

# Release Forms

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On a professional production, obtaining proper written permissions is the responsibility of the producer and can prevent complicated problems down the line in the event the project is licensed for broadcast or distribution.

The four most common release forms used in documentary productions are:

- *Appearance Release*, for non-actors
- *Minor Appearance Release*, for children, it must be signed by a parent or legal guardian
- *Materials Release*, for obtaining permission from the owner or license holder to use photographs, audio, video, film or other media which may be copyrighted or owned by others
- *Location Release*, for use when you are filming on property you do not own

In any professional production, a good idea to establish a relationship with a qualified and reputable entertainment attorney that understands documentary. If you're working with professional actors you'll probably need a special actor/model release form which is beyond the scope of this class.

Read and edit these forms as necessary for your particular production and requirements. Releases are important because some film festivals, most funding bodies, and all broadcasters and distributors will require them as part of the chain of title, a series of documents that establish the producer's right to put the components in their film or video. For locations, it's important to know who actually owns the building or land you want to film on and also to find out who the current occupier is. For example, if you are filming in a rented house you should get permission from the landlord as well as the tenant who is renting the property.

Some books I recommend in order to become more familiar with legal issues related to the production of film/video include:

- *The Pocket Lawyer for Filmmakers: A Legal Toolkit for Independent Producers* by Thomas A. Crowell
- *The Independent Film Producer's Survival Guide: A Business and Legal Sourcebook* by Gunnar Erickson, Mark Halloran, and Harris Tulchin
- *Archival Storytelling: A Filmmaker's Guide to Finding, Using, and Licensing Third-Party Visuals and Music* by Sheila Curran Bernard and Kenn Rabin

The forms on the following pages are the same forms I use in my productions. They were written for me by a respected entertainment attorney. Please be advised that this document by no means constitutes any form of legal opinion or advice.

Book titles link to Amazon.com book pages in the PDF edition.

## APPEARANCE RELEASE

Video (Working Title): \_\_\_\_\_ (the "Video")

Person Appearing: \_\_\_\_\_

Production Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Production Location(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize \_\_\_\_\_ ("Producer"), Producer's agents, successors, assigns, and designees to record my name, likeness, image, voice, sound effects, interview and performance on video, film, or otherwise (the "Recording"), edit such Recording as Producer may desire, and incorporate such Recording into the Video, any versions of the Video and all related materials thereof, including but not limited to promotion and advertising materials. It is understood and agreed that Producer shall retain final editorial, artistic, and technical control of the Video and the content of the Video. Producer may use, and authorize others to use, the Video, any portions thereof and the Recording in all markets, manner, formats and media, whether now known or hereafter developed, throughout the world, in perpetuity. Producer, and Producer's successors and assigns, shall own all right, title and interest, including the copyright, in and to the Video, including the Recording and related materials, to be used and disposed of, without limitation, as Producer shall in Producer's sole discretion determine.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## MINOR APPEARANCE RELEASE

Working Title: \_\_\_\_\_ (the "Video")

Person Appearing: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Production Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Production Location(s): \_\_\_\_\_

As parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, I authorize  
\_\_\_\_\_ ("Producer"), Producer's agents,

successors, assigns, and designees to record his/her name, likeness, image, voice, sound effects, interview and performance on video, film, or otherwise (the "Recording"), edit such Recording as Producer may desire, and incorporate such Recording into the Video, any versions of the Video and all related materials thereof, including but not limited to promotion and advertising materials. It is understood and agreed that Producer shall retain final editorial, artist, and technical control of the Video and the content of the Video. Producer may use, and authorize others to use, the Video, any portions thereof and the Recording in all markets, manner, formats and media, whether now known or hereafter developed, throughout the world, in perpetuity. Producer, and Producer's successors and assigns, shall own all right, title and interest, including the copyright, in and to the Video, including the Recording and related materials, to be used and disposed of, without limitation, as Producer shall in Producer's sole discretion determine.

I represent, as parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, we shall both be bound by the terms of this Appearance Release.

Signature of Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## MATERIAL RELEASE

Video (Working Title): \_\_\_\_\_(the “Video”)

Description of Material: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (the “Licensed Material”)

Licensor: \_\_\_\_\_ (“Licensor”)

Licensor hereby grants to \_\_\_\_\_ (“Producer”), its successors and assigns, the non-exclusive right to reproduce the Licensed Material, to record and edit the Licensed Material as desired on film, video, or otherwise (the “Recording”), and to use the Licensed Material, in whole or in part, in and in connection with the Video and all versions thereof and all materials relating thereto, including advertising and promotion.

Producer, and its successors and assigns, shall own all right, title and interest, including the copyright, in and to the Video, including the Recording, to be used and disposed of throughout the world in perpetuity without limitation as Producer shall determine in its sole discretion, including without limitation to distribute the Video in all manner, format and media, whether now known or hereinafter developed.

Licensor represents and warrants that Licensor possesses or has obtained all rights to the Licensed Material necessary for the grant of this license and that the rights granted hereunder will not conflict with or violate any commitment, agreement, or understanding Licensor has or will have to or with, nor infringe upon any rights of, any person or entity. Licensor shall pay and indemnify and hold Producer and its grantors, officers, directors, assignees, agents, licensees, and employees harmless from and against all claims, losses, costs, expenses, settlements, demands, and liabilities of every kind, including reasonable attorneys’ fees and expenses, arising out of or incurred by reason of the use of the Licensed Material set forth herein or the inaccuracy, alleged breach, or actual breach of any representation, warranty, covenant, agreement, or undertaking Licensor has made herein.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## LOCATION RELEASE

Video (Working Title): \_\_\_\_\_ (the "Video")

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Location Owner or Authorized [name and address]: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ("Owner")

Date(s) of Recording: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ ("Producer") and Owner agree as follows:

Owner agrees that Producer and persons designated by Producer may be in, on, or about the above location on the date(s) indicated above, for the purposes of preparing or making photographs, and/or video and sound recordings or otherwise (the "Recordings") in connection with the Video. Producer shall hold Owner harmless from and indemnify Owner against any damage to the above location caused by any persons designated by Producer to be on the location or against any injuries occurring to persons designated by Producer to be on the location.

Owner authorizes Producer to edit the Recordings as desired and to use them, in whole or in part, in connection with the Video, in all manner and media, as Producer shall determine in Producer's sole discretion. Producer, and Producer's successors and assigns, shall own all right, title and interest, including the copyright, in and to the Video, including the Recordings, to be used and disposed of throughout the world in perpetuity without limitation as Producer shall determine in Producer's sole discretion.

Owner represents and warrants that Owner has the right to enter into this agreement and that the rights Owner has granted hereunder will not conflict with or violate any commitment, agreement, or understanding Owner has or will have to or with, nor infringe upon any rights of, any person or entity. Owner expressly releases Producer and Producer's employees, directors, officers, agents, assignees, and licensees from all claims, losses, costs, expenses, settlements, demands and liabilities of every kind, including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses, arising out of or incurred by reason of the use of the Recordings in connection with the Video or the inaccuracy, alleged breach or actual breach of any representation, warranty, covenant, agreement or undertaking made by Owner herein.

Agreed and Accepted By:

PRODUCER

OWNER

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_