

**Bubblebee Sidekick IEMs and Accessories Help Ammar Al-Zeer Deliver Great Sound**

*The renowned sound mixer uses Sidekick on high profile shows such as The Interview, Al Jazeera’s flagship documentary.*

**Copenhagen, Denmark. February 10th 2023**: Ammar Al-Zeer, principle live sound engineer for Cable Sound Studios, is using a range of audio accessories from Bubblebee Industries to ensure that the sound he captures for news, current affairs or documentary programmes meet the director’s quality expectations.

“It’s my job to ensure that whatever a director requests, I am able to accommodate,” he says. “Often these days I am asked to conceal microphones, just as we would on a movie set, so I prepare for that by having plenty of lavalier microphones handy and plenty of Bubblebee accessories so I can effectively hide them under clothes.”

On current affairs and documentary shoots the schedule is usually very tight, and parameters can change with no warning. One production that always tests Al-Zeer’s ability to think on his feet is *The Interview*, a flagship programme for the Al Jazeera Media Network, which is filmed at various locations around the world.

“When you are dealing with high profile guests, time on set is limited and there are fewer opportunities to do re-shoots,” he explains. “Also, Al Jazeera is primarily an Arabic-speaking channel, and the interviews are regularly conducted in different languages. We often need to factor in a live translator who must be able to speak to both parties on set and feed the translation back and forth, two-way in real time.”

Al-Zeer usually uses Sanken Cos 11 lav microphones in conjunction with Lectrosonics SSM transmitters to mic the show’s presenter and guest. He mounts his Cos 11s on Bubblebee Lav Concealers so that they are immediately ready when he needs them. He also has an accessories box with Bubblebee lav concealer tape prepped and ready to go in case he needs to make quick adjustments to accommodate the clothes the guests are wearing.

In situations where the interview moves outside of the studio, he uses Bubblebee Windbubbles and Piece-A-Fur to prevent any wind noise from spoiling the audio.

“These are all phenomenal products for outdoor location recording and overcoming adverse wind conditions, and I’ve never had a problem with any of them,” he says. “I have different sizes and colours of Windbubble for every eventuality, plus all the clips and mounts you can think of, including dual clips that are useful if a guest comes on set and doesn’t want a mic hidden under his or her clothes.”

Al-Zeer is also a fan of Bubblebee Sidekick In Ear monitors, which he regularly uses with his RX kit. This consists of Lectrosonics SRc receivers, a Sound Devices SL-2 Mixer/Recorder and Sennheiser ew G4 series IEMs.

“I am really impressed with the Bubblebee Sidekick and I use it for the presenter and interviewee, positioning the earpiece on the side that won’t be seen on camera,” he says. “Even if they decide to walk and talk, which does sometimes happen, the Sidekick is so discrete that it is almost invisible. A lot of directors from the Middle East come in with their own massive studio earpieces, but when they see Sidekick - and when the presenter realises how good it sounds - they are all blown away.”

Designed to be virtually invisible, Sidekicks feature the world’s first micro driver solution. This allows the driver to fit inside the ear canal, thus eliminating the need for acoustic tubes outside the ear. Thanks to its discreet profile, extreme levels of comfort and ability to deliver high speech intelligibility, Sidekick is rapidly becoming a vital piece of the film and broadcast communication jigsaw because it allows the sound crew, presenters and talent on set to easily communicate with directors and sound mixers back in the studio while still hearing everything that is going on around them.

On set, Al-Zeer works fast to mic up interviewers and guests, often having no more than 10 minutes to check levels and make sure everything is working properly.

“I have my lavaliers already prepared with Bubblebee Cos 11 concealers because nine times out of ten the person being interviewed will be wearing a shirt, so the concealers allow me to fix the mic without too much fiddling about,” he says. “I have various straps as well because some high profile female guests won’t allow us to mic them – they prefer to mic themselves and the belt straps make this much easier.”

As with all live television situations things do occasionally go wrong and Ammar admits he’s sweated a few times when equipment hasn’t worked, or people have jumped on the wrong radio frequency.

“If we are waiting on camera and I know what the problem is, I can usually get it fixed within a minute or two,” he says. “If it needs longer, I whisper in the producer’s ear and we sort it out. Loose connections, batteries dying – things like that – can always happen. This is the unpredictable nature of factual shoots. My clients want the sound to be perfect, so you have to find work arounds. That is the nature of the job. The trick with documentaries, ENG and reality shows is to travel with lots of back up so you are always prepared, no matter what gets thrown at you.”

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**About Bubblebee Industries**

Bubblebee Industries has been Making Sound Sound Better since 2011. Based in Denmark, Bubblebee designs high quality microphone wind protection and sound accessories for the production sound, field recording, live, sports and broadcast sound industries.

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