

**Figure 6.3** In this example of a one-camera shoot, the subject faces the interviewer directly, looking into his eyes.



**Figure 6.4** Zoom in on your subject for a more intimate shot.



## Position Your Subject

I don't care whether you're shooting an interview, a parody, a business advertorial, or a tutorial—camera placement will be your first and most important decision.

Outside shots can look great, but sound can be an issue—car horns beeping, passersby chatting, birds twirping—plus lighting can be problematic if all you have is bright sunlight. Indoor settings usually offer more controlled situations for both lighting and audio.

If you're going to meet a professional at his or her business—doctor, lawyer, accountant, dry cleaner—where should you put your subject? In a chair, on a couch, standing up? If the choice is for sitting directly across from you, try my favorite eye-contact technique: Sit or stand directly across from the subject, and place the camera on a tripod next to you or right over your shoulder. Position the camera so the subject is looking at it—and you—thus producing that much-desired eye contact.

For instance, in *Figure 6.3* I've set up a one-camera shoot, using a Canon PowerShot S95 to interview Reza Hosseini, the owner of Tiffany Dry Cleaners in Manhattan Beach. The camera has a decent zoom. In *Figure 6.4*, I use it, zooming in for a nice tight shot to focus on his face and not just the surroundings. I want to see Hosseini on camera, facing me directly, so we can see his eyes.

## CELEBRITY LOCATIONS

When I interviewed actress Valerie Bertinelli on the set of her TV show “Hot in Cleveland,” I grabbed two director’s chairs so we could face each other (*Figure 6.5*). Sitting on couches can be a problem because you don’t get the distance you need to fit both you and your subject in the frame. Instead, you end up with side shots of both faces. We used three cameras: a camera behind Bertinelli facing on me, another camera behind me for the actress, and a third camera wide shot that looked at both of us dead on.



**Figure 6.5** Actress Valerie Bertinelli looks relaxed and professional in this setting.

When we interviewed comedian Adam Carolla about his podcast, it just made sense to sit in the same area where he interviews guests. We got around the couch issues because there was room to put our multiple cameras (*Figure 6.6*). For those gearheads out there, a Canon 5D Mark II with a 70–200mm lens was focused on Carolla, and a Canon 60D with 85mm lens was pointed at me. We got a wide shot dead center with a Sony EX1 video camera. You’ll notice I’m not sitting directly next to Carolla, but on the adjoining couch, so we appear to be facing each other in the video.



**Figure 6.6** Adam Carolla interviews his own guests here, so it seemed like a great place to interview him.