

TIP SHEET



SEE IT
FILM IT
CHANGE IT

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS:

CONCEALING IDENTITY

FILMING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CAN BE DANGEROUS: BE SAFE. BE ETHICAL. BE EFFECTIVE.

If you need to protect the anonymity of people you are interviewing you can do so with editing software or while filming. Using an editing program in post-production allows you to blur faces and distort voices beyond recognition. However, if there is a high risk of your original material being confiscated, it is best to conceal identity during filming.

NOTE: Blurring out faces does not guarantee protection. A person can be identified from visual details, such as scars, tattoos, a distinctive item of clothing, or a landmark in the background of the shot, as well as audio details such as a distinctive voice or accent.

IF SECURITY IS A MAJOR CONCERN, REMEMBER TO

- Ask the interviewee not to refer to places, locations, or people that could reveal their identity.
- Never identify their name on camera.
- Ask them to wear non-descript clothes.
- Be aware that the uploader or their IP address may be traceable and could lead to the identification of people in the video. Investigate options for uploading anonymously.
- Always make sure to keep records, memory cards, and files in a secure place.

CONCEALING IDENTITY TECHNIQUES WHILE FILMING

There are several options for concealing identity while recording. Film the interviewee wearing a non-descript article of clothing that covers much of their face, focus only on their hands, or simply record out of focus. If you are concerned that your video might be seized before you can upload it – look into using an anonymizing application on your mobile device, such as the InformaCam (<http://bit.ly/informacam>).



FILM HANDS



COVER FACE

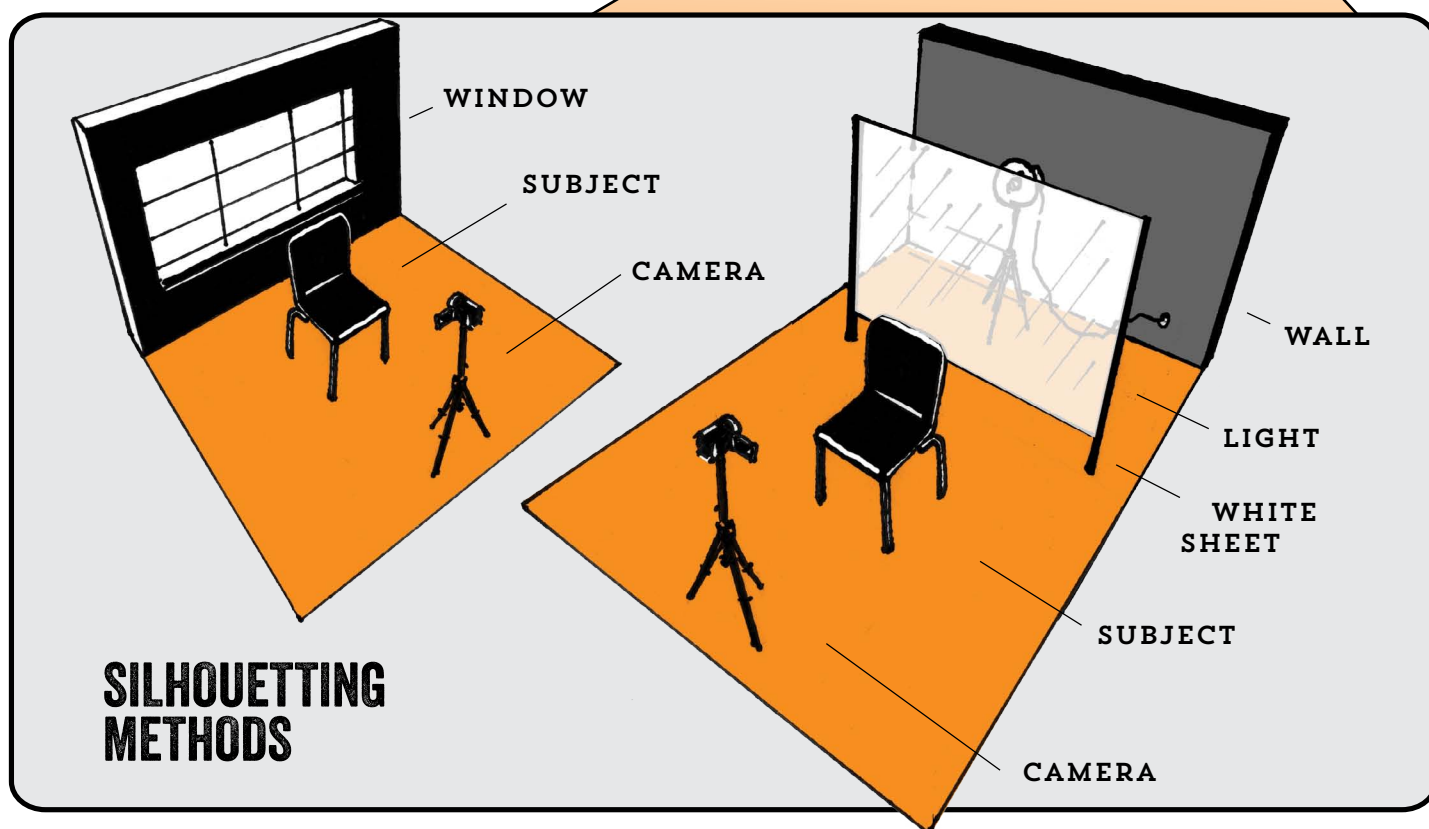
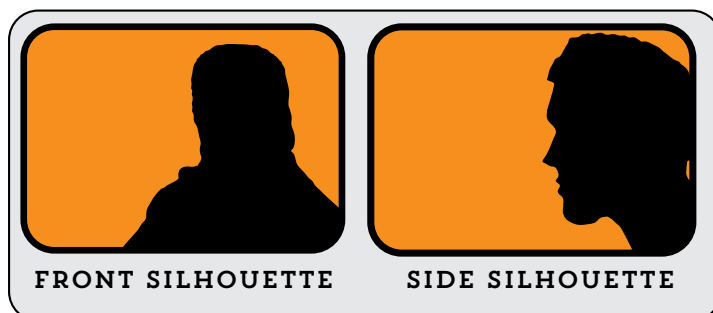


BLUR FOCUS

A. SILHOUETTE EFFECT

A common technique used by filmmakers is to apply strong lighting behind an interviewee to turn a person's image into an unrecognizable silhouette.

The first step in creating a silhouette is to backlight the subject. Two ways to do this are to either place strong electric lighting behind the person, or position the person in front of a window with the light filtering in from behind them. When creating a silhouette, make sure that the room is as dark as possible and diffuse the light by using a light-weight fabric, such as a white bed sheet, between the electric light and the subject you are interviewing.



If possible, manually adjust the exposure on the camera so that it lets in less light and darkens the person's face. Note that your footage may appear brighter on a large screen than it does on your small camera screen. Adjust your exposure so it is slightly darker than appears necessary. If possible, flip over your camera's LCD screen to get your interviewee's approval of the image.

B. CREATING A BLUR FOR ADDED SECURITY

For an additionally secure image and to avoid revealing your location, you can use your camera's manual focus to blur the image. Adjust the focus setting so the interviewee's silhouette becomes slightly out of focus. Modify the setting so the effect is subtle while still blurring any identifiable features. If done correctly, your image will be unrecognizable to anyone viewing your footage. Remember though that the voice will still be identifiable.



CAMERA BLUR

CONCEALING IDENTITY DURING THE EDIT

A. EDITING SOFTWARE



PIXELATE



FACE BLUR

Most editing software will allow you to both blur images and distort voices beyond recognition. During the editing process you can also edit the sound to remove any identifying names or places mentioned in the interview. Although editing tools will allow you the most options for concealing identity, remember your raw unedited footage can be a liability for both you and the people you film.

B. YOUTUBE FACE BLURRING TOOL

YouTube offers a tool that allows you to obscure the identity of faces in the videos you upload. After uploading your video to YouTube, set the video to private, select the Video Enhancements tool and then go to Additional Features to locate the face blurring application to conceal identities. Once you have finished, delete the original video and store a copy of it in a secure location. Post only the blurred video online.

See this link for instructions: <http://bit.ly/yt-faceblur>