

## **Arthur Rochester interview, August 2010**

### **Do you remember how you first discovered Phonak's invisibility in-ear receiver?**

It was via a conversation I had with Ann Reische who was working for Phonak in the US. She mentioned these 4-channel earpieces called invisibility. Of course I always looking to improve my sound equipment and make things as fool-proof as possible, so I tried them. In this line of work we don't have the chance to experiment on the job, so it's important to be sure that everything in the sound recording package is compatible and free of bugs.

### **What was the first film you used invisibility on?**

I first used the receiver on Something's Gotta Give (romantic comedy with Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton).

### **And what transmitter did you use with it?**

That would be the Comtek ESP25 transmitter. I always had and used a couple of those.

### **How many invisibility do you have and regularly use? And are these the invisibility Flex or 4-channel model?**

I own four 4-channel invisibility models, which I got before the Flex model actually arrived. I really liked the idea of being able to tune these earpieces to different frequencies.

### **And before invisibility? What did you use?**

Well before invisibility, there wasn't an FM headset available, so we were using induction units.

The invisibility is much easier to use than induction equipment as there's less hardware involved. You don't have to deal with amplifiers and induction cables, which used to be installed in a car for a vehicle scene for instance. Plus you don't have to have an induction receiver on a loop around the actor's neck, which is great because actors really don't want to be bothered with any extra stuff in a scene; they already have hair and makeup staff constantly around them.

### **How would you typically use invisibility? Was it mainly for script prompting or other types of use too?**

It's typically used for script prompting for the actors but its use can also be very specific to an actor or a certain situation. For example, in one film I worked on the very well-known female lead liked to hear music while she was working. In the film she had some very sensitive scenes in which she needed to reach a certain emotional point, and the music she chose to hear in her ear via invisibility helped her achieve that.

### **What are some of the biggest projects readers might know of that you've used the invisibility on?**

I first made the transition to FM in 2003 when shooting Something's Gotta Give. That film and the thriller Cellular with Chris Evans, William H. Macy and Kim Basinger were the most intensive in terms of my invisibility use, but I've used the receiver for script prompting, at least a few times on any one film, ever since.

**When using invisity with an actor for the first time, how do they typically take to the product?  
What's the feedback been like from them?**

It's more about the director really and how he wants to cue the talent in front of the camera; actors are in a sense just grist to the mill. If the director can get 'into the head' of the actor while they are acting then this is really to the director's advantage. As such, directors in general really love in-ear earpieces like invisity. And Production Sound Mixers today are now really expected to carry these sorts of cueing devices in their standard kits for this reason.

**Can you recall a specific example of a situation in which invisity really helped 'save a scene' or solve a problem?**

In the film Cellular, we used them in every moving vehicle scene that had dialogue. We were using invisity as the off-screen dialogue (via an actress sat in the command van), and for director's cues to the actor (Chris Evans), who was driving the car. We found invisity to be much more reliable than using a cell phone for this job. We also produced a short film on the making of cellular in which I explain how we used invisity\*.

**Is there anything you would change about invisity?**

Of course it's always good to have more range, but I've always worked around this by using transmitters and antennas that are specifically tuned for a specific location. invisity however is a great receiver in a small size, so I don't know how you could improve it much.

**About Arthur Rochester**

A Production Sound Mixer with over 30 years of on-set motion picture experience, Arthur Rochester has worked on numerous Hollywood movies, including but not limited to Something's Gotta Give, Cellular, About Schmidt, The Truman Show and Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World. Arthur has received Oscar nominations and BAFTA, CAS and Saturn awards for his work. Arthur has owned and run DigiTrax® Sound since 1992.

\* [www.imdb.com/title/tt0431724/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0431724/)