on a DOP hat) that I’d like to pick up as move on to future projects.