PROFESSIONAL PROFILE:

Name:	**Phil Widmer**
Profession:	**Lighting Designer**
Experience:	**25+ years**
Location:	**New York, NY**
Portfolio:	**widmerdesigns.com**
Employer:	**WABC**
Shows:	**LIVE with Kelly and Ryan, and Eyewitness News**

Phil Widmer is a world-class lighting designer for broadcast events. Educated at Cal Arts and having designed for television, tours, dance, and special events around the world, City Theatrical (CTI) took the opportunity to interview Phil (PW) to learn more about the award-winning role he has played for 19 years.

THE INTERVIEW:

CTI: What is a day in the life of Phil Widmer like?

PW: My workday is made up of three parts: LIVE show prep and recording, post-tapes and pre-lighting, and Eyewitness News public service shows and planning for the next day's shows.

CTI: How does your daily schedule break down?

PW: While every day is different, this is how many of my days go:
7:00 a.m. – Camera meeting with the LIVE show director.
7:30 a.m. – Focus, re-point, and program cues. This could be as simple as talking about the lighting for the day, or as complex as setting up lighting for a new game show skit, musical act, or special segment.
8:00 a.m. – Camera blocking and rehearsals.
8:30 a.m. – Audience load in and record cut-ins for local promotions.
9:00 a.m. – LIVE show begins, which often includes trivia, calls to fans, or other fun segments. It's cut and dry from a lighting perspective.
9:20 a.m. – Show continues with celebrity interviews. Adjustments for

skin tones are made on the fly.
9:40 a.m. – Show finishes with new product demonstrations, animals, inbox, etc.
10:00 a.m. – Record another show, and repeat the process of the previous hour to bank shows for holidays. This could include recording an interview, skit, vignette, or post-tapes that are often used in August or September.
11:00 a.m. – We run looksies to review certain scenes, as per the show's director.
12:00 p.m. – Lunch.
1:00 p.m. – Move to address any lighting needs for WABC's Eyewitness News Desk (studio is across the street).
2:00 p.m. – Discuss the needs and prepare for the next day's LIVE show.

CTI: What's the pace like while the show is recording?

PW: It's literally a zoo of things, day-in and day-out. With a 360 degree theatre in the round camera view, we make sure every direction is lit properly and can be manipulated quickly if needed. It's a job where if you can't stay calm and focused, you won't stay long.

CTI: Which shows are especially challenging from a lighting

perspective?

PW: Every year we run a Viewer's Choice show, which requires many lighting cues around the set. We must be able to quickly cut, paste, and alter cues as necessary.

CTI: How large is your team?

PW: The lighting team is made up of myself along with three I.A.T.S.E. Local One members, including our Head of Electric Tom Brouard, Lighting Programmer Andy Blais, and a swing stagehand.

CTI: What kind of lighting is used in the studios?

PW: We have tons of LEDs built into the set, and a glam uplight LED for our talent.

> ## "It's a job where if you can't stay calm and focused, you won't stay long."

PHIL WIDMER INTERVIEW:

(Continued)

CTI: Which City Theatrical products do you use?

PW: We use City Theatrical products for testing and wireless DMX control, including DMXcat®, SHoW DMX SHoW Baby® 6 (transmitters) and SHoW DMX Neo® (receivers) Wireless DMX with Maximum Bandwidth Technology™.

We also use software by City Theatrical, including Lightwright® 6 and Vectorworks Spotlight.

In addition, we use lots of City Theatrical beam control accessories, including: Follow Spot Yokes, Beam Benders, Donuts, Blacktak™ Light Mask Foil, Barndoors, Sandwich Holders, Drop-in Irises, Color Frames, and Color Kinetics Accessories.

CTI: What do you like best about SHoW Baby 6?

PW: As lighting designers, we have to watch how data is transmitted. If you

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have a problem with one of your lights that all daisy chain with wired DMX data, two thirds of your truss could be lost. SHoW Baby has made a huge improvement in how we control our light fixtures with wireless DMX. We use it for the host chat desk because it's reliable, and so the talent doesn't trip over cables.

CTI: How do you use City Theatrical's software?

PW: Lightwright and Vectorworks Spotlight are the staples of the industry. We use them to stay organized – the software is part of our "part-time job" of maintaining paperwork. We track all changes and document everything that happens

from a lighting perspective in our space - we want the show to be able to go on, no matter what.

CTI: Which are your go-to beam control accessories?

PW: The way our studio was designed, it didn't allow for follow spot positions. We built a platform to fall under the lighting grid in combination with Source Fours, and the Source Four Follow Spot Yokes allow us to light the talent properly.

With our space constraints, Beam Benders are also great because they slide into a gel frame mount and project templates onto our scenery from difficult lighting positions.

And in my opinion, if you use a gobo, you need to put a City Theatrical Donut in the gel frame to keep it sharp.

CTI: So why City Theatrical?

PW: The combination of City Theatrical products used – wireless DMX, software, and accessories – it's like using a knife, a fork, and a spoon. Or like a scout's backpack of stuff. It's just something we use daily as part of our toolbox because we know it will get the job done.

LIVE with Regis and Kelly

LIVE with Kelly and Ryan

Learn more about City Theatrical at:
www.citytheatrical.com

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