



INTERVIEW WITH ACTION FILMMAKER AND MOUNTAIN BIKER SCOTT SECCO

Scott Secco, you are an action filmmaker and mountain biker from Victoria, British Columbia. How do you split your time between these two passions?

Considering I'm primarily a mountain bike filmmaker, I think most people would be surprised that I don't actually do much riding on most shoots! These days I have so much gear that it's generally faster and easier to just hike in to locations with a couple backpacks full of equipment and leave my bike at home. During the mountain bike season (approximately April - October) I'm frequently away filming and don't get to ride as much as I would like. When I'm home I try and get out three or four days a week. Riding my bike is a great stress reliever and workout, it's nice to break up monotonous editing days with a quick pedal on my local trails to clear my head. Filmmaking and mountain biking are my two favourite things, and I'm grateful to have a career that lets me do both.

Scott Secco, action filmmaker and mountain biker



How did you get hooked on mountain biking?

I think I was hooked on cycling the moment my Dad removed the training wheels from my first bike. I didn't really discover mountain biking, as I now know it, until I saw the movie "New World Disorder III: Freewheel Burning" when I was 13. My best friend's older brother popped it into the VHS player and it absolutely blew my mind. I just couldn't believe people could do these things on bikes! That movie really marked the beginnings of my obsession with mountain



biking and inspired me to build some truly rickety jumps with friends - and break a few bones in the process.

“Builder” was your first feature film, it’s an homage to trail builders and mountain bikers alike. What inspired you to make this film?

The concept for Builder was created by my producers, Julian Coffey and Ryan Berrecloth. They came up with the idea and then I handled directing, shooting, and editing on the movie. I’ve always loved riding trails and spent time building stunts for my own videos over the years. I wanted to try and capture just how much time, effort, and passion goes into building the tracks that these guys ride. They’re really artists with shovels, chainsaws, and bikes. At the end of the day, I’ll feel like it was a successful project if it inspired people to go ride their bike or pick up a shovel and do some trail work of their own.

We have seen how much work you put in seeking the perfect camera angle and the best perspective. Are you as careful about the audio you’re recording?

From an audience perspective, filmmaking is 50% picture and 50% sound. You can tell a compelling story in either medium without the other (silent films/radio, for example) but combining the two art forms results in cinematic gold. Recording sound on location will always be my preference whenever possible. However, filming outdoors often puts me in extreme weather conditions, with wind or rain pushing the limits of reliability with my gear. I’m as careful as I can be given the realities of the places I’m filming. I think audiences can tell when something is real, and that authenticity is vital when you’re making sports films. It’s amazing what a difference good audio can add to a film, and focusing on sound helps take things to another level.

You have tried out the MKE 2 elements action mic for the GroPro HERO4 – what were your experiences with it? Do you film a lot with GoPros and on-camera mics?

The MKE 2 was fantastic to work with! As a filmmaker, I value simplicity with my gear since time is everything when you’re on location. The MKE 2 takes about three seconds to set up: you just have to plug it in, close the case, and it does the rest automatically. I tested out the MKE 2 with various POV setups while filming mountain biking and found that sound quality was noticeably better than GoPro’s regular built in microphone. Wind noise is always a problem for me when using these cameras, but the MKE 2’s built in wind muff does a phenomenal job of cutting out annoying background noise while still capturing high fidelity sound from the bike’s suspension and tires - exactly what I want to be hearing.



I try and use whatever camera system or technique fits the shot I need. GoPro's allow me to get footage from angles that would be impossible with a conventional cinema camera.

Watching footage from an athlete's perspective really lets the audience feel like they're riding along with them, and the MKE2 allows me to capture those fleeting moments of audio where the rider is natural and unguarded. I like hearing little reactions while they're riding, like yelling with excitement after finishing a technical run.

What has been the best mountain biking moment ever for you?

My best mountain bike moment ever would be the world premiere of "Builder" in Monterey, California back in 2015. I was 23 and had taken the year off university to work on the film. I had only shown the final cut to about four people so I had no idea what the response would be, and I was super nervous and tired from marathon editing sessions to get the movie finished on time for the premiere. My parents and sister flew down with me for the show and it was incredibly special to have them in the audience along with a sold out theatre crowd. When the credits rolled and everyone cheered, all the sleepless nights editing and stressing about the film felt worthwhile. It was probably the happiest moment of my life!