

## Podcast “Filming in Portugal. See the big picture” | Season 2

### Transcription of the episode 5 with Lori Balton and Eduardo Rodrigalvarez

**[00:00:15 Martin Dale]:** So I'd like to welcome everyone to another episode of the podcast of the Portugal Film Commission *Filming in Portugal. See the big picture*. I'm the host, Martin Dale. I'm a journalist contributing to *Variety*. And today we're going to be talking about location scouting and management. Delighted to have two guests, Lori Balton, who's based in California, the USA, who's been working over three decades - if I believe that's correct, as a location scout with experience pretty much across the board internationally and also some connection to Portugal. And Eduardo Rodrigalvarez, which is a difficult surname to pronounce, but I hope I didn't massacre it too much. So Eduardo Rodrigalvarez is working with Palma Pictures in Mallorca, where he's responsible for a head of locations, working across all formats, so working out of Spain, but across the board, with some productions linked to Portugal as well. And, so to kick this off, we'll alternate between the two of you, but perhaps begin with Lori, if you could talk about what it is to be a location scout and the sort of international dimension of your work.

**[00:01:32 Lori Balton]:** Well, it's interesting to watch how the industry is shifting a little bit. And right now, most of the work does seem to be in Europe. I have been doing a lot of research where I virtually scout the whole world. And it's been great because I've been learning a lot.

I started in Los Angeles, so I started working here. Then when my daughter got older, I was able to travel more. And now I do predominantly international work. I also do a lot of virtual scouting, which has been interesting.

It used to be that I read a script and I let them know where I think the best locations are for them to accomplish the storytelling that they need to do. Now I get a script, and I also get a list of where the incentives are and where they want me to look, so it's not... It's unfortunate because I'm not only reporting by showing pictures of places, I'm also reporting by showing what the incentives are. So it affects a lot of my work in what I believe to be a negative. But it's a business and that's the way of the world.

**[00:02:34 Martin]:** But the negative could you just explain a bit why, in what sense?

**[00:02:39 Lori]:** In the sense that the money is what's driving things completely, over the visuals and over the creative. The only place that I see that I get a little bit of leeway and can have some fun with is when I'm scouting for plate shots, and because the footprint of who I'm working with is so small, I can indeed go all over the world. On a movie recently, it was a Marvel movie, *Shang-Chi and the Ten Rings*, I got to scout up in northern Vietnam along the Chinese border. And it didn't matter that there weren't airports, there weren't hotels, because if they did settle on something there, the crew would be so small that it's very adaptable. And then, of course, they were going specifically for the visual and the incentive didn't come into play. So there are still times where the visual matters most. And there's also certain directors, I would add, that the visual always matters most, and then they get into loggerheads with the studio over, you know, incentives versus what you're actually seeing on the screen.

**[00:03:41 Martin]:** And just before switching to Eduardo, I saw on your website, a focus on certain countries: Georgia, Iceland, Jordan, New Zealand, Peru, Portugal, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam. Is that sort of more recent projects or just explain?

**[00:03:59 Lori]:** Exactly. Those are those are places that I've been recently or as recently that I've had time to actually adjust my website. And then for projects that I'm working on, they have their own specific page that's private on my site. So these were just some movies that have come out already that I was able to put some pictures up or pictures from fam trips that I've done.

**[00:04:22 Martin]:** Great. Well, I'd like to come back on some of those issues. But just switching over to Eduardo, talk a bit about, as head of locations, what that involves. And perhaps also when you first became involved in the whole question of location management and locations.

**[00:04:41 Eduardo Rodrigalvarez]:** Well, I started in the UK, early 2000 and so my school of learning started in London, driving a van, if that makes sense. And then from there, make my way up. I did a bit of production, and then soon I discovered, because I didn't know that locations existed as a career path. And I did love it very much because I can travel, I can take pictures. I go with my phone and my laptop. That's my office, my camera, and that's it, I can go anywhere. So I was lucky to be based in London. That is kind a hub where you can go... It's like the center, I mean, I'm not going to say the world, but you know, you start there and then they send you everywhere. I was sent to Sri Lanka, to Tunisia, to whatever it was. They will send you with a brief and off you go for a month or a few weeks or whatever. And actually the scouting was my favorite part, you know. Now I'm the head of location, it is a bit more office based, and I love it, but it's not as much fun as I used to.

But obviously, you know, as you get older, you need to settle a little bit and say, "okay, let's settle, because I need to have a life", if that makes sense. So you need to have less crazy lifestyle and more like a stable lifestyle. And in one of the jobs I end up here shooting in Mallorca, which was *White Lines* - which Palma Pictures was the service company for the job - and I was already thinking, maybe Spain, obviously, I'm Spanish, you know. I was 20 years based in London, and I was like "Spain sounds like a nice place, you know? And I am local from here, I speak Spanish. I got everything in there. Maybe there would be the right opportunity." So it happened, I came for a job and they saw what I did. They understood what I was doing. And from there, after that job, I stay here.

You know, I was like temporarily "I'm gonna try" and then Covid kick in. Because I did *White Lines* in 2019 and actually my life kind of shifted, if that makes sense. And now I'm very happily here in Mallorca, five years later, having an in-house team that I'm building up from the get-go and things like that, which is quite nice.

**[00:07:19 Martin]:** And, you're based in Mallorca, Eduardo, but the productions are pretty much across the board. Lori was talking about the importance of tax incentives, Mallorca has some incentives. So explain a bit about the mix between the stuff that's actually done in Mallorca and outside.

**[00:07:38 Eduardo]:** So Mallorca is a group of islands in the Mediterranean of the east coast of Spain. And luckily the headquarters of the company are here, which I'm very glad that we have headquarters here, but we do productions all over Spain and Portugal.

So Portugal is something that we started a few years back, maybe after Covid basically, 2021, something like that. We started to try as well Portugal, but we cover all of Spain. So we are shooting in the Canary Islands. We shoot in Madrid, Barcelona, Alicante, Valencia, Malaga, Almeria, the North, Bilbao, all of the Spanish territory.

So, obviously, in the current company that we have, we are like 60 something people, full-time people, and basically we do projects from entertainment or we do projects from film and TV, or we do projects from advertisement or photo shoots. So the range is quite open basically. And essentially every single project, the first step generally is locations, you know? Like on a budget, but it comes to locations and then we are like, "okay, where can we shoot this?" And then you have to reference images, prepare visuals and so on, to demonstrate that... reading their briefs or their treatments or their scripts or whatever it is, depends on the format, the location exists or can be done on Spain or in Portugal as such, if that makes sense. That's kind of the process at the beginning.

**[00:09:23 Martin]:** Okay. That's great. I'd be interested to know about your own connection to Portugal as a location. And also, I was very impressed looking at your site, the aesthetic quality, to be honest, of the images you've had of Portugal, showing very much a very dynamic range of visuals that are available in the country. So, if you could talk a bit about your connection, obviously, to Portugal. There are the tax incentive schemes, which is the financial side, but there's also a very wide range of locations. So talk a bit about your experience and what makes Portugal attractive. And then I'd like to get back to Eduardo on the same issue.

**[00:10:03 Lori]:** Sure. Well, I was first introduced to Portugal, I want to say, as long as 20 years ago by Margarida Adónis, who has a company called We Are Ready to Shoot. And I met her at Location Expo, which was something that AFCI used to do years ago, where they would bring all film commissions together with location managers and producers. It was sort of an earlier version of what has become Focus, I think, is a fair assessment.

Anyway, Margarida was there and we met and we hit it off, and a little bit after that she put together a fam tour with my friend James Lynn, who sadly has deceased recently, who was a location manager, and then at Universal, and a couple of other location people, and she took us around at her own expense. She took us around Portugal. And she basically turned us all to believers, and we all went into the world bringing news of how great Portugal was, how many locations there are that are so varied and so visual. And so, you know, it's hard to find a place that is so small and has so many different looks. So that was really my first meeting with Portugal. And then over the years, Margarida has always helped me out on projects, giving me, as Eduardo said, mood books, which are references for what's available at any given location.

She helped me out quite a bit on the live action version of *The Little Mermaid*, where we were looking for a beach for reshoots, and she helped me with giving me tide charts and the paths of the sun. And I mean, she went above and beyond with more than what I needed to present the locations to the producers. So I haven't yet actually brought a show to Portugal. But knowing what great help there is there, and what great locations there are, and now the incentive, it's at the top of my list.

**[00:12:01 Martin]:** As a location scout, and as I say, there's a strong aesthetic quality to the images you take, so you're very much coming in with your eye that will be relevant to the director, to the production team, of what they're looking for. If you could talk a bit about, as a scout, there are these logistical financial factors you talked about, but also you're kind of conveying often digitally to them or through images and so on, an atmosphere, a mood... I mean that there's an artistic quality to that, that you've got to capture particular angles and perspectives. If you could talk a bit more of the challenges that involves.

**[00:12:50 Lori]:** Well, yes, challenges. But honestly, it's the reason that I love my job. I mean, I'm so grateful that I have some sort of creative input in helping find the canvas for a director to tell

their story on. And I've been doing this for 35 years, and I started out as a location manager. So I understand the logistics and I understand all of that stuff. So I keep it in mind while I'm scouting. But I also work a lot with a lot of the same directors or a lot of the same production designers. So we've developed a shorthand, and I know what they like. And to me, yes, you have to take the big picture and you have to, you know, when we first start doing this job, we're taught "you shoot in one direction and then you get the reverse angle". And it's evolved so much for me, that I present the image and then I like to get beauty shots that sort of are evocative of the image, that can maybe help if they don't go to shoot that one place, they can find little things to capture from it and bring it to the place that they shoot. So it's always an evolving thing because you never know where they're going to end up.

As Eduardo said, I mean, we've got the best job in the world because we travel to beautiful places and we take images. And when I say beautiful places, I don't mean gorgeous sunsets on a beach. I can find a disgusting alley with broken bottles to be beautiful if the light happens to be hitting it right, and it happens to be a key element by which the director can tell their story. So I have a very weird definition of what's beautiful.

**[00:14:31 Martin]:** If I could just follow up on that. What caught my attention looking at the images of Portugal. Obviously Portugal has a mixture of old and new modern, ancient, but that can sound kind of cliched, as it were. Are there any things in particular that catch your eye and that you think are attractive for international productions that can only be found in Portugal?

**[00:14:57 Lori]:** Oh, that's really an unfair question because I've been scouting an entirely different part of the world recently. But one thing that I remember in Portugal and if I'm not wrong, it's right in Lisbon. I don't remember what it is, and I sound like an idiot, but it was a building that was right in the water, like a really old building that was right in the water. And it was just... It's such a stunning image. And I love that kind of contrast, you know? And just putting unexpected things in unexpected places. And then there's Sintra, which is just, you know, mind blowing. But those incredible spiral staircases, and the patina and everything, it's just wonderful. And in Lisbon, too, you have the old train cars coming through the city, and there's old sections that are windy and curvy with all of the cobblestones. And then you just turn and you're in a new part, or there's a modern building sticking up. So it's the contrast that I find interesting. But again, it always depends upon the story that you're trying to tell.

**[00:16:01 Martin]:** That's great. Well, if I could, Eduardo, following on from that, as with your company very much focused on the Iberian Peninsula, if that's correct. But within the Iberian Peninsula and the islands, Mallorca, Canary Islands, there is a huge variety of locations. So within Spain you've got Andalusia, very arid landscapes, in the South. You've got very green landscapes with things in common with the north of Portugal, let's say in Galicia or Asturias. What's the balance between...? Obviously, you've got to find the right place for the look and the needs of the production, the financial factors, the logistical factors come into play as well. So talk a bit about how that works in practice. And perhaps talk about your experience with Portugal a bit more.

**[00:16:53 Eduardo]:** Well, on the selection, generally at the very early stages, you know, you go the briefs that you could be sitting anywhere, you know, you could be shooting on a tropical line or the equatorial line. We can shoot it in the Caribbean, or we can shoot it in Italy, or we can shoot in Greece. It's sort of, what is the thing that's going to make us go to this place? Obviously, one of the key things is the locations that are needed for the story to be told exist. You know what I mean?

On my experience, Portugal has a range of options. Obviously Spain has a lot of range of options. But Portugal, when I been there, has a flavor, a flavor that Spain doesn't have, which is different to Spain and is different to other things. And when you are in there, you feel you are in Portugal. You know, even though it's in the Iberian Peninsula, and it should be very similar. Actually, it's different. You know what I mean? It has their own accent. If I make sense, of their own style, you feel different when you're in there. Because you think as well of logistics from the early stages.

So you're looking for places that, without moving the unit too much, you can... If you can have Afghanistan and Italy, Mexico, half an hour away from each other - better. You know, sometimes these decisions matter. And Portugal has that range, for example. When I'm in Lisbon, we could double it up for San Francisco easily. You know what I mean. Or with the yellow trams and the bridge that you have in there. Or we could double it up for Paris, or we could double it up for many different regions, which from a production point of view, at the very earliest stages when they're taking these decisions, it is an asset, you know, to be able to have the variety so close by. You know, it's easier to convince an executive producer or an exec to say "oh, well, we should shoot here". Not only because of tax incentives and all these benefits and all these fiscal advantages, mainly is the locations and how different, how a range of diversity of locations are within an hour distance, within two hours distance, if that makes sense.

**[00:19:15 Martin]:** And you mentioned the question of the incentives. As Lori said at the beginning, incentives in many ways, increasingly as part of the mix, as it were, in choosing locations. Within Spain itself, there's not just a single incentive across the whole country. It's more specific parts of Spain that have their own specific incentives. For instance, the Canary Islands, I think is the highest of all, but it's pretty much varied. So, how does that affect... Like Lori was saying, often that's a pretty important factor in deciding, in addition to all the other factors you've just been mentioning. How in practice does that work? How important is it? And in the case, again this is a podcast from Portugal, I keep bringing you back to Portugal, but there's the incentives here. To what extent will that determine the shoot?

**[00:20:11 Eduardo]:** The part of tax incentives, there is people within the company that are the experts on that, if that makes sense. That's not something I am an expert, or I would like to put me in a meeting to talk about. Because I don't know the details of all of that. But to summarize it very quickly, you know, we have to say, Portugal, Spain has different rebates because you have to look at Spain like a country with 17 kingdoms, if that makes sense, 17 states. And each state has their own rules and things. You know what I mean? Like the United States, its 17 states, basically. And each autonomous community has their own tax incentives and own rules and so on. While Portugal is more unified. So that's an advantage, on that front.

Some advantages I see on Portugal is that, in Portugal, to date, last time I checked, maybe that has changed, I don't know, but recently, last year, it is not like when you're working in films in the UK or Spain or stuff like that, you have to do PAYE most of the crew, if that makes sense. While in Portugal it's all freelancing.

Essentially you're saving money on cost to the production because you're making the crew themselves responsible to pay their own taxes and not the production company to have to take that up, if that makes sense, and add it into fringes. So that's an advantage. That is the case when you purchase things in Portugal is actually, there is a system of validation of tickets, I didn't see in the countries, when you buy anything is automatically being validated, which that's a positive thing when you want to collect all those tickets and get your tax rebate at the end, if that makes sense. So there is a number of advantages in there that are positive.

For example, last year we were scouting for a couple of projects, for big shows, entertainment shows, like reality shows, where, you know, in other countries when you have to do a big show, I don't know, 400 people, let's say it is not this project, but just so we can get an idea of the type of frame, like a Big Brother house. You know what I mean? You have to buy a house and shoot in there for a number of months.

In Portugal, the regulations help in that matter because you don't have to get a temporary permit that would allow you only to be shooting for three months. So, generally, you get a temporary license, and you only got three months to shoot in there, and then you have to build essentially everything, shoot and then strike everything. In Portugal, you could actually build it and then shoot one, then the next, then the next, you could do four shows. You know what I mean? Which is as well as attractive for the country. So there's a number of things that Portugal has advantages to other European countries.

**[00:23:32 Martin]:** And just following on before I switch to Lori, the question of the percentage of the incentive. You said you've got other colleagues that deal with that, but within your own experience, knowing that, for instance, I believe Canary Islands will be higher. Some parts of Spain don't have a strong incentive. Other parts will have a 30 % incentive. Although it's not your direct responsibility, but talking with colleagues, how much of these kind of financial or material aspects, in addition to all the other things you mentioned, will be determining the choice for location?

**[00:24:12 Eduardo]:** It is quite important, obviously, as Lori mentioned, the financial aspect. As well depends on the project. So you go to super production or productions with big budget, let's say, 70 million plus or whatever. They don't really, I mean, they do care, but the creativity is the driving force, if that makes sense. And then when you are a more medium and lower budget, then every penny counts, every cent counts, basically. And as well creativity is a driving force, but it's kind of a balance, if that makes sense. So in terms of volume of productions, yeah, it is important as an average, if you do an average of all the products, it's a very important incentive, if that makes sense.

But don't underestimate having the locations and having the right crew, local crew in there. It is very interesting because if I have a very high tax incentive somewhere and I give you 60% of the money that you invest there. But I don't have crew that are professional. I'm going to spend a fortune on hotels and travel tickets and bringing people from all the parts of the world, and then that 60 % is not going to be 60 %, really. It's going to be 20 %, perhaps because I've just been a big chunk of available budget into things that if I'm going to a place that already has those things, I don't have to spend it. And for example, Lisbon itself has professional crew and has a lot of things that's as important as an incentive or even more.

**[00:25:59 Martin]:** So Lori, perhaps you could share your experience, whether you agree with a lot of things on that specific issue that Eduardo was just talking about, or other things you can bring to that subject.

**[00:26:12 Lori]:** First of all, I'd like to say the thing I was thinking of was the Belém Tower in Lisbon. I just had to get that off my chest.

Exactly what Eduardo is saying. It's been the problem from the start, as soon as we had incentives. It's like comparing apples to oranges. Everybody's is slightly different. And then it's not just about the incentives. Is there a crew base? Is there infrastructure? Are there stages? There were all of these other things that are going to end up either saving you money or costing

you money. And I was just doing some virtual scouting and looking around for a pretty big Paramount project. And you talk to a lot of countries and you realize that some that don't even have an incentive could end up being the cheaper place to go because of a variety of issues.

So I'm just starting something now called the Location Lounge, and the goal of it is to be the most comprehensive list of film commissions and production service companies in the world, but the idea behind it is to be able to find people because, say, for instance, a film commission in Namibia can't be competing with the film commission from Spain because they just, you know, they just can't. But Namibia has some great looks, so they should be, perhaps for some films, on the radar. And it might behoove who's ever doing the looking to look a little bit deeper. So this website would sort of try to give everybody equal footing, and it would also standardize things so that you could understand better what the incentives from one country, how they compare with the incentives from another country. Because again, there are so many loopholes and levels and considerations there.

**[00:28:00 Martin]:** And do you feel, I mean, you mentioned there's a frustrating dimension for your work that often the financial side can be a critical factor in choosing. Again, using the word challenge, that presumably there's a dynamic to that, that you have to find a way of making those two things work, the aesthetic and the artistic side of the project, marrying it with some of these financial aspects. I'm sure it must be frustrating, but are there any positive aspects to that challenge or how do you view that?

**[00:28:38 Lori]:** I view it this way. I do the homework that I'm assigned, and I do it as quickly as I possibly can. And then I do the extra credit, which is my own. You know, like on this Paramount thing, they want it to be three hours from London. I said

“Okay, here's everything that's three hours from London. But look at this. Because this next tier, which is three and a half to five hours from London, has some pretty frigging great things in it that you might want to consider, and it might be worth spending a bit more time on a plane to get to.”

So... I follow the rules. I give them what they want, and then I like to sort of go beyond that, because, in my opinion, that's what we are as scouts. We're the eyes of the production and we're the first ones out there to sort of see things and process things and think about how it can all work together. And I like to present to them as much as I can, even if it's stuff that they didn't ask to see.

And a lot of times, you know, I get told “no thanks, but no thanks.” And other times it happens like “wow, we never even considered that. Thank you for putting it in front of us. Because given the rules that we gave you, we never would have seen it.” So sometimes it's appreciated, sometimes it's not.

**[00:29:53 Martin]:** And Lori, again I apologize for always bringing things back to Portugal, but it makes sense given the podcast itself. Portugal is sort of more on the radar for the United States as a place to visit, a place to live, and in terms of shooting, in terms of locations, in terms of incentives. You said you've done scouting, but not yet a production that's actually filmed in Portugal. But how much do you think Portugal is on the radar for American producers?

**[00:30:29 Lori]:** Well, I think that it's certainly growing. And I think also... You know, directors have this thing... I hate it when I go into a property and the person is trying to impress the director

by letting them know “oh, so many movies have shot here” and I'm behind the director go “no, no, don't say that”, because every director wants to feel like they discovered something.

So in the rush now for everybody going to Europe to film, everybody is starting to see the same things. You know, everybody is starting to understand how great Spain is. Everybody is going to Prague, everybody's going to Budapest. So now there's a whole next wave that's like “yeah, find me something different”.

And that's why I started the Location Lounge, because I was looking for film commissions in Central Europe, and there was some that I actually couldn't find, even though it did say online that they had a tax incentive. And it was like “wait, how do you find the person to give you the tax incentive?” So they always want something new, they always want something different. So Portugal in my mind is very uniquely placed right now for American studios because it hasn't had that much that's shot there, and it has a whole lot to offer.

**[00:31:45 Martin]:** You talked about having doing virtual scouting of locations. Now another dynamic in production is virtual sets or the combination of live action mixed with virtual. That's obviously also linked to questions like artificial intelligence, that is changing and will change the dynamic of the production scene overall and your work. Could you talk a bit? Lori, first, and I'll ask Eduardo the same question. What's your perspective on that?

**[00:32:21 Lori]:** Well, you know, when I'm scouting, if it's for a period movie, I will look at something and point out to the director that if you did a set extension here or there, suddenly this can become a really vital part of the image and give you something special. As far as everything being done, you know, on stage... Maybe it is heading in that direction because it's getting pretty damn good. But I also know that there are a lot of actors that really like... They don't want to stand in a dark room with a green screen behind them and act. I would imagine that would be very difficult.

And my contention has always been that the location is another character in the film. The location lends so much authenticity to the story that's being told, and the interaction of the other actors, characters, with the character of the location, I find to be critical. So for the movies that I find more visually interesting, I think that there's still going to be the need for locations and the need for someone who has a good eye for locations, for a long time going into the future.

**[00:33:32 Martin]:** That's great. Thank you very much. Eduardo, if you have similar or different views.

**[00:33:37 Eduardo]:** I do agree with everything that Lori have said. I'm going to put a sample. We are the generation that we can see... I don't know the end of the music industry when Netscape started. You know what I mean? That was the end of the music industry. Or the end of movie industry because streaming. And look what it is, it's never been busier. So I do actually believe that, AI as a tool is something useful. So actually, myself, I'm trying to learn and being up to date with the technology that exists, because I think not being aware that it exist... Eventually if I don't get up today, then or in the loop, you will get left behind. You know what I mean? If 50 years ago you scouted with a map, as when I started, you go with an eight to set and in my car and with a voice recorder and saying “after the corner shouting left and the traffic light at the time.” And that's how you would write a movement over there. And now everybody has Google Maps and it's just a pain and straight away there and all of that.



So I think it's similar, it's just another technology that is quite impressive, to be honest. And there are many aspects to it that can be beneficial. So to put a few example, if we could do a movement order where I can train a chatbot and say "I want to start at 7 a.m. and pick up the director at this hotel, this is the five locations I want. First location is that one. And I want to spend 45 minutes in each location. I want to have lunch at one." Press enter, click. And it sort of gives me 70 % of the work done. That's an advantage, because I think our value is on the relation with the locations, knowing the location, communicating with the locations. These things are the gold, you know, of what we do. If it can help us with the admin of things, you know, to make these hours and hours of doing a documentary said, "oh, I did put this line wrong or I did..." If that can be streamlined and AI can help with that, more than welcome.

**[00:36:05 Lori]:** And then there are also elements that still can be actual locations that are then combined. On the live action version of *The Lion King*, I scouted in Yellowstone Park the geysers that they came in and lied hard, and then those were placed in the elephant graveyard for the animals to go. So it was fascinating to contribute pieces of locations that were then combined into bigger pictures of locations.

**[00:36:33 Martin]:** And as we're talking about sort of these current trends, technology, another dimension is the question of the carbon footprint, the conservation, the green shooting, green production. The choice of the location will also have an impact on that. So it's not just the question of making it less expensive and logistically quicker. If you've got, for instance, a number of locations all closed at hand... There's also link to that question, the question of the carbon footprint and the green production. How relevant is that, and to what extent do you, in-house or have people that help? Because I think producers and productions are increasingly conscious of the importance of that.

**[00:37:23 Eduardo]:** Yes. When I started, it was there, it was in the conversation, but nowadays it's gone into... It's imperative, you know, sustainability and the impact that we have on that. So, it's becoming a normal thing to have power banks everywhere, electric power banks instead of electric generators. The first thing I did is "catering - here is a power bank." Can get this electric generator, a petrol generator, because I don't want to wake up the neighbours, you know what I mean? So it's not only pollution to the atmosphere that will pollute, some pollution for any animals that are in there and so on.

And, we do have, for example, in production generally is more common more and more, a sustainability person or PA, call it, or a supervisor that will go and check if the rubbish is been dropped properly. And the paper cups... Well, there is no paper cups, we have refill bottles, but the coffee cup is being thrown where it is supposed to be and organic in here. And then it's been through what is supposed to be thrown. And there is as well paperwork that we do online instead of a piece of paper. And then it's a track of how many vehicles in there. So you can actually understand your footprint of that production.

**[00:38:50 Martin]:** But so if one location was more up to speed, as it were, in terms of these issues, that could be a factor for choosing a location against another one where it's not giving priority? Or it's more something you do in-house. For example, some locations may already have facilities that make all of those things easier. Or whether it's more to do with your planning in-house?

**[00:39:18 Eduardo]:** Basically what we do is to make that happen. So let's say, that location has the facilities in place, more than welcome, great. But if it doesn't, we will bring them on, you know, we bring those facilities to place and we make it sustainable. You know what I mean?

That's why we go facilities companies or different ways of doing it, to adapt it, like we should do on environmentally protected areas. You know, we go through a permit process and then we go there. We take pictures when we arrive. When we finish, we take pictures again, and it's exactly the same that we left it. And we follow. When you go to those permits, you can imagine you have a number of restrictions and things that you have to follow, which we do.

And we police those rules or restrictions, because the key, I mean, when I started as a location manager, the key thing is that you shoot in one location. I finish today on this location, and tomorrow Lori can go to the same location. They're going to be like "yeah, yeah, you can shoot in here." Like, that's our bread and butter basically. And that means you have a sustainability is key to reduce maximum the impact, as well to solve it. Because if it's there and you don't put it on a movie and you don't put it on productions, then people around the world are never going to see those beautiful forests or those beautiful waterfalls, or those beautiful deserts or those beautiful locations that are there to be seen.

**[00:40:57 Martin]:** And so, similar for you, Lori. How much of these sustainability issues, sustainability come into the equation when you're scouting and when you're communicating locations to producers?

**[00:41:09 Lori]:** It basically doesn't. To me, it's a toss up for them, the first question being how much money is it going to cost me? The second is how much does the director like the creativity of the location choice? And then sustainability, which obviously is admirable and super important, will come into play once the studio gets there, most studios will have a person or a department or is responsible for that. And as Eduardo said, they'll, you know, bring whatever elements to it. So to answer your question, if a location has those things, is that going to make it a better choice? I wish that it was, but sadly, the answer is resoundingly no.

**[00:41:52 Martin]:** And just as a following last question, this is a podcast of the Portugal Film Commission. Within your work, if you like, you could talk about specific example of Portugal or also the local film commissions. But in general film commissions, how important are they for your work?

**[00:42:11 Lori]:** The film commissions are essential for my work. I mean, they're the first person I call to sort of get a hand on what's going on. Again, not to belabor the point. You know, the whole idea of the Location Lounge, you can go to one place and you can access location libraries. We're also going to have a chat room for international location scouts that I was talking to Eduardo and his colleagues in Spain... It's going to then have also sub chat groups so that all of the location managers in Spain can talk to each other about the problems and issues that they face and so on and so forth.

So I see the film commissions as being the starting point, and they help direct us towards production service companies. They have location libraries that give us our first taste of what's available. And they're sort of the go-to-person. If they don't know the answer, they certainly know who we can go to get the answer. In my perspective, they're critical.

**[00:43:10 Martin]:** Great. Eduardo, the same question.

**[00:43:12 Eduardo]:** Obviously, for everything that Lori says, I agree completely, is the key. And not to repeat what you say. I would like to add the film commissions as well are crucial, if I have a complicated issue... Like a chase, going through a city or something like that. Who is going to organize that meeting with the police and with the mayor? That's generally the film commission,

or somebody from the film commission that will organize that meeting at the beginning and will be like “okay, this is going to happen. And how do you feel about it?”

And then you have to speak with the different institutional bodies of the city. So that's another point why I find it very useful. They kind of start a conversation and then you can just take it from there. As a location manager, you know, take care of the project. But at the beginning they can organize those crucial key points, because at the beginning the production is going to bombard you. “But can we do it? Can we do this? Can we do that? Can we do in this and that?” And then you are like “okay, okay, I'm getting into it. I need to research all of this on this place.”

And I think film commissions and something that is super valuable is that they can organize fast because as well, they know that they cannot wait two months to get that meeting going. It's like “okay, next week I need to get this meeting happening.” And they understand the speed of what we do. And then they get you into a meeting with the mayor, or the right hand of the mayor, or with the person of transportation that runs the city and the chief of police. And then you can get a sense of what is possible or not. So you can go back to your designer or to your director and say “well, that yes but that no” and then everybody can start working on making that happen.

**[00:45:03 Lori]:** The other thing that they do that's invaluable is in those meetings they legitimize us. So I do notice there's a little bit of sometimes fear or mistrust of an outsider, especially if it's an outsider from Hollywood. So what the film commission can do is they can vouch for us and, you know, be sort of the middleman to tell whatever city or state or country entities that we're dealing with, that we're good on our word that we have a good track record and that we're going to do everything that we say and more.

**[00:45:35 Martin]:** Very good. And, Eduardo, you've done some shoots in Portugal. I don't know if you could talk, just any specific example. You could talk of your experience.

**[00:45:46 Eduardo]:** I mean, my experience in Portugal has been quite positive so far. I mean, still we haven't done any scripted work in there. Mainly all the work that we have done in Portugal is TPC and photo shoots, commercials mainly. Which is a good way to get to know the locations, the crew and things like that, that is in there. I have found it to be quite flexible and the permitting process to be transparent, with a few surprises here and there. Sometimes you can find. But as you do in any location and any territory. But the crew is good, the teams are good. And definitely looking forward to continuing projects there.

**[00:46:42 Martin]:** That's great. Well, I'd like to really thank Lori and Eduardo. It was a fascinating insight into location scouting and management issues at the multiple levels, including some of the new technologies and sustainability issues. The mix between the aesthetic dimension and the financial dimension. So, I'd really like to thank you for your contribution to this podcast.

**[00:47:05 Lori]:** It's a pleasure.

**[00:47:06 Eduardo]:** Thank you for having us. Well, for having me.

**[00:47:10 Lori]:** Us, for having us. Thank you for having us.