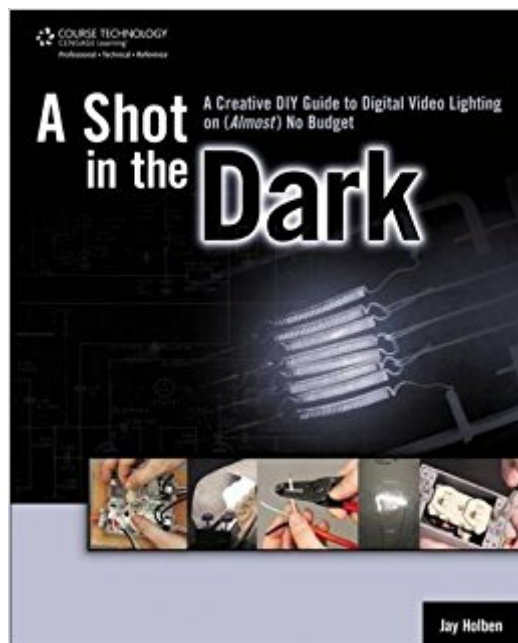




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# A Shot In The Dark: A Creative DIY Guide To Digital Video Lighting On (Almost) No Budget



## Synopsis

The most significant contribution to film imagery is lighting. Lighting is the key to turning amateur footage into professional stories and presentation. **A SHOT IN THE DARK: A CREATIVE DIY GUIDE TO DIGITAL VIDEO LIGHTING ON (ALMOST) NO BUDGET** shows that good lighting doesn't always require expensive or extensive Hollywood hardware. With a little creativity, ingenuity, and some elbow grease, you can create your own lighting arsenal to handle a multitude of situations. This book will show do-it-yourselfers how to create their own equipment and how best to use it. The first part of the book teaches you about the basics--the fundamentals of light, color, exposure, and electricity--that are the building blocks of lighting. You'll discover what light is and how to control it. Once you have that foundation, the book will introduce tips, techniques, and hands-on projects that instruct you on how to create your own lighting tools from inexpensive, readily available resources. The only limit to what you can do is your imagination.

From the Author: Five Tips to Better Images

Never use auto exposure! Your exposure is your strongest brush in your photographic arsenal. Never allow a piece of hardware to tell you where to place your exposure. Evaluate the scene, evaluate the lighting levels, and make an educated decision based on what you want your audience to see. Learn to control your lighting quality. Choosing the right quality of light for the right situations helps to refine your images considerably! Hard light, soft light, or a combination of the two: learn to use these tools to your advantage. Position your lights according to the mood you want to convey. When it comes to lighting, it should rarely (if ever) be about 'just enough light to shoot.' Lighting creates a mood and helps tell a story. Whether it is a corporate interview or a dramatic scene, your light position helps the audience to experience the right mood. Learn to see light. Photographic lighting doesn't happen in a vacuum. It's based on real-world experiences. Sometimes you want your light to be surreal and foreign, and sometimes you want it to be incredibly natural and not feel 'lit' at all. The best way to learn the differences is to study light in the natural world. Natural and artificial lighting in your everyday life will surprise you with how beautiful and memorable it can be. Learn to not take light for granted and to see it around you at all times. The most important thing you do with lighting is to direct the audience's attention to where you want it to be. What is most important in this shot or scene? Starting there will help dictate how you will add or subtract lighting to make sure the audience is seeing what you want them to see when you want them to see it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jay Holben began his career in theater, eventually becoming a master electrician and lighting designer before making the move to Hollywood first as an electrician, then as a gaffer, before advancing to become a director of photography. As a cinematographer, Holben shot commercials, music videos, documentaries, and feature films. In 1996 he started as a writer for "American Cinematographer Magazine," eventually rising to technical editor for the publication. He is currently the technical editor for "DV Magazine" and remains a contributing writer for "American Cinematographer" as well as "Videography magazine." Holben has also contributed to several other books including the "American Cinematographer Manual." He is now an independent producer/director living in Los Angeles.

I recently learned that one of my highest recommended books about lighting - [Matters of Light & Depth](#) - has been chosen as a textbook and as a result the price has skyrocketed. In a recent review, I panned [Motion Picture and Video Lighting, Second Edition](#) by Blain Brown as being pretty useless for anyone setting up a stopmotion studio. So in an effort to find another book I can recommend in lieu of [Matters of Light and Depth](#), I ordered a newly-published (jan of this year) book that sounded good. And it does not disappoint one bit!! Like [Matters](#), it goes into the properties of light - both hard and soft light, and how they're created and what kind of effects can be achieved with each. Lots of great example pics, and also a great bonus - a section on do-it-yourself electrical wiring, I especially like this, as I've done some bodgering of light fixtures myself, guided only by a

friend's advice, and now thanks to Jay Holben's excellent electrical teaching, I have a pretty decent understanding of the relevant considerations when doing this sort of thing. It's all about the AMPS... he'll tell you why and give you simple conversions to figure out just how much amperage you need when selecting cords and other electrical components. In fact, his coverage of lighting in general is very thorough... but there were still a couple of ideas covered in the Lowell book that aren't here... namely off the top of my head Lowell mentioned an important concept from old Hollywood techniques calling for the separation of subject and background so that you have complete control over each without it affecting the other. Ah, but what can you do? This is an excellent book and gets my highest recommendation!!

This is not just a DIY book on lighting on a budget. It covers most of what to expect working on a indi set. The DIY part serves a double function of teaching you hands on basics of electrical wiring. From people that I've talked to who work on indi sets, there is a lot of building your own solutions to what ever problem comes your way, so I think this is more practical than your average "how to work with no budget" type guide. There is also no section on three-point lighting - this is a good thing. Every other book (including non-lighting books) cover this, and frankly in narrative, hell simply any non-interview setting, three point lighting is throw out the window. This book feels like it was written by someone with lots of on set experience, not by someone who just wanted to make money writing another mediocre book on lighting. Highly recommended.

I bought this book about a year ago- and glad I am. For the price of the information in this text book, one cannot go wrong. It covers the basics of digital video lighting as well as types of lights, and how to construct lighting gear and accessories. Joined with HQ pics, the text gives you a great inside look at how lighting creates tone, mood & dimension- it also gears an individual to start looking at everyday lighting differently, like a cinematographer. I would recommend this book to anyone starting out or trying to increase their skills in low budget video lighting. The author did a great job on a subject that is not covered nearly as much as it should.

Have you ever had a secret weapon? Kind of like discovering that if you sneak out \$500's from the Monopoly game bank your odds of winning increase dramatically? That's kind of how I felt when I read this book. And, honestly, I didn't want to tell a soul. Why help anyone in that conquest to have perfect lighting in your work? The only reason I'm willing to is because I feel the author really deserves all the credit and accolades due. Jay Holdben just hits it out of the park with this book on

lighting because his writing is so thorough and accessible. I like to think of technical books in the recipe or cooking school variety. The recipe books are exciting because they give you nice, quick fixes. The problem, of course, is that you will probably run into situations where you need a new recipe and one isn't given. In terms of lighting that falls into fixtures. To be honest, there aren't a ton of fixtures here and for someone looking for the quick fix you might not see your immediate needs met. However, for those who want to understand how to cook up a lighting recipe for any situation thrown at them you're just not going to find a better book anywhere near this price or so clearly written. Holben covers every aspect of the lighting challenge you're going to run into: temperature, exposure (film and digital) and light quality and their related controls (gels, gobos, placement, etc.). He then goes onto the process of building your own sources in a safe, practical and economical manner. Short of being a certified electrician Holben gives you enough guidance to get through most any lighting situation the budget film/video maker will run into. Holben isn't telling us anything new here. All of this information is out there on the internet and in books in your library and one might make a quick leap of logic and ask themselves 'why spend a cent when I can get it for free?'. What Holben does so well, though, is holding your hand through what I consider a film/video lighting apprenticeship never missing a detail or going into an extraneous side bar that leaves you wondering what on earth he's talking about. It would take you forever to assemble this much quality information from other sources and you'd likely miss certain areas Holben covers plainly and clearly. Which is to say this book is worth every penny and then some to anyone interested in making a decent video or film. I consider this book 'essential', 'foundational' and 'need to know'. It should be the first book you buy on the topic. Holben takes us a step further than simply explaining by asking us to start considering the light we see around us and thinking about how we might replicate that in our work. What more is that like any good teacher, Holben encourages experimentation. He wisely recognizes that he could recommend countless solutions to your lighting situation but sometimes you might stumble upon one that others hadn't considered just by trying new things out. He gives a particularly fun example of this whereby he and a friend accidentally bounced light off a porcelain toilet bowl producing a remarkably beautiful effect. Holben encourages us to grow and that is five star worthy. Like I said, feel free to run out to You Tube and borrow someone's lighting recipe. It will probably help you get through a situation or two, but when the overall quality of my video/film is inexplicably ten times better than yours, don't pay attention to that hand sneaking \$500 bills from the Monopoly bank pile and don't say I didn't tell you so. Thank you Mr. Holben for writing this incredibly helpful book.

As an amateur photographer, I was hoping to get a few tips and resources to help me take my hobby to the next level. It turned out the book was chocked full of great information, and I still reference material even today. It's a great read and a must have for photographers and videographers of all talent ranges.

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