

The Point-of-View Playbook

Auteur-driven filmmaking, new media, and the craft of making something worth watching

Lockett Pictures — First Edition — July 2026



This e-book is editorial and educational commentary published by Lockett Pictures in July 2026. It reflects the working philosophy and production practices of an independent film and new-media company based in Los Angeles; it is not legal, financial, or distribution advice, and it is not a guarantee of any commercial or festival outcome. Production incentives, platform terms, and industry conditions change constantly — always verify current rules with the relevant film commission, guild, or platform before you rely on them. Nothing here should be read as a promise of representation, financing, or results.

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Foreword

Anyone can point a camera. The hard part — the part that separates a film from footage — is having something to say and the discipline to say it clearly. This book is about that discipline.

Lockett Pictures is the independent film and new-media company of filmmaker Devin Lockett, working out of Los Angeles with a team of production professionals. We make auteur-driven films, web video, and digital media for audiences who want more than the ordinary. That phrase — "more than the ordinary" — is not marketing. It is a standard we hold every project to, and this book is our attempt to write down how we try to meet it.

We wrote this for the filmmaker at the beginning: the one with a strong idea, a limited budget, and no interest in making something forgettable. Read it once through, then keep it near the whiteboard. The checklists at the end of each chapter are meant to be argued with, marked up, and adapted to your own project. The craft is personal; the process can be shared.

Chapter 1 — The Point of View Comes First

The single most valuable thing an independent film can have is a point of view. Not a budget, not a star, not a distribution deal — a reason to exist that no algorithm and no committee could have generated. When people say a film is "auteur-driven," this is what they mean: there is an author behind it, and you can feel their hand in every choice.

Point of view is not the same as plot. Two filmmakers can shoot the same story and produce entirely different works, because point of view lives in the choices around the story — what the camera lingers on, what it refuses to show, whose face we stay with when the room goes quiet. A studio system optimizes those choices toward the middle, where the most people will tolerate the result. An independent studio does the opposite: it protects the specific, the strange, the personal, because that is where memorable work comes from.

For Lockett Pictures, protecting point of view is a structural decision, not a temperamental one. Creative control is kept in the filmmaker's hands from development through the final cut, precisely so the vision survives the hundred small compromises that every production demands. Compromise is inevitable; surrender is optional.

The practical test is simple. Before you commit to a project, you should be able to answer one question in a single sentence: why does this film need to exist, and why do I need to be the one to make it? If you cannot answer that, you are not ready to shoot — you are ready to keep developing.

Field Checklist

- State the film's reason to exist in one sentence
- Identify the choices that carry your point of view
- Decide where creative control lives before you start

Chapter 2 — Development Before a Frame Is Shot

Most of a film's problems are cheapest to fix in development, when the only things being spent are time and attention. The same problems become expensive on set and ruinous in post. Serious independent production front-loads its thinking on purpose.

Development at Lockett Pictures means shaping an idea into a story worth producing before a single frame is shot. That includes the obvious deliverables — concept, script, treatment — but it also includes the less glamorous work of interrogation. Does the second act actually turn, or does it just get louder? Is the ending earned or convenient? Are we making this scene because the story needs it or because we like it? An honest development process asks these questions early, when the answer can still change the outcome without changing the budget.

Script is the foundation, but a script is not a film. Part of development is translating words on a page into a visual and tonal plan: how the thing will look, how it will move, what it will feel like to sit in front of. A short deck of references, a rough shot vocabulary, a color and sound sensibility — these are cheap to make and they align a whole team faster than any meeting.

The discipline of development is also the discipline of saying no. Every idea you fully develop is three ideas you chose not to chase. That focus is not a limitation; it is what makes the finished work coherent. A studio that develops everything finishes nothing. A studio that develops deliberately ships work with a spine.

Field Checklist

- Interrogate structure and ending before production
- Translate the script into a visual and tonal plan
- Kill or park ideas that dilute the central one

Chapter 3 — Building the Right Small Team

Independent film is not a solo art, even when it is a singular vision. The auteur model works because a small group of skilled people agree to serve one point of view — and the assembling of that group is itself a creative act.

The strength of a small team is speed and alignment. A large crew has to be managed; a small, right crew can be trusted. When the director of photography understands the film's point of view, they light for it without being told. When the editor understands it, they cut toward it instinctively. That shared understanding is worth more than raw headcount, and it is why Lockett Pictures builds around professionals who can carry the vision, not just execute a task.

Building the team is ongoing. Good collaborators are always worth meeting, and the studio's standing invitation to production professionals — reach out with your credentials — reflects a real belief: the next project is only as good as the people willing to commit to it. A director who treats crewing as a one-time transaction rebuilds from zero every film. A director who treats it as a relationship accumulates a company of people who get better together.

Two cautions. First, hire for the film in front of you, not the résumé; a brilliant credit on the wrong project is still the wrong project. Second, protect the culture. A small team amplifies whatever is in the

room — talent and generosity, but also ego and dysfunction. The producer's quiet job is to keep the room worth being in.

Field Checklist

- Crew for shared understanding, not just skill
- Treat collaboration as an ongoing relationship
- Protect the culture of a small room

Chapter 4 — Shooting in Los Angeles in 2026

Location is a production decision with creative and financial consequences, and in 2026 Los Angeles is a strong place to make an independent film. Production has been returning to the region as California's expanded film and television tax incentive draws work back home, and for an LA-based studio that means more crews, more locations, and more experienced partners within reach.

The practical advantage of shooting where you are based is depth of infrastructure. Los Angeles offers an unmatched density of gear houses, post facilities, experienced crew, and permit-ready locations. For a small independent team, that density lowers the friction of every day: a replacement lens is across town, not across a state line; a specialist you need for one afternoon is a phone call away. Friction is the silent budget-killer on independent shoots, and geography that reduces it pays for itself.

The incentive landscape rewards preparation. Tax credits, rebates, and permitting rules are specific, deadline-driven, and subject to change, and the productions that benefit are the ones that plan around the program from the start rather than discovering it in post. Build incentive eligibility into the budget and schedule early, and confirm the current terms with the relevant film commission before you count on a single dollar — the rules in force when you read this may differ from the rules in force when you shoot.

None of this replaces judgment about what the story needs. Sometimes a film has to travel because the location is the point. But when the story is portable, the case for shooting in a deep, incentivized, home-based market is strong — and in 2026, Los Angeles is making that case louder than it has in years.

Field Checklist

- Use local infrastructure to reduce daily friction
- Plan incentive eligibility into budget and schedule
- Verify current film-commission rules before relying on them

Chapter 5 — New Media Is Not a Consolation Prize

There is an old hierarchy in which features sit at the top and everything else — web video, short-form, digital content — is what you do while you wait to make "real" films. Lockett Pictures rejects that hierarchy. New media is its own discipline, with its own craft, and treating it as second-rate is how you make second-rate work in it.

Web video and digital media reach audiences on the platforms they actually watch, and those platforms have their own grammar. Pacing, framing, sound, and length that work in a theater do not automatically work in a feed, and pretending otherwise produces content that feels transplanted rather than made. The studio's approach is to bring cinematic craft to digital-first work — concept through delivery — while respecting that the format has its own rules. Craft is transferable; assumptions are not.

New media also serves the larger creative practice. Web series and short-form pieces let a filmmaker develop voice, test ideas, and build an audience at a fraction of a feature's cost and risk. A strong short can prove a concept; a well-made web series can build the exact audience a future film will need. Treated seriously, new media is not the thing you do instead of film — it is part of how a modern independent studio builds toward film and sustains itself between projects.

Websites, SEO, and digital storytelling round out the discipline. A project's vision does not stop at the edge of the screen; it lives in how the work is presented, found, and remembered online. Carrying the point of view into that layer is not marketing overhead — it is the difference between work that reaches the right viewers and work that disappears.

Field Checklist

- Respect each platform's native grammar
- Use short-form to develop voice and audience
- Extend the point of view into how work is presented online

Chapter 6 — Post-Production as Second Authorship

A film is written three times: on the page, on the set, and in the edit. The last of these is where a great deal of the point of view is finally locked, which is why serious independents treat post-production as authorship, not cleanup.

Editorial is where the film's rhythm is discovered. The same footage can be paced into tension or into tedium; the same performance can be shaped into subtlety or melodrama depending on where the cut lands. A good editor working in service of the film's point of view is not assembling — they are composing, and the director's job in the edit is to keep the composition true to what the film is trying to say.

Color, sound, and finishing carry the tone the rest of the process built. Color grades an emotional register; sound design fills the space the picture leaves; the final mix decides what the audience notices and what they merely feel. These are not technical afterthoughts — they are expressive tools, and in a small, focused team they are often where a modest production earns a look and feel well beyond its budget.

Post is also where the temptation to fix everything in the edit must be resisted. Editing can rescue a great deal, but it cannot manufacture a point of view that was never shot. The best post-production amplifies a coherent vision; it cannot invent one. Which is why everything in this book points back to the same discipline: decide what you are making, and then make every stage serve it.

Field Checklist

- Treat the edit as composition, not assembly

- Use color, sound, and mix as expressive tools
- Keep post in service of the vision you shot

Chapter 7 — Reaching an Audience Directly

A finished film that no one sees is a private diary. Distribution — getting the work in front of the right people — is part of the job, and in 2026 the tools for reaching an audience directly are more accessible than ever to a small, focused studio.

The center of gravity has shifted toward direct-to-audience relationships. Creators increasingly reach viewers through email lists, memberships, and private screenings rather than depending entirely on gatekeepers, and that shift favors makers with a clear point of view and a defined audience. The work that travels directly is the work that means something specific to someone specific — exactly the auteur-driven material this studio exists to make. A film for everyone is a film for no one; a film for someone can be shared, recommended, and returned to.

The market conditions support this. Worldwide spending on lower-budget independent films has grown substantially, which means there is real and expanding demand for exactly the kind of independently produced, distinctive work a small studio makes. Meanwhile, falling costs for high-end production tools and AI-assisted editing and finishing put studio-grade capability within reach of a lean team. The gap between what a small studio can make and what it can distribute has never been narrower.

The discipline here is to build audience relationships before you need them. An email list assembled during production, a following developed through short-form work, a community around the studio's point of view — these are assets that compound, and they turn each finished project from a cold launch into a warm one. Distribution is not the last step you bolt on; it is a relationship you cultivate the whole way through.

Field Checklist

- Build direct audience relationships early
- Make work specific enough to be shared
- Use lean, modern tools to close the make-and-reach gap

Conclusion: Make the Thing Only You Can Make

Everything in this book reduces to a single instruction: make the thing only you can make. The point of view that comes first, the development that protects it, the small team that serves it, the location that supports it, the new media that extends it, the post that amplifies it, the audience you reach directly with it — all of it exists to get one specific, authored piece of work into the world with its vision intact.

The industry in 2026 rewards this. Production is returning to Los Angeles, the independent market is growing, and the tools to make and distribute distinctive work are within a small studio's reach. But tools and timing are only the conditions. The work itself still comes down to having something to say and the discipline to say it well — which is the one thing no incentive, platform, or piece of technology can supply.

That is the whole job, and it is a genuinely hopeful one. The ordinary is crowded. The specific is open. Make something worth watching, made the only way you could have made it, and there is an audience waiting to find it.

References

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