

Production Evaluation - Under the Clamp

MED4040 Final Major Project

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Planning and Access

The production began with direct access to locations through existing industry connections. Rather than formal applications or permits, I approached the Wenzhou casting factory and Shandong construction sites through contacts within the local power company. This method proved essential for an observational documentary. Formal procedures would have resulted in heavily managed, staged access rather than authentic workplace documentation.

The pre-production phase focused on understanding the technical processes rather than detailed shot planning. Working in active industrial environments meant that rigid shooting schedules were impractical. Instead, I maintained a flexible day-by-day arrangement coordinated by on-site personnel who understood operational windows and safety constraints.



Health and Safety - Practical Reality

The most significant safety challenge occurred during the aluminum injection sequence. Molten aluminum at 730°C can spray from the mold edges during the casting process. Rather than relying on written risk assessments, I worked directly with the casting operators to identify safe camera positions. The workers' experiential knowledge can know exactly when and where spray occurs, proved more valuable than any safety protocol I could have written in advance.

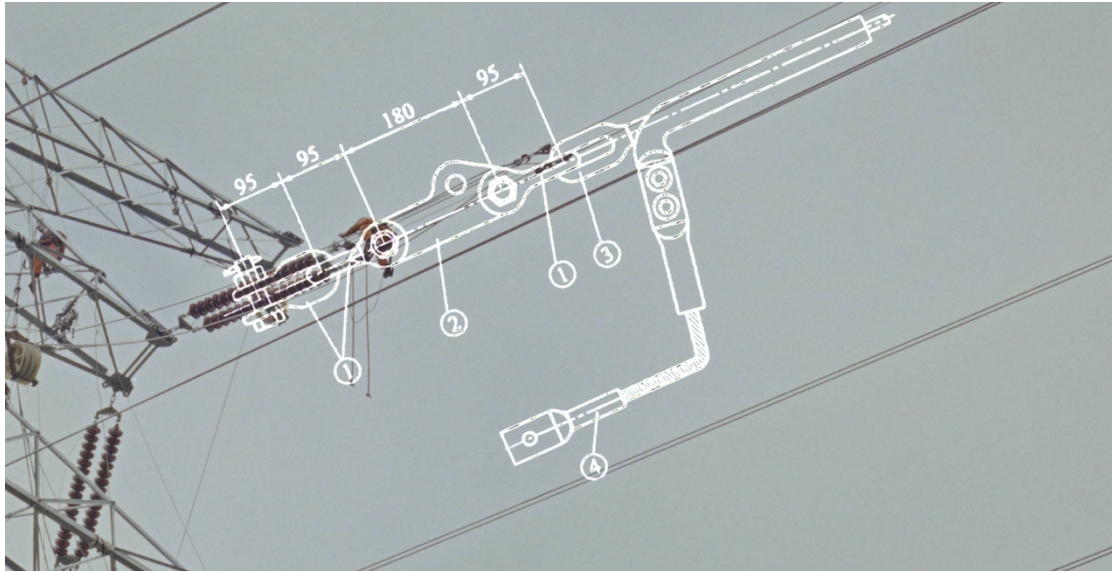
For the construction in Shandong, I used some drone footage rather than attempting high-altitude camera work myself. The substation sequences were filmed during construction phases when the facility was not energized, eliminating electrical hazards. Local company representatives coordinated timing to ensure no live electrical work occurred during filming.



This approach reflects the realities of working in Chinese industrial contexts where formal agreements are less common than trust based on relationship.

Technical Translation Challenge

The documentary's central challenge was converting highly technical content into accessible narrative without oversimplifying. Transmission clamps operate concepts that sound abstract in narration but become tangible when shown.



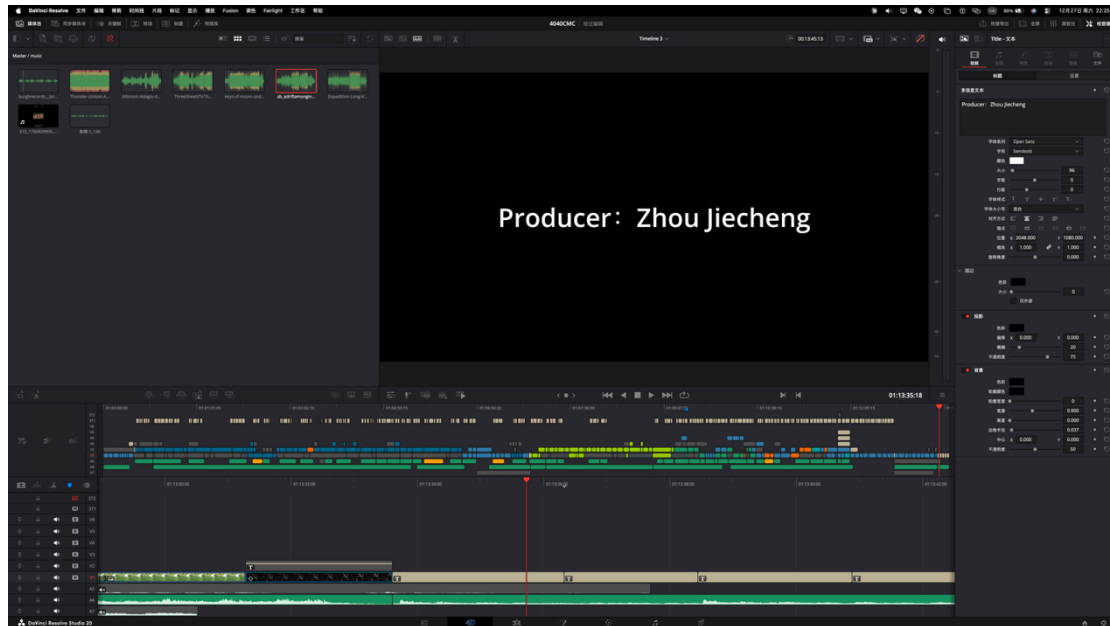
The solution emerged through observational specificity. I did not discuss quality control abstractly, I showed the “23.38 kilonewton tensile test and the clamp splitting cleanly down the middle, exactly as designed”.

Unplanned Realities

Chinese industrial documentation operates differently than UK production models suggest. There was no call sheet, no scheduled crew movements, no signed release forms. Daily specifics that when the casting would run, which tower section would be installed, all depended on operational needs I couldn't predict. The production adapted by extending time on location and remaining responsive to what was actually happening rather than trying to impose a predetermined schedule. This flexibility had costs. Some planned sequences didn't materialize because operations didn't align with filming windows.

Missing Element - Human Impact

The documentary's most significant gap is inadequate representation of how electrical infrastructure affects daily life. The final cut includes only a brief interview with an electrical engineer discussing historical context. What's missing are actual scenes of people whose lives changed when electricity arrived.



Conclusion

This documentary required balancing technical accuracy with narrative accessibility, formal planning with operational flexibility, and industrial scale with human detail. The final work succeeds in revealing the overlooked craftsmanship of electrical infrastructure but could more fully connect that technical achievement to its human purpose.