FIRST FRAME

British Film Editors

CRAFTING THE MOVING IMAGE

AUTUMN 2022

The 'Kate Bush' Effect

"I saw that they'd put This Woman's Work *in the hanging scene. So that was the only song considered for that scene. Once it was in there, it stays."*

Maggie Phillips, Music Supervisor

RENÉE EDWARDS
CHAIR

Hello BFE Members,

Hoping your summer's been rosy, and for those editing remotely without AC, that your keyboards haven't scorched your fingertips. It's remarkable how the dawn of remote editing brings increasing flexibility, even the opportunity to live elsewhere, with digital nomad visas. We are doing well to remain connected. Our online events are bridging the miles, and becoming a bedrock of the association. We are expanding for Season 5, to include factual and entertainment VGOWs. Coming together in person with the awards' evenings, socials and events is joyful. Along with members, sponsors and nominees, I met a mentee who described the vast difference our mentoring scheme makes to their career.

It was wonderful to join the Bristol Editor's Network social, as we want to be part of regional events.

Congratulations winners of the Cut Above Awards 2022. We'd love to see photos of you with your awards. I'm catching up with the films, having helped with admin last winter, instead of the usual film-a-thon. What superb work! We've opened the 2023 suggestion list on the website and there's a new category - Best Edited Single Current Affairs.

We are delighted to announce our collaboration with *Televisual* Magazine for the next two issues, and thank you ALL our sponsors and supporters. With you we are building the BFE we're striving for. Thank you to our Governors, freelance staff and members. We are finding our feet as we expand, but dancing as we go.

All good things,

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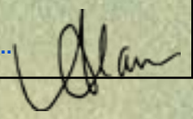
From The Editor

Welcome to *First Frame*, Autumn 2022. My introduction a few moments ago existed as a capsule state of the world but I assume we're all pretty much up to date with what problems we are dealing with so I deleted the paragraph. Let's be forward looking. Our membership continues to climb as the average age of members continues to fall, our Mentorship Scheme and First Aid For Editors are both up and running and our annual Cut Above Awards are now becoming established in the industry with some help from the industry magazine *Televisual* and brilliant efforts from those who made the Awards possible. A shout out to Renée, Andrew Evans, Bonnie Poole and Rai Jenkins. Together with Bonnie, Andy Kemp has also kept up the sponsorship drive. Stand out articles in the magazine this time are Stefania Marangoni's behind the scenes look at Virtual Production, *Virtually Real, Really Virtual* (p.56), a real eye opener and the cover story, *The Kate Bush Effect* (p.46) which looks at how a single song can turn the emotional impact of a scene up to (ahem) 'eleven'. That's a *Stranger Things* joke and I refuse to explain it. One last thing. *First Frame* has one house style rule which if you don't know it may make you think I randomise bolding or italicising movie and TV titles. Movies are in **bold**, TV (short films, books and plays etc.) are in *italics.* I hope you enjoy the magazine and as ever, it's your magazine so send me ideas/articles, I beg you!

P.S. If you're reading this in a post house and are not a BFE member, please turn to the back cover...



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BFE extends its continuing gratitude to our sponsors...

PRIMAL SCREEN

Images That Go Deep

by Tim Bayners

In several interviews, including BFE's own VGOW, Academy Award winning editor Joe Walker (congrats on the promotion, Joe!) highlighted a series of shots in **Dune** directed by Denis Villeneuve. He described them thus:

"I always feel that although his films have great dialogue and great action sequences, of course, they also thrive with what I describe as a very brain stem-y approach. There are images where you don't need to see everybody's face. You can just see the hand on the back of the neck and you get the context that it's a woman who's abandoning her life on a planet in the face of peril, while the servants are in the background and everything about the history of this family has been packed away in crates and shipped.

At this moment of tremendous anxiety, this reassuring hand comes in and you can see from the expression, the level of trust between these two people. I mean, how do you write that? It's a brain stem-y image. I think it's one of many in this film that resonate because they're very sensory and very immersive. As an editor, I'm always trying to make sure of the platform for that, so that you can really appreciate that."

These images speak to the primal sense of identification that cinema evokes so powerfully. Yes, Paul Atreides is the subject of an alien prophecy, something most of us can't really relate to (though I'm sure some might see themselves as worth a prophecy or two) but we all know what a loving touch feels like or the cool, literally immersive nature of a hand in wild water, the very opposite conditions of the desert world he's about to fold space to reach.

While I could trawl my memory and hard drives for similar shots throughout cinema, I thought I'd focus on one sequence: a sequence that is special to me for nothing even close to obvious reasons. I would lead you into the spiritual but I've not prepared the ground well enough yet.

22 minutes and 2 seconds in on the Criterion Collection Blu-ray of 1967's **In The Heat Of The Night**, there is a whole scene given over to 'Brain Stem-y' shots. They are not as emotionally charged or immersive as those images in **Dune** and on the surface act as simple close up coverage of a preliminary examination of a dead body. Director Norman Jewison gets the camera to follow the leading actor's hands, with assured invisible cuts by legendary editor turned director Hal Ashby, as it makes its way around the corpse. But, despite the prosaic reason for this particular coverage and edit, the scene affects me quite deeply.

Several things used to mesmerise me in ways quite unlike any other aspects in life. Those of my vintage will recall the artist Tony Hart and his artwork lighting up the programme made explicitly for children with hearing disabilities, the BBC's *Vision On*. Its 'sequel' (we didn't have sequels in the early 70s) was *Take Hart* and featured Mr. Hart making art and animation which kids just adored. I recall as a child standing watching a blacksmith at work at an open forge and feeling a serenity that was completely alien to me (but hugely welcome) at the time. I still find it difficult to describe the feeling. Then there were the childish games played with friends where one would build a robot that ended up looking just like us but the 'scientist' had to do the building attaching arms and legs to the other. It was that being fussed over, like having a soothing massage that didn't send you to sleep but put you in that same relaxed, almost meditative state.

So let's cut to the corpse. **In The Heat Of The Night** starred the recently deceased icon of cinema, Sidney Poitier as a black man arrested in the town of Sparta in the southern state of Mississippi. Racism here, at this time in history, was a simple and open fact of life. A dead body had been discovered late at night (guess the colour of his skin?) The first black man found still up and awake, waiting for a train in the depths of the night, was brought in for questioning. In a deliciously timed and played scene, it turns out that Virgil Tibbs is a well paid policeman from the more enlightened state of Philadelphia. Under some duress, he is asked by his own superiors to help with the murder case. The film, of course, examines the stupidity and ubiquity of racism, pitting Virgil against redneck Chief of Police, Bill Gillespie. While they don't ride off into the sunset together, some mutual respect is earned at the close of this brilliant police procedural.

Tibbs's examination of the corpse is the scene that still floors me. Poitier's body language and movement in close up is delicate, meticulous and mesmerising. Together with the minimal coverage and edits, it's his soft voice as a form of gentle narration that seals the deal. I may be an outlier in this kind of appreciation of what might be a distasteful moment in the film but the real shocker was realising that I was blissfully and serenely identifying with a corpse!

So for your edification and potential spiritual enlightenment, here is the scene in screen grabs and appropriate dialogue. Relax and just let Sidney mesmerise you...

"*Well, you wanna look at it?*"

"New manicure. That's good."

“That’s very good.”

“I’ll need a few things...”

“*Such as?*”

“Ammonium hydrosulfide...”

“Benzedrine... Superoxide of hydrogen..”

“Copper powder, distilled water...”

“A six inch celluloid scale, a thermometer...”

“Some tweezers, calipers and some toothpicks...”

TALES FROM THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

“Editors often joke that you can edit a scene in half an hour and then spend a week working out what music will fit it.”

Making Music by Guy Ducker

Style Counselling

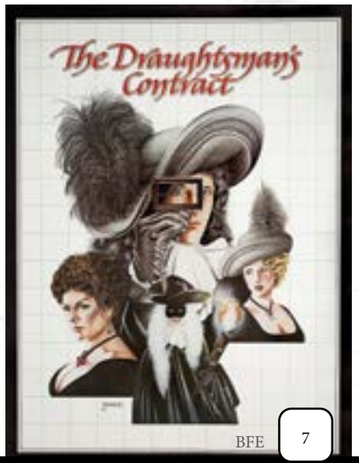
Long before movies had sound, they had music. Not the 10,000 piece orchestra of Hans Zimmer* — instead, a single pianist on a cheap upright piano, or later a cinema organ, improvising to the picture as it played. Nonetheless, from near the beginning, moving images relied on music as a trusty guide, steering the audience through the emotional highs and lows of the story. There’s a lot to be said about music in film.

I’ll talk about how to decide what style of music best suits your film. So how do you know what style of music will best suit your film, when to use music and when not to, and whether the music should shout or whisper? There’s a lot to cover. Musical style first, placement and prominence next. The first and biggest question to answer when considering film music is style: what sort of music will best suit your story? Most genres of film have their own established musical styles: the eerie strings of a horror film, galloping orchestras or lonely harmonicas for westerns, bugles and drums for war movies... you know the rest. While it does no harm to nod to these conventions, sticking too closely to them can make your film feel clichéd, over-familiar.

Sometimes filmmakers will turn to musical styles not specific to cinema to lend a tone to their story, whether it be hip hop in **Ghost Dog**, Delta blues in **Angel Heart** or sixties soul in **Last Night in Soho**. The style might reflect the geographical, historical or cultural setting of the film, but it doesn’t have to. You can mash up musical styles, to add an edge to a story that might simply be seen as a genre piece. Peter Greenaway and Michael Nyman had fun resetting the works of Purcell and Vivaldi, with saxophones and other playful additions, for **The Draughtsman’s Contract** and **The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover**.

Alternatively you can go all the way and pick a style that is deliberately at odds with the milieu of your story. Famously Woody Allen scores most of his films with trad. jazz, including his science fiction spoof **Sleeper**, where the zaniness of the music nicely underlines the film’s slapstick comedy. Similarly, Sofia Coppola scored her film of the life of Marie Antoinette with post-punk tracks, to draw modern parallels to her 18th century heroine. More recently Pablo Larhraín and Johnny Greenwood put a dissonant, experimental score to **Spencer**, their film about Diana Princess of Wales, thereby advertising that the tale would be considerably darker and more disturbing than your average royal biopic.

But how do you know what will work? One part inspired hunches to ten parts just trying stuff out. Editors often joke that you can edit a scene in half an hour and then spend a week working out what music will fit it.



You just have to throw a lot of tracks at a scene or sequence; you will find in that process that you learn the most from seeing what doesn't work. You can experiment by using the soundtracks of existing films and temp music; movie scores often work best, because they're designed to go with moving images.

When I assisted editor Michael Parker on **Calendar Girls**, we took forever to find a musical style that didn't just fit the tone of the story, but lifted the film. Eventually a slightly random "why not?" experiment with tracks by the Isley Brothers (included on the **Out of Sight** soundtrack) gave us the key. Patrick Doyle's eventual score for **Calendar Girls** embraced a combination of joyous funk and mischievous boogie-woogie. While these musical styles were far from an obvious fit with England's Lake District, they perfectly reflected the optimistic, playful energy of the characters.

There is however a big pitfall when deciding on musical style: taste. Of all the arts, music is probably the one that most divides opinion. Most editors will recognise the experience of having, after a long search, found the perfect track, and showing it with confident pride to the director or producer, then watching them wince. It's not that you were wrong; it's just not the sort of music that they like. Mike Figgis tells the story of laying down a jazz sound track to an edit of one of his films and screening it for the studio execs, only to be told "people don't like jazz". While it's true that some people don't like jazz — it's often thought to be exclusive and intellectual — Figgis is himself a jazz musician, so it was probably the right sound for his film and the audience he was addressing. My guess is that it was just the exec who didn't like jazz.

How do you get round differences in taste? You don't.

The challenge of finding a style of music that everyone likes has been faced by the people who select music for use in lifts, for 'hold music', and for national anthems, and the results have been almost universally underwhelming. By trying to please everyone, you please no one. Bold decisions often work best, lending a real flavour to the film — can we imagine Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns without Ennio Morricone's eccentric scores? But bold decisions are also the most difficult to sell. Often if you can find a style that the producer and director agree on, and that works for the film, you're doing well.

I should add that, even if an individual audience member doesn't like a particular musical style, that's not going to ruin the movie for them. Personally I hate Country and Western, but I can't think of any film I've seen where I've felt my enjoyment to have been damaged by the inclusion of Country music. In fact I really loved the film **Wild Rose**, which was all about a Country singer. Rather than the music making me like the film less, the film actually made me like the music more. And I don't think I'm alone in that. Of course if the film isn't working, or the style of music is a poor fit, audiences will be critical. But if the story is good and the music works with it, audiences will embrace the score, no matter what the style.

Laying Down Tracks

Now you've settled on a musical style, I'm going to talk about what strategy to use, where in the film to use music, and how prominent to make it. What effect do you want the music to have on the scene in which it's placed? For example, you might use it to create tension, excitement or mystery, or to echo the emotions of the characters.

I think the key divide here is external music versus internal. Let me define my terms: by external I mean music that provides a commentary on the action that comes from the storyteller; internal music feels like it comes from the characters themselves, used to take us inside their heads. It's worth thinking about which of these two approaches you're taking for any given scene. Is the track you use suggesting how the audience should respond to the scene, or telling them how the character is responding? This often amounts to the same thing, but not always. Our young hero walks through a funfair, followed by a shadowy figure: is the music telling us how much they're enjoying themselves or warning the audience that disaster is about to strike?

Neither is wrong, but they're two very different music tracks. You might even get a cue composed that goes from naïve excitement to creeping menace.

When you are placing music tracks, the choice of whether it is an internal or external track will affect where it starts and ends. If the track reflects the character's emotions, it's important to be guided closely by the actor's performance. Say the character receives sad news: you'll want the music to start at the moment the character's face falls on receiving that news. If, however, it is an external track the music might start earlier, warning us of the sadness to come. Generally speaking the music needs to be over when the emotion or dramatic need that has prompted it passes. Keep it going too long and the scene will start to feel part of a sequence, and we may start to feel that the story is being told from some remove.

As the music cue progresses it's important that it keeps a close eye on the developing emotions of the scene. If the music starts sad, but then doesn't change as the character's sadness turns to anger, it will undermine the emotional shape of your scene. It'll just feel wrong. Externally motivated music tracks, however, don't have to reflect the emotion of the scene directly – they can use counterpoint. This is where the music gives us a dramatically different perspective from what the action of the scene would suggest, usually a removed commentary. In this scene from **The Road to Perdition** the fall of the Rooney gang is scored to a poignant lament, despite the blazing tommy gun.

Watch the scene with the sound off and it's easy enough to imagine how it might have been scored, had the director chosen to use an internal cue, following the characters' experience of the event. **The Road to Perdition** clip also gives a good demonstration of another issue: prominence. Thomas Newman's music cue for that scene may be quiet, but it is composed to be front and centre in the sound mix. It is score – music that leads the scene, music we know we're listening to. This approach to music is most common during non-dialogue scenes – action sequences, dance numbers, atmospheric establishing shots – it's pretty much a necessary part of any montage. The most controversial score of recent times has to be Jonny Greenwood's soundtrack for **Spencer**. Here the music is often right in your face, sometimes really intrusive. Whether you liked it or loathed it, it did have a few tricks up its sleeve, like in the dinner scene:

A string quartet can be seen at the start of the scene and we're lulled into believing that it's an incidental detail playing for the diners. As the scene progresses, however, the polite baroque background music becomes gradually more and more discordant as we go deeper into Diana's perspective. This is an example of source music (music the characters can hear) turning into score. Score is distinct from underscore. Underscore puts music in the background, often beneath dialogue. It sits at the back of the mix. Done well, it evokes emotion in the scene without the audience even being aware of its presence.

In **Inception**, for example, Zimmer's underscoring keeps the dream-like mood alive without drawing attention to itself, not until the nature of the scene changes, at which point it becomes score. You also have to keep an eye on what proportion of your film you want to feature music. Assuming that you're paying for music—either getting it composed or using library music— this is likely to be at least in part a question of how many cues you can afford; but let's put money aside for the moment. Like so many things, how much you use is a judgement call, but I think it's best to see music as being a bit like underlining or bold text in a document. It's good for adding emphasis, but the more you put in, the less emphasis it gives. While music is great for drawing an audience in, it can also leave us slightly on the outside. Why? Because music provides commentary. Imagine going round a museum: if we're only able to see the museum with a guide, we often miss a sense of being able to find things for ourselves, we feel a bit bossed around. Sometimes an audience will feel more involved with a scene if you trust them to immerse themselves, rather than telling them what to feel. There are some films that don't use music at all, or use it so sparingly that it feels as if it's hardly there. Famously Hitchcock used no music in **Rope**, and his movie **The Birds** uses only electronically treated crows cawing at the start and end of the film (although if you count bird song as music there is plenty of that throughout).

One effect of not using music is that it leaves the audience alert. No one holds our hands, warns us of impending danger, or sets up our genre expectations: we've got to work it out for ourselves. And, for a thriller, that edginess in the viewer is no bad thing. Zimmerman's **The Day of the Jackal** also only uses music at the top and tail.

This strategy is smart because it allows for an opening cue to set the tone of the film and then leaves you to find your own way. In order for the film not to feel too austere, Zimmerman was careful to allow a fair bit of incidental music: pop songs drift from radios beyond open windows, a riotous can-can blares from a television as someone is murdered, and — most memorably — the pomp of distant martial music accompanies the veteran's day parade at the film's climax. This music is at odds with the mood of the scenes: it plays, happily oblivious to the cold- blooded plan of the meticulous assassin, setting him in a mundane everyday world, making the story feel all the more real.

Behold how extraordinarily dynamic, dramatic and death-defying these images are, all scored with the greatest motion picture theme of all time. Duh.

Whether you choose to use music to reflect the character's emotions or to give us an external commentary, whether you use a lot of music or a little I encourage you not to follow the example set by a scene in **From Russia with Love**. Ironically the track in question is one of the best pieces of film music ever written (don't get me to justify that); even so, pairing the uncontained excitement of the Bond theme with a scene where Sean Connery casually wanders round his hotel room looking for bugs has got to be one of the clumsiest uses of music in cinema history. Let me know if you can think of a worse one.

 Edited by Dr. Sara Lodge

* I can't say with authority that the bullying grandeur of Hans Zimmer's scores requires 10,000 instruments. It may be more.

Editor's Note*: The* **From Russia With Love** *checking in and surveying his room for bugs scene always bothered me even as a child. This utterly timeless classic theme has been reworked countless times throughout all of the Bond movies but only once has the original recording featured as the main theme of, unsurprisingly, the first film* **Dr. No.** *And in that case, it starts on the big crash, has an edit to roll it back to the start and then after only 1 minute and 17 seconds does it mix into Three Blind Mice, the signature song that introduces the actual film. Perhaps everyone knew what kind of a classic it was and they were desperate to use it… but where? Well it's* The James Bond Theme*… why not over James Bond in the hotel in the next movie despite variations of the theme used over Bond's arrival at Istanbul. Oh, and let's remember the theme's composer who passed away on the 11th July 2022. RIP Monty Norman.*

FROM POLAND WITH LOVE

AN INTERVIEW WITH RADEK SIENSKI BFE

by Matthew Walters

Radek is a BAFTA-nominated editor, known for Save Our Squad*,* The Write-Offs*, and* First Dates*. He was born in Gdansk, Poland and has been living and working in the UK for the last 15 years. He recently became a BAFTA member.*

Q: Hi Radek! Let's start from the beginning. When did you become interested in film?

The earliest memories I have of falling in love with film are watching 'making of' featurettes of films that were soon to be released. I must have been 10 years old. I was inquisitive about how films were made, who directed them, how long they took and was captivated by seeing footage from film sets. Soon after, I became obsessed with Bond films. I would call TV stations to find out the next time a film would be broadcast and how long they held licences for the films. I forced my younger brother Marcin to watch different genres with me as I was making my way through film history - Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, German Expressionism, **Singin' in the Rain**… As children we would shoot and reenact our own films based on what we watched and invite the neighbourhood children to participate.

Q: What inspired you to enter into the world of films?

I recall watching **Memento** for the first time when I was 18. My mind was blown by its non-linear structure. It really opened my eyes to the narrative possibilities of film and made me want to be a filmmaker.

Q: Did you live in the UK at the time?

No, that was when I finished my Polish equivalent to A-levels and was at a crossroads as to what to do in life. Like most parents, my mother wanted me to get a 'proper job'. However, I remained persistent about working in film. A friend suggested Buckinghamshire New University from a campus presentation they had attended. You have to remember that at the time the internet was not what it is today so I was very limited in my research. I had to apply with blind faith.

Q: Tell me more about your move to the UK.

Naturally, it was very challenging. I was raised by a single mother who could not assist me with the finances to migrate. I am the first of my family to have a degree and live abroad. When I first moved, my English was very poor and I didn't have enough money for accommodation. It was the generosity of a butcher who gave me my first job which helped me save enough money. My English improved rapidly because I was required to have a minimum 90 percent pass rate for the English exam to be enrolled. I didn't have a portfolio so I applied with a freerunning video which I edited, showcasing my acrobatic tricks, cut to uptempo music. How 2007!

I worked every single weekend for 5 years as a waiter and then as a cinema usher to put myself through film schools. Tesco Value 10p pasta with 13p tomato sauce were on the menu on most nights. I couldn't afford train tickets to school so I bought a cheap bike and cycled 12 miles every day. It's these moments that allow me to reflect on the challenges that seemed so insurmountable and required a lot of courage.

Q: What aspect of filmmaking appealed to you the most?

Early 20s are a time of self-discovery. It was great to be exposed to all facets of filmmaking on my BA film course, but it wasn't until the second or third year that my passion for editing started to emerge. The turning point for me was directing and editing two shorts: *Memories* and *A Question of Time*. These films turned out to be very successful in festival circuits and enabled me to travel to places like Canada for the Toronto Film Festival and Los Angeles for the Campus Movie Fest and many other locations.

I had an offer to turn *A Question of Time* into a Bollywood feature! On the strength of the shorts, I was offered to edit a comedy feature with the late Keith Chegwin in the lead. I worked as a VFX artist and a VFX supervisor on a couple of indie films. That was a fun and very creative time.

Q: Not bad for someone straight out of uni! Did you continue to pursue the path of indie features?

Surprisingly, no. Someone told me about the National Film & Television School and their prestigious alumni so I decided to apply for an MA in Editing. I felt incredibly honoured to be accepted as one of eight students and it changed everything for me. I was probably a bit too confident at the time and the school helped me to channel that into creativity. My cash prizes from the festivals paid for the first year and I did feel invincible.

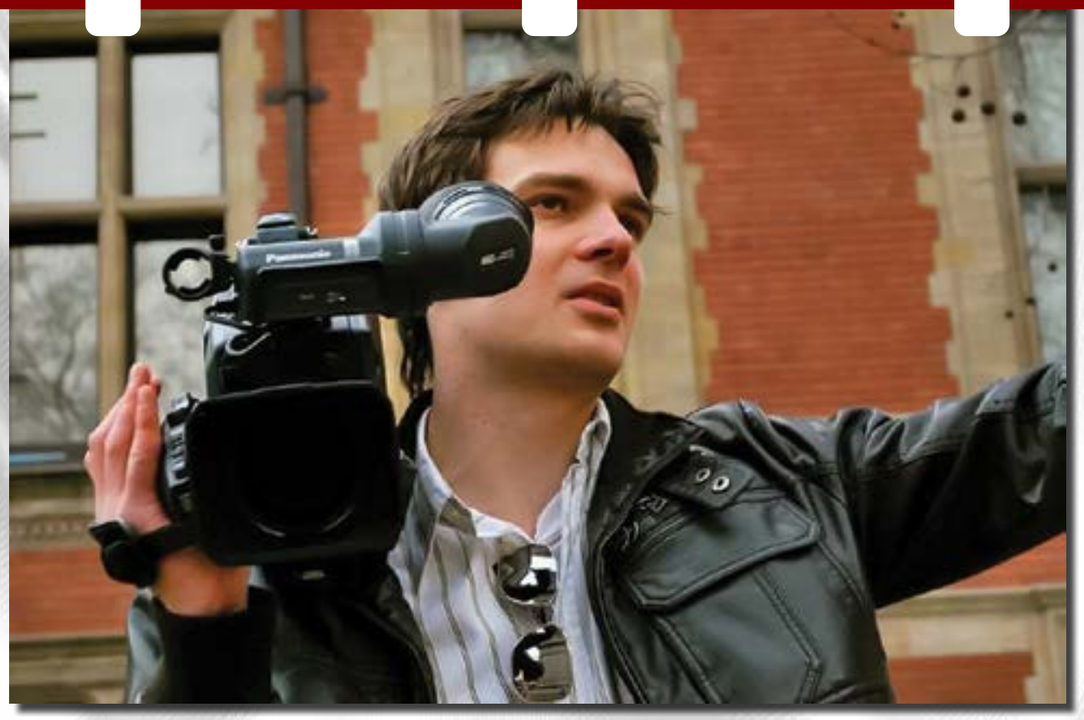
However, within the first week of the course I realised how much more there was to learn about filmmaking and editing. A whole new world opened up in front of me and for two years I was soaking it up like a sponge! After graduating, I worked as a junior editor for Landmark Films before getting my first prime time BBC documentary *Fox Wars*. I am extremely grateful to Nicholas O'Dwyer who gave me my break.

Q: What do you consider to be your unique contributions to the industry as an editor so far?

I have a very good eye for stories that are deeply and universally human and I know how to bring them to life on screen. I am deeply empathic and it finds its outlet in the way I edit.

When I was offered *The Write Offs* which deals with adult illiteracy in Britain, I knew that I could bring the right level of sensitivity to the subject. We had the challenge of making learning to read and write engaging - both stylistically and narratively. We succeeded by thinking beyond the reality of the situation and came up with a stylised opening sequence in which road signs are rendered unreadable to put viewers in the shoes of the individuals.

I'm always keen to experiment and try to elevate any show I work on and I love a good challenge, especially the ones that require re-shaping scenes completely or building new ones by repurposing old material - there is ALWAYS a solution. My ethos is: 'it's good, but let's see if we can make it better'.



Q: Do you have any advice for aspiring editors for whom English is not their first language?

Yes! First of all, don't think of it in the categories of native and non-native speakers when it comes to film and TV. As long as you speak English at a good level and can communicate your ideas in a clear and concise manner, then you're ready to start taking steps towards a career as an editor.

Furthermore, I know a lot of editors whose English is not on a fantastic level, but they are brilliant screen storytellers and they are in constant demand. Secondly - and that applies to everyone, think of as many possible ways you can start to network with industry professionals. Get on the ladder as soon as you can by applying for Edit Trainee schemes, be active on dedicated Facebook groups, go to networking events by BFE and Blue Collar Post Collective.

Also, meet your heroes! There is nothing more motivating than getting to know the people whose work inspired you. Editors who want to be searchable have their emails or websites online and I would advise you to reach out to them. They started somewhere too and often will happily share their experience or offer ideas on how to take first steps. Their responses and guidance will give you motivation to carry on. Now, with such a demand for editors and assistants, it's a perfect time to try to break into the industry, no matter which country you were born in.

Q: What does the future look like for you?

I was recently accepted as a full BAFTA member which I'm extremely grateful for. I am mentoring a couple of people and it brings me a lot of joy to see their careers blossom. I have finished cutting on a Disney+ series starring David Beckham and now I am on my favourite Apple TV series for a year. I hope to one day edit a big action blockbuster.

KINDRED SPIRITS

First Frame welcomes a fellow Editors' Magazine

by Alan Miller BFE

I think it was Vice Chair Fergal who introduced me to *Assembled*, the first issue of the magazine of the Irish Screen Editors. After working solo on *First Frame* for a number of years, I was thrilled to find another Editors' magazine see the light of day. I reached out to speak to its own editor Jeremy 'Jayce' Briers because it's always a good idea to share ideas if you're both doing the same job. There can't be that many of us in the UK editing a magazine solo so we planned a Zoom call and had a great chat which turned into finding more than one thing in common.

Jeremy was wearing a T-shirt which in the fuzziness of Zoom calls was maddeningly familiar but not familiar enough for me to mention it straight away. Behind me in my cutting room/office was a poster that must have given Jeremy the same recognition problem I had with his T-shirt. Finally I crack and ask the question...

"Is that Jayne Cobb on your T-Shirt?"*

It certainly was. Jeremy was looking at a poster behind me, a picture of where Jayne Cobb lived for most of the time, the good ship Serenity, Firefly Class, captained by Malcolm Reynolds. If none of this means anything to you, then please see the footnote. A more famous aspect of popular culture should have been obvious to me if I'd kept my eyes open. One of the world's most famous props was sitting on the cover of the *Assembled* magazine. Even if you've never seen an episode of *Star Trek*, the Communicator must still be well known to you. Jeremy proudly showed off the superb replica and I just knew my bank account was about to take a hammering.

If I'd been a bit more quick-witted, not only would I have recognised Jayne Cobb but I could have reached up my right hand to my top shelf and pulled down a very inaccurate, wrongly coloured version of what's known in fandom as 'Jayne's hat'. I dare you to Google it! I model it here for your delectation (next to the poster).

Welcome to the party, Jeremy!

To read or download *Assembled*, please point your camera at this QR Code

*To non-Browncoats everywhere, Jayne Cobb was a fictional character in Joss Whedon's beloved series *Firefly*. Despite Joss now being cancelled for allegedly not behaving very well, this shouldn't be a reason not to catch up with a series that gets everything right. Plug over.

In Safe Hands

by the BFE Mentoring Team

The Mentoring Team has asked Alan Miller, our fabulous *First Frame* editor, whether we could take over some of the pages of *First Frame* on a permanent basis, hoping that we are not taking on more than we can chew. Therefore, this should be our first issue of many. Our first foray into *First Frame* was back in the Spring Issue, when we announced the opening of our permanent scheme and called out for mentors and mentees to apply. Since then, we have launched our dedicated page on the BFE website* and have started rolling out the new scheme. Soon we will touch base with those we have managed to pair up, to find out how they are getting on.

In the meantime, we are starting to look at further developments, to include dedicated online events and social gatherings. We will announce these, as dates and times are confirmed. It was while discussing the contents of this article, that we were reminded by Alan about the intentions behind the BFE scheme in 2020, which was about helping to forge mutually beneficial relationships between up and coming editing talent and their more experienced counterparts.

This is what prompted us to get in touch with the participants of our pilot scheme and hear about their experience first hand. We could only manage to publish a small number here but hope to bring you more in the coming issues. Those who completed the pilot scheme were: Cristina Balduin and Ariadna Fatijo-Vilas, Tatjana Rhodes and Henry Wood, Trace Taylor and Timéa Kalderák, Jack Goessens and Malcolm Crowe, Inigo Manby and Olly Stothart, Sebastiano Dell'Eva and Andy Kemp.

We will bring more stories and further insights like these in future issues of *First Frame*. In the meantime as you will see from the ScreenCraft Works article in this issue, our BFE Mentoring Scheme is not the only one and we believe that each play a part in creating these enriching relationships. In reading our participants contributions, we were pleased to witness the impact this is having, which goes beyond our expectations and we are even more excited about developing the scheme further in the coming months.

* https://www.britishfilmeditors.co.uk/mentorship

Cristina Balduin

After considerable experience editing short form, Cristina Balduin joined the scheme with the goal to move in to long form broadcast television.

"Ariadna (my mentor) gave me lot of advice on how to approach new clients, communicate with them effectively and manage a large amount of footage. Her positive can-do attitude helped me to feel more confident in my work, and during the mentorship, I landed an important job as additional editor on a Netflix series directed by Emmy winner Mark Lewis. Unfortunately, I can't reveal the title until it is officially announced, so watch out for it on the platform if you like gripping documentaries!"

Cristina also benefited from Ariadna's extensive editing and teaching experience, *"During the mentoring she gave me very constructive feedback on my work; we even analysed together one of the documentaries I edited, looking at narrative structure and creative editing. Lastly the regular catch ups with Ariadna gave me the drive and motivation to pursue my goals: every month, we would build together a plan that we then reviewed during the following meeting. I found every session of the mentorship extremely useful. Ariadna was friendly and approachable from the start, and we connected instantly: we discovered we had a few things in common, we both lived in Barcelona for a long time and shared a passion for stories with a social impact."*

Ariadna Fatjó-Vilas

Ariadna joined the mentoring scheme because she believes that *"…this programme is valuable in bringing a new diverse range of voices to the industry. It was a pleasure discussing with Cristina strategies to help further her career and supporting her development. But most of all, it was truly inspiring to see her excitement and drive. The mentorship program gave me the opportunity to regularly chat in-depth with a fellow editor about the craft and the industry. After this opportunity to open a conversation with a fellow editor who I now call friend, I understand that the programme brings even more than I initially thought: it provides a platform for editors from different generations, experiences and backgrounds to engage in a two way conversation that can only enrich us all."*

It was useful to also hear from Ariadna that she found the Skillset training *"very useful. It gave me a guide on how to structure my conversations with Cristina to set achievable goals to aim for between each meeting."*

Cristina Balduin is an Italian film and TV editor with 10 years of experience. She started her career in Barcelona after her MA in Film Editing at the Barcelona National Film School. She has been based in London since 2015 and has worked on many well known commercials and cinematic documentaries and films. Recent credits include *Ode*, an art short for the BBC, **Beautiful in the Morning**, a coming-of-age feature film and winner of the Sochi Special Jury Price and *The Reveal* the story of resilience of a paraplegic American veteran. Cristina's name will also appear soon as additional editor on a forthcoming Netflix documentary series by award winning director Mark Lewis.

Ariadna Fatjó-Vilas is a film editor working nationally and internationally on documentary and drama features (including Tribeca award winning **Una Noche** and Irish Film & TV Academy nominated **A Doctor's Sword**), animated films (BAFTA nominated 'Yours Truly') and TV series (HBO *The Talwars: Behind Closed Doors*). The documentary feature **The Act of Killing** brought Ariadna's editing work international acclaim. The film won a BAFTA, an Oscar nomination and Berlin Film Festival prizes while dominating critic polls throughout 2013. In a critics' poll on the BBC, it was ranked the 14th greatest documentary film of the 21st Century. Her recent film **Fadia's Tree** (by Sarah Beddington) was released in UK cinemas in August 2022.

Most of our mentees want to progress into scripted television or feature films. They ask for mentors with those credits. However, as Henry and Tatjana demonstrate, mentoring can make a difference regardless of genre.

Tatjana Rhodes

Tatjana is already working her way up from assistant editor to her goal of one day becoming an editor on high end TV series. *"Mentoring has helped me with my interview technique and how to focus in on the jobs I really want to apply for. My networking skills and self-confidence have improved. I got to work on a big HBO TV series,* The Nevers*, as 2nd assistant editor and as an assistant editor on the feature film* ***Consecration****.*

"Had it not been for the mentoring scheme helping me know my self worth and talent, I wouldn't have applied for my 1st Assistant Editor positions. On top of that, this year I was accepted as a full BAFTA member and last year I was nominated for the BFE Chris Crookall Cut Above Award for Breakthrough Editor, which was truly the highlight of my career so far and such an honour to be nominated by fellow colleagues!"

"I was paired with Tatjana Rhodes - a supremely talented, up-and-coming editor working in TV drama and feature films. As I work in factual telly it was great to have the opportunity to learn more about that side of the industry. As well as continuing to cut some exceptional low budget features, Tatjana had clear goals at the beginning of the year in terms of where she saw herself in the wider industry: working as a first assistant editor in TV drama and wider release features. I personally learnt a lot about planning the meetings and follow up with summaries of what we'd talked about. I felt very positive about being in a position to help someone who was grateful for that help. It was also good to be reminded about my own career path and the process has inspired me to widen my own client base. On top of the mentoring, I enjoyed viewing and discussing Tatjana's work with her and found it rewarding talking to someone who is enthusiastic about the art of editing. Due to her own commitment and talent Tatjana has achieved her mentoring goals and much more. It will be fascinating to see how her career develops from here."

Henry Wood

Tatjana Rhodes' work spans feature films, short films, TV, documentary, music videos, advertising and fashion. In 2017, she edited her first feature film entitled **Knights of the Damned** and from here went on to win the Best Editing award for her work on the short thriller, *In2ruders*, at the Birmingham Film Festival in 2018. This led to Tatjana editing three further indie feature films during 2019 and 2020. Firstly, a horror movie called **The Darkness**, which had a premiere screening at Cannes Film Festival, going on to become a semi-finalist at the Gold Movie awards 2020 and winning Best Feature Film at the Sweden Film Awards 2020. Followed by a sci-fi movie, **The Ant Farm**, and a drama called **Tummyache**, all due for release in 2021/2022. She has recently finished work as 1st Assistant Editor on the Series 2 of TV Series *Whitstable Pearl* and is now editing a gangster short film called *The Jackal*.

Henry Wood has edited more than 200 hours of broadcast factual television, working for the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and C5. He graduated in Media Studies from the then named Polytechnic of Central London, now Westminster University. After working as a runner at several post-production facilities in London, he had his first break into editing after being invited to work on a BBC 2 commissioned program by the director, for whom he had cut the film taster for the pitch to the corporation. He is currently completing work on *Saving Lives at Sea* and he is due to begin a 5 month project behind the scenes of The National Trust.

'I have used the Grey Man music library for many years. They always come up with those hard to find tracks for documentary. In this sometimes stressful environment you can count on them. I can't recommend them enough.'

Gary Beelders BFE

'Grey Man can be relied upon to provide tracks for embarrassingly tight deadlines that always sound fresh and well considered. Their intuition and understanding make them an indispensable resource.'

Andy Kemp BFE

'Working with ever increasing changes and ever diminishing deadlines, Grey Man are a go to source for finding that perfect, mood fitting track. Well composed, well catalogued and well thought out playlists make scoring the pleasure it should be.'

Ian Lloyd BFE

'Grey Man has consistently provided spot on playlists for many of my edits. The tracks are chosen with accuracy and are never inappropriate. I can request a playlist and have it within a couple of hours. Clients have regularly commented on how fitting the tracks are and how well they support the tone and editorial direction of the programme we're working on.'

Melanie Quigley BFE

'Grey Man understands music, pace, atmosphere and moods but most importantly, they understand my needs for the documentary I'm cutting. A collection of perfectly picked tunes arrive exactly to the brief. I go nowhere else for my soundtracks.'

Adam Richardson BFE

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"Forever Mine..."

How The Work of an Anglican Clergyman With a Disreputable Past became a Celebration Of Life, both Religious and Secular

by

A Wretch Like Me

There are fifty feature films that all have one thing in common. I won't list them all but here are twenty in alphabetical order just to set your mind a-whirr…

Amistad
The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford
Bad Boys: For Life
Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice
City Hall
The Coal Miner's Daughter
Due Date
Gangs of New York
The General's Daughter
Greenland
The Handmaid's Tale
Invasion of the Body Snatchers
L.A. Story
The Legend of Bagger Vance
Memphis Belle
Men In Black III
Romeo Must Die
Spy Hard,
Star Trek II: The Wrath of Kahn
True Grit.

What on Earth could unite this vast range of subjects the above represent? How could they have anything in common?

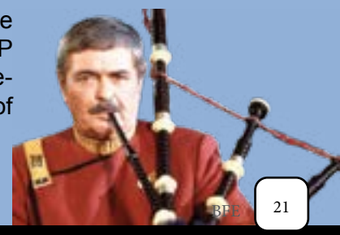
There are stories of the past, the present and the future, tales of alien possession, recalcitrant cowboys, talking road signs and thuggish gangs? Well, it would have to be something that says something about the human condition – there's nothing else left to hang on to, to answer that question. Let me give you a major clue if you've not guessed it already.

Despite it's extraordinary popularity in the United States, it's known to my generation and myself mostly as a tune played by that 'acquired taste' of musical instruments… the bagpipes (with suitable apologies to those who adore the sound). How any tune could suit a bagpipe rendition so well says a great deal about the tune. But played by the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, the sound is transcendental. Hang on. I'm going to have another listen. Bear with me.

Oh God. It still works. Music has a way of evoking such a primal part of our psyches. When the entire ensemble join in at about fifty seconds after the lone pipe, I'm utterly transported. Its bass line carries you up. No wonder it's adored by religious folk as there is a taste of the divine about it but it's also a secular favourite because its subject is the very best of how human beings can be and aspire to be. The tune and song is, of course, *Amazing Grace*. I admit to knowing only the first verse as it gets quite God-inspired in later verses. But then, the event that poet and clergyman John Newton experienced that inspired the lyric was nestled deeply in his own terror at being shipwrecked in a storm. The words were written in 1772. Funny how invoking God seems to be the first thing anyone about to die would do. But things were very different in the 18th Century.

In Philip Kaufman's superb remake of **Invasion of the Body Snatchers** (1978), the hymn does two things especially well. Matthew Bennell (Donald Sutherland) is hauling around his friend and unspoken love Elizabeth Driscoll (Brooke Adams) despite both being desperate to sleep. They know alien seed pods have duplicated their nearest and dearest and now alone, they are seeking for a way to escape the port city of San Francisco. The lone piper starts the hymn and Sutherland catches it on the wind. "Ships! Ships!" he says, "We can get away!" In one big, long zoom out the music swells and that afore mentioned bass kicks in and we think for a second that this may be the answer to their prayers. The hymn is nothing if not slathered with hope. But it's simply a radio playing, quickly re-tuned. Why any emotionless pod would turn the radio on in the first place is glossed over. It's not good. Now after the hope comes the realisation of *Amazing Grace*'s power and purpose. Just for the most important seconds, its transcendent sound took our mind off what no other piece of music could do... It made us forget that Sutherland left the only person that means anything to him, alone for crucial moments. As he holds her inert body, he realises it's too late. Elizabeth crumbles to dust in his hands as her naked doppelgänger leaps up, points and lets loose that alien screech. Sutherland is on his own.

As a nod to the late Michael Apted, take another look at his film of the same name made in 2006 with Albert Finney as Newton and Ioan Gruffudd as William Wilberforce, the MP whose lifelong work to abolish slavery (something he succeeded in doing) and a pre-*Sherlock* Benedict Cumberbatch as William Pitt the Younger. Beware. The language of slavery used very sparingly (twice) detonates with horrible power.



WHERE WOLF?

THE MAKING OF A DRAMATIC WILDLIFE FEATURE FILM (WITH A MOST ELUSIVE STAR…)

BY

ALAN MILLER BFE

&

PRODUCER/CINEMATOGRAPHER
CEES VAN KEMPEN

In 2010, an unassuming Dutchman attended one of our Wildeye Wildlife Filmmaking courses which my ex-*Survival Anglia* Producer wife and I conducted from out of our once roomy farmhouse. The roomy farmhouse is still roomy. It's just not ours anymore. Cees van Kempen (Cees is pronounced 'Case') made a big effort to stay in touch with us after the course, leaving us with a few dangling 'maybes' on projects he was trying to get off the ground. Watching his 2007 self-produced *Kingfisher* film, it was very clear that Cees had a great artistic eye. What he needed was a gantry of support only a filmmaking company could really give him. What kept him close with us was his desire to make the films *he wanted to make* in the way *he wanted to make them*. As a 'company' cameraperson/producer this would never be possible as he would be chained to a broadcast model. So despite other people in other companies (big fish in the small pond of natural history filmmaking) recognising his talent and making him good offers, he threw in his lot with us. Our response to his decision? We initially thought he was crazy, rejecting one of the biggest natural history production companies in the world. And he wants my wife and I to help him deliver his first baby.

We first clicked with a promo. Shooting the life of a kestrel around his farmhouse in the south of Holland in Cees's meticulous style, he gathered some beautiful footage for me to put together. I put emotion front and centre, mixed a movie score temp track and sent it out into the world. The best response we had to the promo was having someone's arm hair stand to attention at one of our teaching weekends (this was to be an ongoing reaction to Cees' material, see later). Cees also used the promo to introduce himself at Wildscreen, one of the two major wildlife film festivals at that time.

As written about last issue, the relationship between a director (or in this case cameraperson/producer) and their editor is an important one and Cees saw my wife's producing skills and my editorial contribution as a sort of key that unlocked his talent and showcased it. It's fair to say he trusted me to edit his films from then on but there is such a thing as too much reverence or trust. It's well known that Steven Spielberg never turned down any of his composer John Williams' efforts for his films. This points to an ultimate trust in the instincts of this über-gifted composer. Even when he offered the director two main themes for Indiana Jones for **Raiders of the Lost Ark**, Spielberg said he'd take both which is why we have both 'Dun du-dun daaaaa,' and 'Dun da-daaaaa, dun du du-du-daaa…' I hope you know them both well enough to recognise them from those baby noises. Cees never fell into that trap however comfortable it was. He remained and remains a true collaborator, accepting my first assemblies with good grace and then pushing to see how we can take it further with a little bolder ambition.

We made a three part series, each centred on an animal that had returned to the Netherlands because of the rewilding efforts of the country and areas once uninhabitable for all sorts of human-caused reasons were now pristine ready for those returning. The series is available on *Amazon Prime* under the title '*Returning The Wild*' and as I performed the international commentary, the relevant web page boasts that the series is 'Starring Alan Miller.' As I will never see such a credit again, it gave me a little thrill, to be sure. I've never starred in anything before. We editors "…prefer the solace of the shadows… Sunlight is my destroyer!" Wait. That's Darkness from Ridley Scott's **Legend**. But you know what I mean. The series was quite special for a number of reasons not least the evocation of wonder from camerawork that still enthrals me. *Returning The Wild* was a calling card. We were just getting started. Cees had rightly gained the mantle of Executive Producer on quite a few more projects with fledgling filmmakers wanting to be coached and supported by a filmmaker clearly gifted and respected from what was actually his first broadcast filmmaking effort. Predictably, international and national recognition, nominations and awards followed.

Like two people who find their pint ordering and their toilet breaks had synchronised, the two world class filmmakers I had lucked into working with since 2015, (Cees and the husband and wife team of Will and Lianne Steenkamp) always managed to require my craft at the same time.

They both take years to realise their extraordinary films and for ridiculous reasons, both planned virtually intersecting editing periods. We worked things out. If Cees's style could be described, it would be 'controlled artistry'. Any natural history filmmaker has to rely on luck to get certain shots but what Cees achieves with patience, skill and persistence is quite extraordinary. So far as he is able, Cees controls everything he can control and trusts to some luck to get that perfect shot. There is a shot (unsurprisingly in the front titles of the series) of a kingfisher bursting out - in ultra-slow motion - from the bubble of the water splash it created. It takes my breath away every time I see it. (*See page 55 - Ed.*)

His next project, **Wolf**, again the returning of an animal driven out of the Netherlands one hundred and fifty years ago, would be a dramatic feature, truthfully spirited, showcasing a lone wolf's arrival at Dutch forests, overwhelmingly shot in the wild. But he had to relinquish the kind of control he had filming kingfishers, beavers and kestrels. You do not control a wild wolf's environment and the title of this article should tell you all you need to know just how difficult this filming would be. Where wolf? Indeed.

Production Diary Part 1 by Cees van Kempen

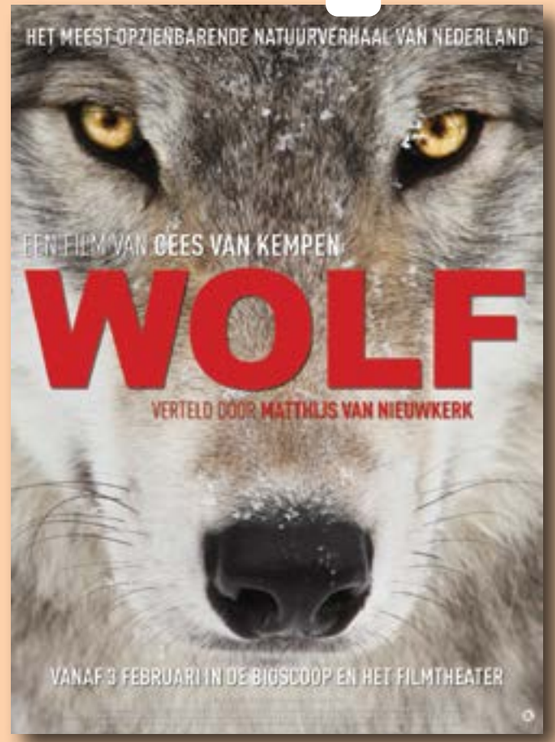
The pack I am filming lives in an East German production forest. Running straight through this forest is a railway line. It's used as transport to an industrial area and trains are as rare as the wolves. Sometimes you won't see a train for a week. Since there are several crossings with alarm bells nearby, you can always tell when a train is on its way. In other words: it's safe to sit on the railway. It's extremely difficult to find the wolves as they move around like ghosts through the forest. But the railway dissects their territory and the wolves regularly have to cross it when moving around. Sitting at a strategic location, you can see as far as the eye can see, because the railway is straight, with no obstacles. Thus, it's the perfect place to find out in what area the wolves are active. It is also a place to sit and film. Almost always something happens: a red deer crossing, or a marten, a wild boar, or even a wolf. And if you are lucky it happens close enough for a usable shot, not a kilometre away rendered out of focus by heat haze.

But then there is always the difficulty of choosing in what direction to shoot. I decided to film to the north, because that's where I expected the chances to film a wolf were higher. But clever as I am (!) I did bring a second camera with me. I installed myself with my main camera pointing north, and installed the second one shooting south, keeping it recording for as long as I sat there, or at least until the card had filled up. At the end of the day I had filmed nothing. The other camera? I had to check when back at base camp.

There, I had the sometimes boring, sometimes rewarding task of playing fast forward what I had recorded.

A session of 5 hours at 10 times speed means about half an hour watching the screen of my laptop hoping for movement. Quicktime can go faster, but then you might miss something. So I was going fast forward, trying to stay focused and then... Yes, something moved. I play back the same stretch at normal speed. It's a boar, and another one. One of them is limping. Nice snack for a wolf, I think. I select the action and copy this one minute, to move on fast forward again. But then immediately, another few frames with something... play backwards, normal speed forward and yes! A WOLF.

I resist the temptation to immediately copy this part and keep playing forward. Within a dozen seconds, ANOTHER WOLF and then A THIRD WOLF and A FOURTH. Without knowing, I'd filmed a limping boar being carefully followed by four wolves. Ha! Thinking back, didn't I hear a scream of some poor animal while sitting there? I can't recall. That may be my imagination. But what I captured on my camera was real, for sure.*



Editing officially began in August 2020. By this time Cees had been shooting for years. You'd think with all of Cees's material, the camera trap media, assistants with cameras, and the amount of time taken, I would have been inundated with footage. Cees had it meticulously logged with keywords and a very solid understanding of his own material. It's certainly true that I never carved out time to watch all the rushes. I was guided towards what to concentrate on and the first forty minutes came together very swiftly. In just twelve days, we had the first assembly of our act one. Cees' producer, Sander Emmering, once CEO of Warner Brothers International TV, took a look at the temp tracked first act and said that there were moments when the hairs stood up on his arm. We took that as a good sign. It was during these first few weeks that Cees gave me his idea of the opening and closing bookends of the story. A grandfather takes his grandson to see a production of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* in concert. Inside the child's mind are the fairy tale impressions and evil character of the 'big, bad wolf'. We abruptly leave this reverie as 'Peter' calls for his grandfather and stops the film mid-flow saying that this reputation of the wolf is all fiction and we have the real story to tell. The film ends with the grandson getting his first glimpse of the first wild wolf born in the Netherlands for one hundred and fifty years. His grandfather leans in as the boy watches a wild wolf through binoculars and whispers "The world is big enough for Peter.. *and the wolf*." I was so fired up by these sequences that I storyboarded a few ideas which were taken as a rough template when Cees and I shot these sequences together at the concert hall and in the wild.

We were both thrilled when a gentleman named Matthijs van Nieuwkerk said he would be happy to provide the Dutch commentary. Let's put it this way. It would be akin in the UK to securing Graham Norton… and for free because he loved the project. In his heyday, Matthijs was on Holland's prime time interview/current affairs programme *The World Keeps Turning* every week day every week for fourteen years and is perhaps the Netherland's most well-known homegrown celebrity.

*The sequence is in the film. We only used three of the wolves, and cut away before the fourth appears, because that better fitted the narrative.

Production Diary Part 2
by Cees van Kempen

I have been filming for 3 weeks and am pretty tired. I had a good sleep last night, so am okay to drive the required 900 kilometres. But I hadn't driven 300 kilometres when I hit a traffic jam on the motorway. After half an hour, slowly creeping forward, there is a sign at the side of the road that says 'Big accident. Motorway closed. Try to leave the motorway and choose another route.' Blast. I just passed an exit and there is no other exit ahead and thousands of cars in front of me. But I am close to the exit of a petrol station with a large car park. Everyone that has the chance parks there, the refuge for hundreds of drivers. I am traveling in my VW van, which has a bed in it. I often sleep in my car when filming. That way I don't have to drive through the forest in the dark, potentially disturbing the wolves before I start filming at dawn. So I am one of the lucky ones that has his own bed. Result! But sleeping in a car park is different from sleeping in a forest. To avoid being robbed, I take the keys with me when I go to sleep and lock the door so no one can get into the cabin when I am fast asleep.

It's 2 o'clock at night. I'm sort of awake and just wonder if there is any news about the accident. I decide to leave the car and see if I can get any news. I creep out, close the door behind me and immediately think, "Ah, the keys are still inside. Please don't let the car be locked." I grab the handle of the car, pull it and, aaargh, locked. There I am, in the middle of the night at a parking place along a highway looking at my keys that I can clearly see through the window. The lady at the petrol station is sympathetic. It's okay if I stay at the petrol station for the rest of the night. "Would you like a coffee?" I call the ADAC, which is the German equivalent of the UK's AA. Yes, they can help with this problem. But no, not now. The motorway is closed…

So we had a star, we had our bookends and after a few months, we had our movie. We also had Covid to deal with and as much as I enjoyed working in Holland, the needs of bureaucracy and government safeguards meant that travelling to and fro via the ferry was duly stressful. I will avoid flying whenever I can and with the virus, a pressurised tube didn't hold a candle to what was essentially a practically deserted large, floating hotel in the North Sea that took eleven times longer than a flight. If you've travelled during the pandemic, you may also shudder at the words 'Passenger Locator Form'. But Covid also meant that the film's theatrical opening date kept getting pushed further and further back, so much so that Cees had many months to worry about aspects of the film he felt could be improved upon and solved. Please see the article *An Infinity of Post* on the back page of the Spring 2022 issue. We got to a point of having the opening sequence cut and recut so many times, we lost count. Wisdom prevailed as it slowly made its way back to an early cut. Putting it back the way it was.

And so we find ourselves slowly crawling towards the revised opening date (this month, September 2022) and I have to say I am very much looking forward to seeing this film in the public arena. I write these words on the day that **Top Gun: Maverick** landed in cinemas (20th May 2022), a day that seems to suggest that we are, sort of, back to normal cinematically speaking.

Production Diary Part 3 by Cees van Kempen

Filming wolves is, quite understandably, very difficult. You can spend weeks in the forest without seeing a single wolf. In order to increase my chances, I built a dozen camera traps, with reasonably good cameras in them. Not high end, but with a Panasonic GH4 or 5 you can capture decent pictures in 4K that can certainly be used in a serious production. We fabricated a movement sensor in each box. As soon as they detect a moving animal, the cameras start filming. Great stuff and they captured some very valuable footage for the film. This time I installed two of these boxes along a game track in a German forest.

The track was formed by the many movements of animals, I believed. Mainly deer and boar, I supposed, but wolves also like to walk these 'roads'. I had never seen a human being in this part of the forest, so I felt quite safe to install the two custom built camera traps. It's always something to take into consideration; where do I place these things without the risk of them getting stolen? I mean, each camera box represents about €2,000.

As insurance I put a cheap, standard trailcam in the tree, just as high as I could reach, pointing down on my expensive cameras down below. One week later, I go there with my local friend Lenni to collect the cameras. It's Lenni who sees it first - the cameras are gone. For a moment I think Lenni is winding me up and has removed them the day before. But no. The cameras are gone. Blast it. I look up to where the trailcam is and yes, it's still there. Whoever stole them, he or she must be on it! And he was. And she too. There were the two of them. Lenni took the pictures with him on his laptop and started to ask around locally. Someone recognized 'her'. Then someone else recognized 'him'. 'Him' was a dead end, we were told. He was someone you really didn't want to meet. He had strange ideas about the world, born in the 'wrong Germany' about 80 years too late, so to say. One might say a 'nasty' piece of work. Time to go to the police.

The police officer was extremely helpful. Yes, they knew these people too, people you don't want to talk to, part of a group meeting each other at strange locations sometimes. 'Leave it to us', the police officer said. And so we did. One week later, my phone rings. The police officer says 'When are you in here in Germany again? We have 2 cameras for you. You can come to collect them."

I am so looking forward to the premiere having worked hard and over so long on the project, a true labour of love for Cees and with any luck, a little success in the cinemas would be so welcome. So often labours of love are never rewarded in the practical world of euros and dollars but the Netherlands has form when it comes to supporting natural history films in the cinema. Fingers crossed the Dutch find **Wolf** just as enticing as previous successes…

PROS vs. Amateurs

by
Eddie Torr

I get a call for a job. It's a producer I've never met for something they want me to cut.

Ed: What's the piece about?

Client: Well, it's 3 cameras, 4K, and we'll be shooting it in two parts.

Ed: Great. What kind of show are we looking at?

Client: Well it has to be ready the morning after, so it's a one-day turn-around. Can you do that?

Ed: Depends on how much footage and how it's delivered, how you handle timecode etc.

Client: It's all good. Ordinarily we'd edit it ourselves, but since we're not near our offices...

Ed: [Shrugging shoulders] Excellent. What's your audience? What kind of edit? Do you have a particular style, approach or impact you're after?

Client: It's an interview. So, yeah great!

Ed: Great.

Note to self: non-sequiturs augur incompetence.

I've been trying to get a fix on why so many producers with years of experience seem to get no better at their job over time -- stuck in a sort of permanent first-timer gear, or at best producer pubescence. In part I think it's their excessive fawning over production and lack of regard for post that alienates them from recognizing consequences of decisions.

We meet. He claims he only works on Avid. So we work on Avid. He's got a requisite trending beard, so all things considered, things are going amazingly well.

We start cutting, and it soon becomes apparent I totally misjudged him. He isn't a long-time producer with no competence. He's a short-time producer with very little experience. He's also friendly, enthusiastic, and anything but arrogant. Unfortunately, he has absolutely no idea what the end result is supposed to be and no idea how to get started. Fortunately, he has three accomplices to support him, a man and two women. They too are very nice. And where he has very little experience they have absolutely none. They also lack the requisite trending beard. That could be bad. When he asks for their advice, they either say "Yes" or "OK". That's probably good.

Now it turns out he's not the top producer. Somewhere lurking outside our edit bay, somewhere in the city, there's this other 'serious producer' with loads of experience who at some point is going to make an appearance. You know he's big time because he's done 'morning shows'. They tell me his name. I don't recognize it, and I still can't remember it.

"Just know," says Producer #1, "he can be a little high strung and emotional."

The pressure is on, and Producer #1 comes up with a plan: "We'll find the most moving, dramatic moments from the interviews, put them into the timeline, string them end-to-end, a few pull-ups, and that should do it," (because if you take your best stuff and put it in a timeline and leave all the other stuff that's less good, then really you can't go wrong. And that, in a nutshell, pretty much explains everything you need to know about editing.)

I suggest to him the possibility of taking some of the other material -- the lesser dramatic stuff, the playful beats, the funny beats, and various notes of interest and insight, and perhaps we try to find a way to sculpt those in, say, earlier than the more dramatic beats.

Since we've got a 5 minute max slot to fill, probably less, here's the basic structural outline: "Cold-open" style montage to build a sense of "what is this?" Answer that with a show title / descriptor, pick it up with a slower pace montage which helps a survey of engaging but light clips, evolve toward the heavier bits, climax with the most dramatic moments, and perhaps go out with a series of wrap up observations, maybe a touching moment and some good-byes.

It's a start, I say, it'll probably evolve as we work through it, but at least it gets us a framework and we can begin working immediately. We have (since tech prep took the first 3 hours) only a few hours to slap this together.

Blank stares.

Producer #1: I think we should play it safe and just keep the best parts.

Ed: Sure, I'm just imagining from your description of him, he's probably going to want a montage.

Producer #1: We just don't have the time.

Ed: Great!

Somehow we slave away at his easy recipe for the next few hours. At one point Producer #1 sidles up to me and whispers in my ear a secret plan to successfully get this past the 'experienced producer': He says "What I'd like to do is get him talking about the graphics and music choice, you know, to keep him from dicking around with the edit and taking the rest of the night - the more we can do to distract him. I want to get us out of here early."

I acknowledged his ingenious plan and gave him a sufficient quantity of surprise to suggest I'd never imagined such a technique was possible, but then waved him a 50/50: "Keep in mind they can be pretty wily about those things." Note to aspiring producers: That "trick" you think you invented - *everyone before you already invented it.*

It comes in a variety of flavors:

- “I always try to leave something in there that doesn’t quite work, so they focus on that and don’t mess with anything else.”

- “If you give them a bone to chew on, they’ll leave you alone with the rest of the piece.”

- “If you cut real fast they won’t know what the fuck it even is, and it’ll get through without any notes”.

I have never seen any flavor of this “trick” succeed... ever. It’s a crutch, a way to delude yourself into believing you’re brilliant, hoping against haplessness that the editor is impressed with you, and your higher ups are idiots who didn’t already try and fail at the same half-witted plan. It will invariably add to the list of notes you will inevitably get.

Here’s what does work: Do your best work, utilize the best strategies in the time you’ve got. It will no doubt fall short of your own standards because of the deadline you’re on. Typically, not always, you will get notes to improve the very things you yourself were hoping to improve.

Now you have effectively conspired not against but with your execs and producers to achieve what in fact you would like to achieve.

Towards evening the ‘experienced producer’ shows up and watches the edit.

Experienced Producer
OK guys, looking really good.
Just a couple of things I would say...

He then proceeds to work himself into a lather about what a terrible job they did, concluding with... “It lacks shape and dimension, lacks narrative, it needs theme and a rhythm, and -- I’m sorry guys to do this to you -- but this just isn’t going to work. We’re just going to have to begin again.” We’re 9 hours into our only day of editing. It was interesting watching the faces of the inexperienced producers hold it together admirably while the ‘experienced producer’ reveled in the glory of making them feel inadequate and incompetent.

Beatdown: check. He turns to me and starts his “let’s show them how it’s done,” tour:

“So first I’m going to want a montage at the beginning,” and proceeds to describe a montage in aspirational award-winning terms the footage will stubbornly refuse to support. “Then we’re going to build a narrative around a [word salad] and themes of [word salad], and then I want [word soup and salad].” I get the self-applauding use words like “narrative” and “theme”. Who doesn’t want to achieve **Citizen Kane**, but a 3-5 minute piece with no pre-prod, planning or end game, then a few hours of editing isn’t likely to knock Orson off his pedestal. It’s going to have at best an arc and contour and maybe make a series of thematic impressions. But it’s not going to ‘be’ a story. At our luckiest best we’re going to ‘evoke’ a story.

With such observations firmly under explored, he proceeds to destroy the neophytes by proving he, too, could flail, as his “I’ll show you” approach to montage runs into the peculiar albeit standard challenges afflicting all first-go montage attempts:

- bites & expressions that are different than you remember:
- intonations that don’t sell the concept you intended.
- clips that don’t quite cut together for ineffable, aesthetic reasons.

“Nope, nope,” he says accusingly (who are you blaming?) as one self-congratulatory idea after another fails to pan out. You’d think ramming their horns into unforgiving walls of the relentless labyrinth that is editing would, over time, humble producers. Instead it callouses their brains. Eventually he put together something that didn’t really work, called it a “start” and ordered everyone to finish it while he stormed off to dinner.

When he came back he took a look at the completed the montage and scowled. “That’s what you did in all the time I was gone?! We have to be done tonight!!” He then proceeded to add a few ‘touches’ to the montage, taking the duration of his just-completed dinner to achieve it, which resulted in a demonstrably worse edit. Even he grudgingly recognized as much: “OK, I know what the problem is.”

He slapped a few more changes on it, which turned it back into what it had been, and called it “improved”. We were 13 hours in. I called in a replacement editor and went home.

All In The Best Possible Taste

by Camus of Cineoutsider.com

‘Tastemaker’ Noun. A person who decides or influences what is or will become fashionable.

Whoah! There are people who do that? What or whom did I used to think actually did this? Robots? God? A democratically elected body? The consensus of a thousand experts? You could argue that modern tastemakers are those artists and craftspeople who reveal our tastes rather than set them. H. R. Giger certainly redefined the iconography of horror. J. K. Rowling released our inner love for orphans, boarding schools and magic, from which ingredients emerged essentially beautifully crafted stories. And you have to nod to the varied but hugely influential career of a Mr. Steven Spielberg. But what if it was a real profession, tastemaker? How do you get experience for this job? Who drew the line? Who dotted the ‘i’s and crossed the ‘t’s of the ‘What’s now ‘in’’ decree? Who, in short, set the bar? Welcome to the 21st century. In the art and craft of media, there are very few tastemakers out there anymore because we all have movie studios in our pockets and publishing houses on our laptops. We’re all on our own. But should we be?

Yes, we all have the power to make, to produce for the tiniest fraction of what used to cost hundreds of thousands. The real power lies in the ability to propagate the product (sorry but the parlance is necessary if you want to shift some books or get eyes on your movies). The tiresome, ubiquitous mantra of the malaise of the British film industry is that we have no distributors. We are a nation of creatives with scant resources to get our work out to an audience. Well, that’s just not true anymore, is it? Starting out in the media in the 80s, I had a vague but very real standard that existed swirling like smoke in my mind.

It was one that fellow professionals would all work towards or use as a guiding line of excellence. And I don’t believe I was being naive. If you’ve been in any industry long enough and have an inkling of an aptitude for it, you can recognise quality almost instinctively. I’ve been invited to judge at film festivals and watching sixty-nine hours of hopeful contenders, you soon come to understand, with a profound exhale of deflation, Sturgeon’s law... There’s only ten per cent of quality in the universe... I think the science fiction writer said in a lecture given in 1951 that “...ninety percent of anything is crud.” Sturgeon had a point. The ten per cent he managed to produce sits highly on my shelves; the classic novel of human gestalt, 1953’s *More Than Human* (I cannot praise that book highly enough); the *Star Trek* episodes he wrote contained the series’ most enduring ideas and icons. Yes, these can be favourites locked into my mind from early exposure but the fact they are still up for debate many decades after their creation tells you there is a quality bar that these efforts have vaulted with feet to spare.

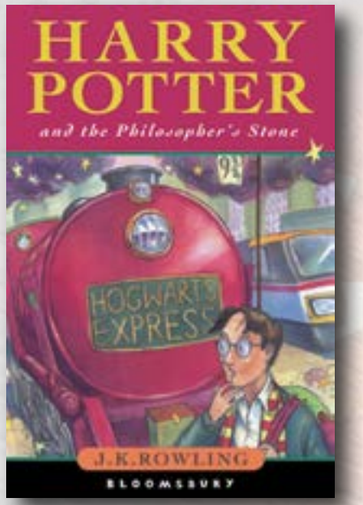
Beyond personal preference, is there a gene for recognising the essential quality of something? For example, you may dislike Pink Floyd’s music but it can almost be scientifically proven that *Dark Side of the Moon* is one of the greatest musical recordings ever committed to disc, vinyl or otherwise. And that was in the pre-digital age of 1973. Any Steely Dan album is routinely used to test sound systems... Why? “Because they cared,” said a managing director of a major sound company that I happen to know. If you ever judge your own work, chances are you are automatically setting a baseline of adequacy, a standard of OK-ness. But what if your work is so original (good or bad) that there is no line of OK-ness to judge it against? I guess that’s what we call innovation (or failure, depending on most people’s reaction). To quote Stephen Sondheim from his Pulitzer Prize winning musical *Sunday In The Park With George*, “Stop worrying if your vision is new. Let others make that decision... they usually do.” And then, I heard this...

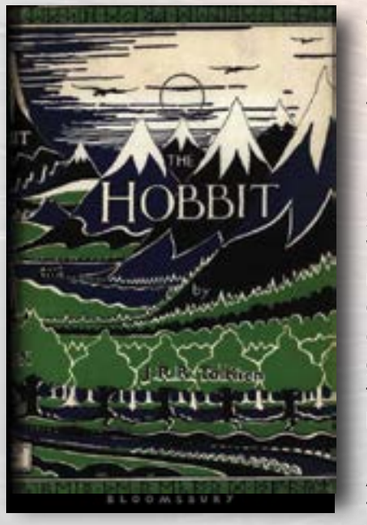
“There’s less good, more bad. Because everybody’s able to do whatever they want to do. The democratisation of it, fantastic. But I think my kids will suffer. They won’t have the quality we had growing up because there isn’t somebody there... there isn’t a tastemaker involved...”

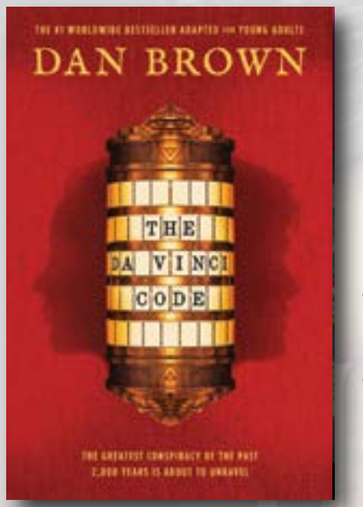
These are the words of producer Lorenzo di Bonaventura, interviewed by Keanu Reeves in the hugely relevant film vs. digital doc, **Side By Side**. Keanu’s response was telling; an impressed or disbelieving “Wow!” I couldn’t tell what inspired the ‘Wow!’ In an argument for the importance of tastemakers, I’d say that Bonaventura has my abiding support for producing one of my favourite fantasy pictures in the last fifteen years, **Stardust**. In an argument dismissing the importance of tastemakers I have to add that the man also produced (and heaven help us, continues to produce) the **Transformer** movies. The man is the very personification of cognitive dissonance, the idea of holding two contradictory ideas in one’s head at the same time. But is he right? Is the overall quality of cinema diminished because we all have access to the means of production? Things are changing.

William Goldman’s “No one knows anything,” dictum works across the board in any creative endeavour. John Cleese (whose *Fawlty Towers* was initially rejected by the BBC) said the same thing after a lifetime’s contemplation. No one knows what will work. Go back to the early 90s. You’re a publisher. I have this idea about a boy wizard in a magical boarding school... Billy Bunter on broomsticks? Close the door on your way out.

I know Potter was turned down a number







Who knew? The *readers* knew. Both *The Hobbit* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* were published and sold to the US respectively based on the opinions of young children who read advance copies. You cannot beat that level of enthusiasm. This is why word of mouth is the most potent marketing force.

Some of these publishers publish appalling titles (and they must know this), moronic work in which someone has seen a gleam of potential profit. Well, the world is not wholly theirs anymore... They're dwindling in number and influence and they're thrashing at the chains of a business model that's not just an anachronism, it's a relic. Recent news tells us that the average earnings for a writer these days is more than 50% below living wage which averages out to about £24,000 per annum. The average full-time writer earns about £11,000. The fanciful notion fuelled by the Rowlings and Dan Browns of the world that if you publish a book, you're set for life, is far from any recognisable reality. Those who write for a living these days are often drowned out by those millions of bloggers (irony-aware sentence, trust me) who want to be heard but have no illusions that their shared thoughts will generate anything like an income to survive on. I'm reminded of that cliché that '...blogs are like assholes. Everyone's got one.' Or to go back to Rowling and her dissection of the publishing world in one of her Cormoran Strike crime novels, *The Silkworm*... Author du jour, Michael Fancourt says "The whole world's writing novels but nobody's reading them." The adults are away and the children are overrunning the playground.

It does feel a little like that scene in the original **Robocop** when the cops are on strike so the bad guys take advantage of the temporary anarchy. I'm not suggesting we all loot and test ridiculously powerful weapons on the streets. While I don't count the efforts of Cineoutsider.com as anything like what you may regard as 'blogging', our reviews, like the world's blogs, still bob up and down like corks in a vast ocean, the digisea, and due to the staunchly held ethos of its founder, there will never be any ads on the site, something that still gives me a warm glow. But like those wonderfully optimistic American Samoan football players in **Next Goal Wins**, we have day jobs to keep financially afloat but I for one would just adore staying dry by writing for a living.

After nineteen years of writing for Cineoutsider out of love and enthusiasm for the things I'm writing about, I have come to the very real conclusion that this is how I want to spend my time. And on the subject of tastemakers (I was taken aback to find the word existed), I actually miss them in other areas of popular culture. In my past there was always a sense that there was a line of excellence, a second line of satisfactory and a third line of barely adequate. These lines were not literal but they may well have been to me, trained as I was at the BBC in the Pleistocene Era. I keep forgetting that it's fallible human beings who make the decisions, not some omnipowerful god...

In broadcast TV and film not that long ago, there were some technical guidelines that had to be adhered to. There were rules on how bright you were allowed to broadcast and rules on colour and definition. It's a technical minefield and I'm pretty sure a lot of those rules are still in place having been massively revamped after the take up of 4K and the R.I.P. nature of most interlaced-screening cathode ray tube TVs. But in terms of taste, talent and worthiness for want of a better word, there are no lines of quality anymore, no middle managing shop stewards pointing at their watches to make sure their members are not being taken advantage of. We are all adrift in this vast digital sea, both ***waving and drowning.***

On the other hand... In the month that Quentin Tarantino's **Reservoir Dogs** emerged blinking bloodily into life in 1992, I cut a sequence in a television documentary of an animal being euthanised. It had led a wretched life, was continually mistreated by its human owners and the end was near. Vets had come to the sad conclusion that its wounds were irreparable and that it would be a kindness to put it out of its evident misery. I submitted my cut (the sequence almost cut itself as the narrative and profound sorrow were in place already). The executive producer gave it straight back to me and said "You've missed all the good bits... Put them in." What she meant were the shots that were technically unacceptable to me but which showed, with their terrible camera moves in their blurry, and badly framed way, emotion on screen. Emotion, as I should have known at that time, trumps everything else. The problem was that I had a standard below which I was not comfortable venturing. It was the first time I realised the entire film and television industry was changing.

Shots had started to appear on the screen that ten years earlier would not have been considered competent enough to make it to air. I'm uncertain who must claim some responsibility for the alarming standard drop and general decline in the quality of content. Our media-soaked world demands ever more feeding so standards were bound to drop. Only recently on the BBC's *Countryfile*, there was a series of shots with an enormous blob (rain on the lens?) on the screen that with a tiny bit of care could have been digitally removed. But no one did because perhaps so few people care that much anymore. I remember taking an online course, the craft of finishing a programme or film to its optimal quality (*pretty sure readers know that - Ed.*) I asked my instructor what the technical line of acceptability was with TV images. He looked at me as if I'd just burped out the first line of the National Anthem. "There is none anymore," he said.

Without a rudder, a ship goes where the currents dictate. This is neither good nor bad just inconvenient if you're on the boat and desperately want to get home. We're all in the same boat now and I honestly hope you're enjoying the journey because there's no one at the wheel...

Little Wren Music

***Little Wren** is an independent production music library, owned and run by two composers; Carmen Bradford and Simon Brown. Since launching in 2020, this Scotland-based company has worked on some of British TV's best known productions, including* Panorama, Dispatches, Countryfile *and* Newsround. *In this interview, they talk about the benefits of being composer-led, starting a company during a global pandemic and their not-so-secret plans for world domination!*

How did Little Wren come into being?

CARMEN: It all came together quite organically - we've collaborated on various writing projects over the years and knew we worked well together. We kept having pipe-dream type conversations that went something like, "Wouldn't it be great if we started our own library and were able to publish our own tracks?"

SIMON: This idea must have struck a chord with both of us, because every time it came up we'd end up fleshing out more aspects of this hypothetical plan. I don't think we even had to convince each other in the end, it was just like: "We're doing this!"

CARMEN: After testing the Little Wren 'idea' out on ourselves as writers and finding that it was working, we quickly found we were getting more briefs in than we could write for, so we began to grow our network of brilliant composers to allow us to cover more genres.

So how did Little Wren go from a pipe dream to something tangible?

SIMON: The great thing about setting this up together is that we each come from a different background within the industry. For my part, I've worked for several libraries and post houses over the years, and Carmen started out working at PRS dealing with sync licensing, so we both have a strong foundation in each of those areas.

CARMEN: And through our composing work, we've both been lucky enough to meet enough people who trust us enough to keep providing their edits with music!

Would you say there are any benefits to being a composer-owned music library?

CARMEN: On so many levels! One, we know what it feels like to be composers writing for libraries, so it's vitally important to us to nurture positive relationships with our composers (and we get genuinely excited when we hear their work). Two, as composers, we each have experience of writing to an edit, so that's given us a great insight into what our clients might need.

SIMON: Also, we both get to scratch that creative itch - we are able to write a lot of the music that goes into the library based on what our clients are asking for. We can also be quite responsive to those briefs where we don't necessarily have something ready-made - we can often just go off and write something new for it.

CARMEN: We can talk to both sides and be understood - that's important and often lacking, from personal experience anyway.

So you started Little Wren in 2020? Starting a company in the midst of a global pandemic sounds like a bit of a challenge, to say the least. Did this affect your plans?

SIMON: The pandemic was brutal on a lot of businesses out there. We thank our lucky stars that it didn't throw us off-track and that we were both in a position where we were able to lay low and begin the process of writing music for the library.

CARMEN: This kept us busy in those times when there wasn't necessarily a big outlet for production music and helped us to get everything ready for the right opportunities to open up again.

What has been the response to Little Wren so far?

CARMEN: We're happy to report that things have gotten off to a great start! We were fortunate to begin with a really supportive client base and are eternally grateful to them for their feedback in the early days.

SIMON: People seem to have responded particularly well to us being a composer-owned business, which we've been really humbled by. As composers, we're used to hearing our music on TV, but that first Little Wren usage was particularly special because it's something that we've built from the ground up and put a lot of love into.

What does the future hold for Little Wren?

CARMEN: Well, the next item on our to-do list is "Take over the world..." (and by that, we mean getting the catalogue out there into different territories!) It's important to us to remain fully independent in the UK, but we can't wait to make our writers' music accessible worldwide.

SIMON: Yeah, watch out world, here we come!

If you want to find out more about Little Wren Music, you can visit their website at www.littlewrenmusic.co.uk, or email them at hello@littlewrenmusic.co.uk.

ScreenCraft Works International Mentoring Programme: Editor Participants' First Impressions

While BFE's Mentoring Scheme (*see page 16 - Ed.*) specifically caters for members of BFE, ScreenCraft Works is a virtual community with a cross-border mentoring scheme for a range of production and post-production under-represented talent. We match craft mentees and mentors across virtual local barriers and international borders to exchange global career insights, share cultural perspectives and widen networks – enriching participants' careers in local and international productions. As well as one-to-one sessions, the mentoring group takes part in 'Cross-Border Conversations', where they share their knowledge and experience with a virtual audience. Mentoring discussions are confidential, but these participants have kindly agreed to share some of their first impressions

Our first mentoring programme call-out received over 70 applications to mentor or be mentored across the disciplines of editing, post-sound and production management, from the following countries and/or nationalities: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, England, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Northern Ireland, Peru, Poland, Romania, Scotland, South Africa, Spain and the USA. Selected mentees include those who describe themselves as having a disability, being from the LGBTQIA+ community or having caring duties. The mentees describe a range of cultural, religious and non-belief backgrounds, and over half self-identify as women.

Director Elizabeth McIntyre

ScreenCraft Works is part of the ScreenSkills Mentoring Network, which is supported by the BFI, awarding National Lottery funds as part of its Future Film Skills strategy. The Scheme is supported by Brunel University London. The mentors volunteer their time and expertise and we are very grateful for their support. Applications are now open for our next mentoring programme.

Our first mentoring cohort recently had their first one-to-ones and have shared some of their first impressions – **how did the editors get on at the start of their mentoring adventure?**

Director Rebecca del Tufo

Rachel Erskine: Me on my Mentor, Paul Martin Smith

First impressions?
Martin was warm, easy to talk to and genuinely wanting to help the next generation of editors. I was inspired and happy that someone of his status is willing to give back.

Are you happy to share something that you talked about?
We talked about how any production – whether low or big budget, whether an experienced or inexperienced team – will have things that don't go 100% right. The team might miss things, not shoot things. So always speak up if you think that something is not right, whatever the production. I have recently stepped up from assistant and assembly editor, to editor: Martin and I talked about how to present yourself in a new role, when you're advancing, so that people who are used to you in a more junior role see you with fresh eyes. We talked about the importance of owning your new editor role – that you are a head of department now, that it's your responsibility to give your opinion. People will want to hear your ideas, so be confident to give them. Martin wants to explore this pivotal transition with me.

What did you find in common?
We both love our jobs. We've also been to a lot of the same places and feel quite international.

What about points of difference?
Me living in Scotland, Martin living in California means that the kind of productions we are involved with are very different: there are fantastic but different opportunities in the two locations (and continuing to increase in Scotland). Productions and approaches are culturally different, which is interesting to compare, contrast and learn from.

Any funny or surprising moments?
We were laughing the whole time. I feel we instantly hit it off.

Is the cross-border aspect of the mentoring important to you?
It's an international business. You tend to hear about opportunities in your local area or country – which is great as I want to work both locally and globally – but I probably would never hear about international work unless in touch with people who are working elsewhere. I am hoping to expand my networks and widen opportunities – working either remotely, hybrid or on-site.

Describe Martin in three words.
Generous, welcoming, kind.

Why did you wish to be a mentee?
I think it's important when you're moving to the next stage in your career to have someone outside your immediate team to help guide you, break some old habits and look at things in different ways – someone impartial to your situation. I think it's important in any career stage to stop, take stock of where you are, where you want to be and reassess goals. I have also been a mentor to an aspiring assistant editor – that was about five years ago. And we still see each other. Also, unofficial mentors can help each other along the way. Mentoring relationships can be long lasting bonds.

Rachel Erskine

Rachel describes herself as having roots in several places. After growing up in Holland and Germany, she moved from country to country with her family, settling in Scotland, a country she loves. Although a job in the creative industry had seemed unattainable in her teens, something that could only be pursued as a hobby, in her early twenties she gained an apprenticeship with Warner Brothers, which launched her into the world of post production. Rachel worked for eight years as an assistant editor on a rich variety of projects, from high-end TV dramas to feature films. She loved the role of assistant, but was able to make the jump to editing and gained credits as an assembly editor, for example, on *Supernova* and *Vigil*. In 2021, she edited her first feature film, **A House in Jerusalem**, directed by Muayad Alayan, which was a fantastic experience. Rachel enjoys giving back as a mentor as well as being mentored. She is a member of BAFTA.

Paul Martin Smith: Me on my Mentee, Rachel Erskine

First impressions?
Rachel is very smart. Knows what she wants. She's going to go far.

Are you happy to share something that you talked about?
Rachel is stepping up from assistant and assembly editor to editor. I was an assistant for one year only, then I started cutting. Rachel's been an assistant for eight years and knows everything there is to know about assistant editing, which will really help her in her editing later on. I want to offer her advice on that transition. For example, when she needs something, to approach it from a head of department's standing rather than that of an assistant. And she completely got that. But she also said she's not very pushy. Give her time! The role of editor is a really important one. It is one of the three main roles alongside production designer and DoP. I also told her that I am convinced that most producers really have no idea what an editor actually does.

What did you find in common?
We both have an international outlook.

What about points of difference?
Rachel has really enjoyed the role of assistant editor in itself, as well as part of her career journey. I couldn't stand it: I wanted to get cutting as fast as possible!

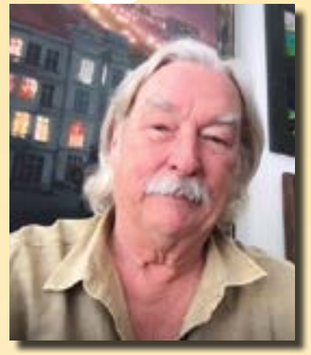
Any funny or surprising moments?
Rachel is very humorous and a joy to listen to. She was cracking me up, left, right and centre.

Is the cross-border aspect of the mentoring important to you?
We've both travelled and lived internationally, and have global outlooks.

Describe Rachel in three words.
Smart. Talented. Hardworking.

Why did you wish to be a mentor?
Because, well, my wife Val suggested it – rather, insisted! She said it was time I *gave back*. It's the first mentoring programme I have joined. I'm really glad I'm doing it and now can't stop recommending my industry friends to become ScreenCraft Works mentors. I have mentored and been mentored unofficially in the past when people have taken me under their wing but not been part of a scheme before.

It's interesting when you start sharing information about your own career as a mentor, and you reflect on how you yourself have made decisions. So when I'm passing those experiences onto Rachel, you reflect on your past decisions in a way you wouldn't have done at the time. I don't see myself as wise at all. At all. And I was saying this to Rachel, that every new job makes me nervous until I get into it and start working with the new material. Every new job is a completely new story. I mean, you draw upon your own experience from over the years, but it doesn't help with the initial nervousness. I think the mentoring is really interesting for both of us. I'm looking forward to my next session with Rachel.



Paul Martin Smith

Paul Martin Smith is known for his editing work with George Lucas, having worked for five years at Lucasfilm Ltd. His many film editing credits include **London Has Fallen; Journey to the Center of the Earth** (the first digital 3D feature film); **Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace**; Renny Harlin's **Mindhunters**, starring Val Kilmer, Jonny Lee Miller, Christian Slater, Kathryn Morris and LL Cool J; the war drama **Behind Enemy Lines**, starring Gene Hackman and Owen Wilson; the romantic comedy **The MatchMaker**, starring Janeane Garofalo; and Jim Gillespie's thriller **Venom**. 20th Century Fox asked him to conceptualise and co-direct three sequences for its animated feature film **TITAN A.E.** and those became audience favourites.

Smith served as the consulting editor on Ernest Dickerson's crime drama *Never Die Alone*, and edited four telefilms in the feature franchise *The Adventures of Young Indiana Jones*. Additionally, he has edited over 30 documentaries, including *Gunfight USA* for PBS's Frontline and *Cold Spring New Dawn* for PBS's Nova.

Smith's other television credits include the telefilms *Country Justice*, starring George C. Scott; *Unforgivable*, with John Ritter; *The Canterville Ghost*, starring Patrick Stewart and Neve Campbell; the Hong Kong detective series *Yellowthread Street* for ITV in the UK; and the Amblin Entertainment/Universal for NBC sci-fi series *Earth 2*. Along with English he speaks French and Spanish and is a dual national (France and US). Smith lives in the US and is a member of the BFE.

Tomoko Hirasawa: Me on my Mentor Gino Moreno

First impressions?
Gino has great positive energy. And you know when you hear someone's voice for the first time and immediately feel you can trust that person? That. I came to our first chat literally a second after finishing my first cut of the film I had been working on for months. That meant that I was high and deprived of sleep. I was just hoping to not come across a total mess!

Are you happy to share something that you talked about?
We spoke a bit about Gino's past works, the importance of networking, other mentors in the programme and how to achieve a healthy work-life balance for documentary editors. During the conversation, he mentioned several times "I'll support you". It's amazing how hearing something like that makes me feel 100 times stronger!

What did you find in common?
We both understand that the making of documentary films can take its toll on editors, especially when the topics are heavy. I am grateful to have someone to talk about this aspect of the job.

What about points of difference?
Gino seemed to have explored networking, which I don't have much experience in. I appreciated his encouragement to try it out.

Any funny or surprising moments?
Gino apologised for his English, which is both our second language – in perfect English. I laughed and assured him he expressed it better than I ever can!

Describe Gino in three words.
Warm, encouraging, empowering.

Is the cross-border aspect of the mentoring important to you?
I live and work between the UK, Spain and Japan, so the international aspect was ideal for me.

Why did you wish to become a mentee?
I am about to start working on a feature-length film as an editor. It's super nerve-wracking editing a feature early in your career. The theme of the film speaks to me, so I really want to do my best work. As this is only my second feature, I have been hunting for any tips, advice or information I can. It's just wonderful to have guidance from someone who has been through it before, and tell me that it's going to be okay. When I discovered this mentorship I leapt at the opportunity to receive advice and wisdom from a more experienced editor. This is my first time to be mentored and I'm very excited about it!

Tomoko Hirasawa

Tomoko Hirasawa is a Japanese film editor based in the UK, Spain and Japan.

Tomoko first discovered her passion for editing while VJ-ing in Tokyo nightclubs. She moved to the UK in 2006 to study film editing at Arts University Bournemouth.

She now edits commercials and documentaries, including the award-winning short *Mitaka Sumo School* (2017) and feature documentary *Bound* (2021). She is a co-director of the post-production company Coup Pictures and is currently working remotely for Change.org Japan.

Gino Moreno: Me on my Mentee Tomoko Hirasawa

First impressions?
Tomoko is extraordinarily driven and passionate about what she does and approaches her professional life with great energy. You can feel that in just a few minutes of talking to her. She has that drive to go further in the industry. And she is also a fellow editor with whom I can share experiences.

Are you happy to share something that you talked about?
Among other things, we talked about how, through new connections, one can make big steps in our careers. And how much of our background we bring to the editing process – a real positive. We also talked about how the industry can take a heavy toll on editors especially, and how to manage that.

What did you find in common?
We both want to push forward, no matter how hard it gets!

What about points of difference?
I find Tomoko in the early stages of her career, a place I've been before. But she will get there.

Any funny or surprising moments?
Our English! We both felt a bit awkward at the beginning but then the conversation flowed.

Describe the other in three words.
Driven, strong, ready to progress.

Is the cross-border aspect of the mentoring important to you?
Working in film or TV has become such an international endeavour nowadays, and increasingly so. Learning to work with people all over the world is, now more than ever, an extraordinary asset.

Why did you wish to become a mentor?
I've wanted to share my experiences for sometime now, really hoping this will help people approach their careers with more confidence and less fear of making mistakes. I have never 'officially' been involved with mentoring before.

But in every project I join, I learn so much from the directors and writers I work with, and try to teach that back to my team. And at the same time I learn so much from them. Whether you are the mentee or mentor, I would recommend it. Mentoring offers new perspectives and ways of working. A time for self-reflection and how your past experiences have changed you.

And hopefully I will help someone else achieve their goals.

Gino Moreno is a film editor with over 10 years' experience in film and TV, with a focus on Latin-American stories. Selected for the prestigious Berlinale Talents network and summit for professionals, Gino's latest short film *El silencio del rio* premiered at the Berlinale 2019, and also won Best Narrative Short at the Calgary International Film Festival, qualifying it for the Oscars. His latest TV documentary specials *Caravanas* and *En la línea: México* both received EMMY nominations in 2020-2021, in the 'Outstanding Investigative Journalism in Spanish' category. Gino Moreno has edited numerous projects with directors and producers across the UK, US and especially Latin-America. Gino currently works as Lead Editor for a documentary series for Brasil, exclusive for Discovery+ in Latin-America, which will premiere in 2022. Gino is from Peru and is a member of the Peruvian Film Editors Association.

Gino Moreno

ScreenCraft Works International Mentoring Programme's next programme is now open for mentee and mentor applicants. You can be from anywhere in the world and apply here: https://screencraftworks.org/mentoring/

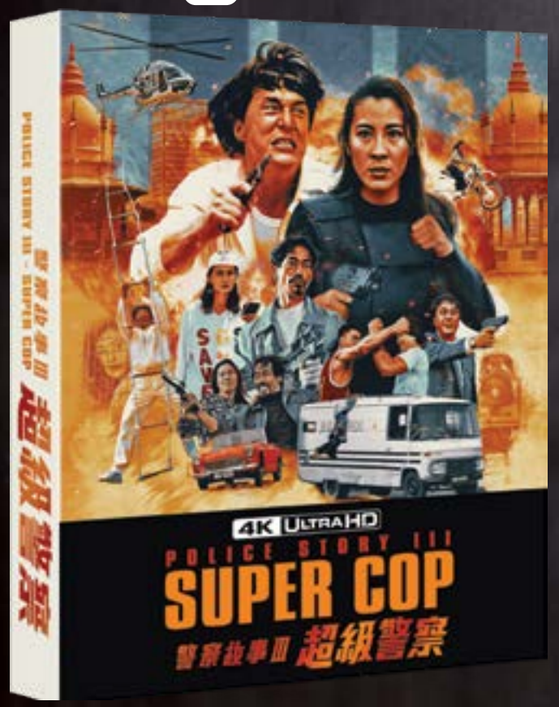
ScreenCraft Works 'Cross-Border Conversation' virtual talks given by the mentoring group – find out about the latest: https://screencraftworks.org/conversations/

Join the ScreenCraft Works community and receive our newsletter:
https://screencraftworks.org/membership-form/

Watch past 'Cross-Border Conversations' on Youtube: Watch the recording of our talk with editors Paul Martin Smith, Chris Wyatt and Tomoko Hirasawa.

MEET THE COP
THAT CAN'T BE STOPPED!

Editing A Trailer for Police Story III by Radek Sienski BFE



Police Story III - Supercop is a 1992 Hong Kong action film starring Jackie Chan and Michelle Yeoh which had its North American premiere in the summer of 1996. The film put Michelle Yeoh on the western cinema map leading to her role in **Tomorrow Never Dies** alongside Pierce Brosnan a year later. Twenty-six years after the US premiere, **Police Story III** will have its US Blu-ray and 4K premiere courtesy of 88 Films.

I was commissioned to create a trailer to promote the release, both online and on various streaming services. I have been editing pre-title and opening sequences for TV shows for a number of years so it was relatively easy to transition to cutting trailers. The goal at the heart of both disciplines is to try to entice a viewer to watch the show. This project was a little more challenging than usual, due to the fact that the film had not one, but three trailers already. First, there was the original Hong Kong trailer, then there was a fantastic US trailer promoting a dubbed and re-cut version of the film as 'Supercop' and lastly, there is a recent trailer from Eureka Entertainment promoting their upcoming release for the UK market.

The challenge was to not duplicate the approach of any of the previous promotional attempts. Therefore, I decided to start from the basics:

Story Story Story!

Each trailer, no matter the genre, must have at least a skeletal story structure. This film piqued my interest in Hong Kong action cinema when I was younger, however, I decided to re-watch it and note up story beats and moments that made me laugh or gasp.

Once I re-familiarised myself with the film, I went through it with a fine-tooth comb, marking up scenes, useful lines and memorable narrative and visual elements. In my Avid, I colour-coded these sequences and broke them down in smaller chunks for ease of navigation.

Structure

It's very important for the film's premise to be properly introduced so the audience knows what's going on. Generally, I'd divide the structure into these parts:

Cold open - hooks audience, doesn't have to have a narrative consequence
Act I - introduction - outlines the story's premise;
Act II - escalation - introduces conflict, we need to be uncertain how the protagonist is going to handle the situation;
Act III - climax - the audience should feel overwhelmed with excitement and suspense, that's where it should end;
The button - one last joke or tease (optional).

I began laying down bits of dialogue that tell the story in the most streamlined way, but without giving away the whole film. The majority of the lines I pull for trailers come from the first two acts, you rarely want to go beyond that. With action films it's tempting to also start pulling big and flashy set pieces and throwing in one-liners, but at this stage I restrain myself to pulling only useful dialogue. Story first!

Tone / Musical Identity

Alongside building a structure, I consider the trailer's tone. This is another key aspect, as many times I was misled by other films' trailers. On occasion I start with the actual score if such exists and I label it in Avid. This is a luxury we only have on films that are completed at the time of cutting a trailer.

The soundtrack for this film is fantastic, however, none of the original Hong Kong release tracks, including the theme, give a boost of energy that a trailer of this genre definitely needs. I reviewed the music from the US re-release of the film which had a new soundtrack and I found what I needed - fast paced, drum-led, explosive tracks but with a hint of what I heard in the original version. I decided to open with these and land on the main theme in Act III to bring it to an epic finish. This was also an attempt to satisfy the tastes of various fans who, in equal measure, favour the original or the US version of the film. This opens up for discussion another key aspect.

English Dubbing vs. Original Language

The producers and I had a conversation about which language version would be more suitable for our trailer. On one hand, it's nice to be respectful to the original Cantonese soundtrack, however, a large portion of the fans watched it first in an English-dubbed version. After listening to both, I went with the English version for two reasons:

Firstly, it's difficult to follow fast subtitles in a fast-paced trailer. Secondly, the English dubbing had quite a good voice acting which 'read' much better in short bursts. The opening 'how do you do' had an awkwardly flirtatious undertone which helped to nail the tone of the trailer.

Comedy and Juxtapositions

Once all the elements were in place and I knew the material inside out, I focused on finding the shortest, most succinct bits of dialogue and scenes which communicated the story efficiently. I focused on making it funny and a lot of comedy came from juxtaposition. We hear the main character's girlfriend saying 'I'm glad it's not another dangerous assignment'. To follow, I found the hardest hitting explosions and gunplay. You get a laugh and it quickly communicates how to read the film and what story to expect. Furthermore, I inserted a couple of gentle rug-pulls and mandatory musical pauses. It's good to vary up the tempo to keep the viewers on their toes.

How To Make It Different

Once I had a rough cut, I revisited the previous three trailers to see if I didn't subconsciously replicate some of the gags or specific lines. I left it for a few days to gain some distance (a luxury that so often we don't have in TV). Upon revisiting, I addressed a few notes and made sure that the finished piece is as true to the heart of the film as possible. The trailer is already available online and will be screened at various action-oriented film festivals as well as streaming platforms later this year.

Police Story III: Supercop premieres on Blu-ray and 4K in the US in the Autumn of 2022.

THE KATE BUSH EFFECT

The Power of the Right Song at the Right Time

by

Barbara Ooshka

We all know those moments, those perfect moments where (in alphabetical order to be fair across the filmmaking board) the cinematography, costumes, dialogue, direction, editing, make up, music, performances, production design, SFX, sound design (*oh my God, what extraordinary sound design*) and VFX all coalesce making a sublime whole where there were once only unformed, disconnected parts. That whole, that gestalt, that unification created through outstanding craft, *that edit*, makes us cry, laugh or hold on to the seat we're sitting on. If they are bona fide moments, breaths are duly held. I had one of those moments last night.

A few years ago I witnessed another moment, so powerful in itself, one in which women were taken by force in the back of ominous black vans. This was a direct allusion to the horrifying cattle-truck journeys to the Nazi death camps as the women are clearly physically powerless to resist their male dominators. As they emerge en masse into a field, a sight to freeze the blood awaits them.

The women are lined up and shepherded on to scaffold platforms, nooses swinging in front of their faces. Terrified, leather-masked and utterly helpless, each woman has a noose draped over her head. You felt the horror of each one as all stifled tears of abject panic. We hear shallow breaths and low moans fused with the metallic sounds of trap doors being primed with industrial severity. No woman in the three line-ups dares to hope for anything other than a swift death. We had no idea what would happen to these poor women, fertile handmaiden slaves to the rich and powerful.

It turns out the scaffold drama was a severe and obscenely effective warning to those who may still harbour rebellious leanings. The power of the sequence was nestled in the DNA of the song chosen to accompany it. As soon as the first heartfelt human sound escaped from the singer's lips, the emotional impact of the scene simply exploded.

Even on its own, the song is overwhelmingly moving. It's about (as most of this artist's work is about) the relationship between men and women. But the song, even on its own, is achingly emotional…

Check out its lyric…

I know you have a little life in you yet
I know you have a lot of strength left
I should be crying but I just can't let it show
I should be hoping but I can't stop thinking
Of all the things I should've said
That I never said
All the things we should've done
Though we never did
All the things I should've given
But I didn't
Oh, darling, make it go
Make it go away

Add these extraordinary images and I'm a helpless puddle on the ground. This was near the opening of Season Two's first episode of *The Handmaid's Tale*. The sequence is available – as most things are – on YouTube but try and see it fully in context. It's a supreme example of the right song at exactly the right time.

Most of you may have guessed or recognised (or indeed looked at the cover!) that the song, *A Woman's Work*, is written and performed by Kate Bush, one of the UK's most gifted artists. You may be surprised to learn that it was written for a film, **She's Having A Baby**. Its lyrics are from the perspective of a man whose wife is undergoing a difficult birth. Kate Bush is extremely picky about where and when she allows her songs to be used in popular culture. It seems she was a big fan of *The Handmaid's Tale* and let the producers use two of her songs, the other being the divine *Cloudbusting* while June (aka Offred) cleans up, incinerates laundry and is given a firearm before the authorities come for her. A YouTube comment said that whoever chooses these songs for this show is a genius. I concur.

But then the strangest thing happened...

Max (Sadie Sink) has had some terrible experiences including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after the supernatural and violent death of her stepbrother in Season Three of Netflix's star performer *Stranger Things*. Psychologically damaged, Max has premonitions of her own demise and in the Fourth Season's episode four, we see her taken over by the demon Vecna from the Upside Down dimension (keep up) and about to suffer a death than can only be described as utterly horrific. Victims are hoisted into the air and their bones broken and shattered and then dropped to the ground as you may discard an apple core. It had happened to two of the victims in the series already so we knew what was coming.

Some of Max's friends, part of the central group of the series, attempt to interview Freddy Krueger (of all people) aka Victor Creel played by Freddy himself, Robert Englund, in order to find a way of warding off Vecna's power. Max is about to be hoisted into the air at her stepbrother's grave side...

But then word gets to the group that music, specifically a favourite song, can give power to the victim to ward off Vecna's absolute hold over them.

You are way ahead of me…

Kate Bush's sublime album *Hounds of Love* was released a year before the events unfolding in Hawkins, Indiana. God, to see that many Walkmans and cassette tapes is like a pre-digital nostalgia bomb detonating in my head. The song that Max identified with was from that same album, the track *Running Up That Hill*.

After we hear an edited version of it in episode one, I was reminded of the Volkswagen Commercial that gave new commercial life to the work of singer/songwriter Nick Drake who died in his twenties but made three sublime albums subsequently celebrated posthumously. His fame came long after his death from the use of his song *Pink Moo*n to shift VW Cabriolets. It seems that Kate Bush had a similar experience. An enormous popular culture push...

Once fans of the show had streamed episode four, Bush's song climbed the charts even getting to the top spot in some countries. I love the idea of today's youth discovering class, craft and art from another age. It gives me hope.

The gang shoves the headphones on Max just before she soars into the air, a precursor to the inevitable bone breakage and in the other 'Upside Down' hell dimension, she's captured by the slimy demon (**Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire**-graveyard style), and is about to be horribly brutalised...

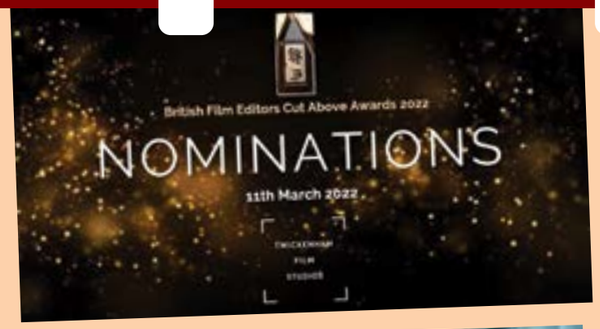
But then the song starts coming through and again there's another tangential **Harry Potter** reference… 'Expecto Patronum' anyone? Think happy thoughts...) Max is able to re-experience the golden moments of her own life that give her enough strength to launch her own attack and while Vecna is distracted, she starts a desperate sprint to escape.

Her own world tantalisingly opens up to her from inside the 'Upside Down' dimension, the world in which her friends are desperately trying to save her as she's suspended above them. Kate Bush's track and the supplemental orchestral film score propel Max forward as Vecna throws obstacles in her way.

The editor, Dean Zimmerman, ACE had many choices how to deliver the coup de grâce. He made the choice that had to be made. I watched the sequence unfolding with a real emotional connection thinking that any moment, Max would be crushed by falling debris. She's still running, the orchestra has taken the baton of the original song and just when you think it's going dark, we cut to black.

Absolutely sublime. Nice one, Dean.

Max drops to the ground and awakes in her ex-boyfriend's arms and her supportive circle. She's the only one to have escaped Vecna's wrath and the subsequent bone breaking demise. So I'm desperate to see episode five onwards but we have visitors and will have to wait for three days to find out what other gems await us in this amazing 'returned to form' series.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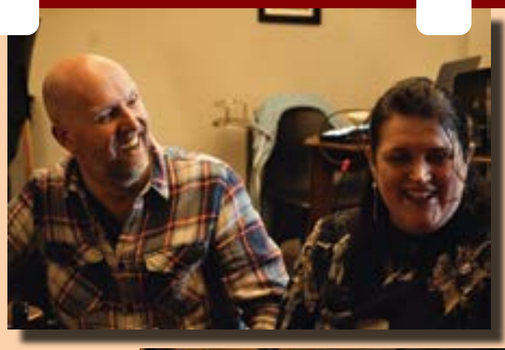

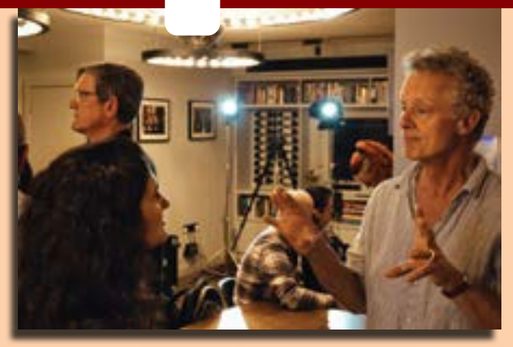

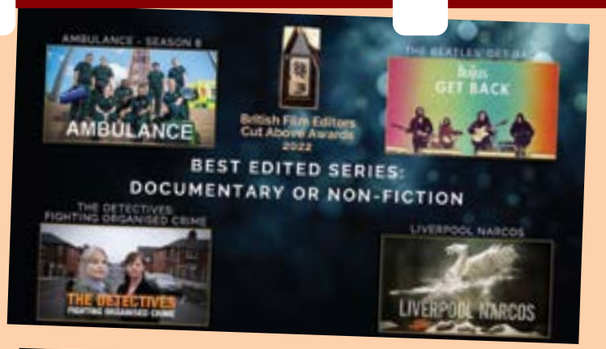
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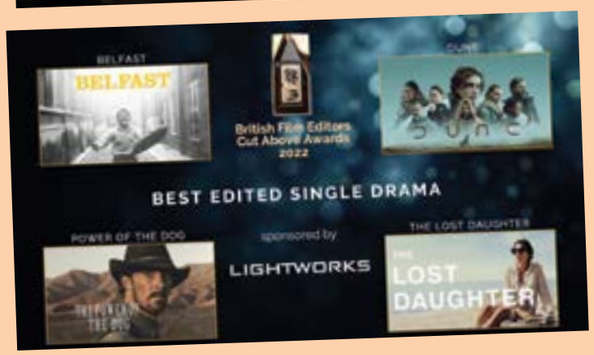
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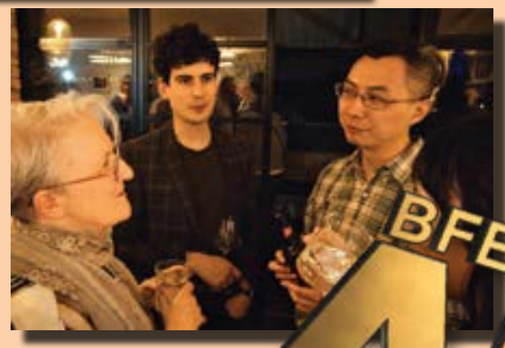

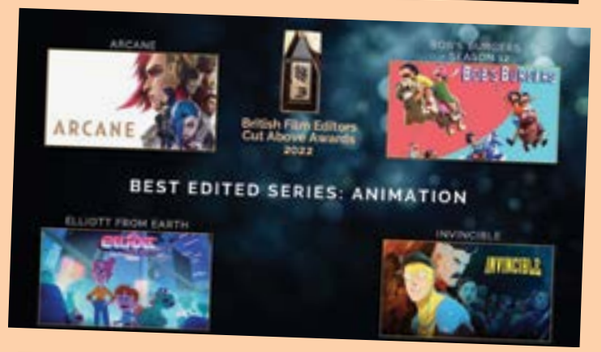
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Mellissa Lo

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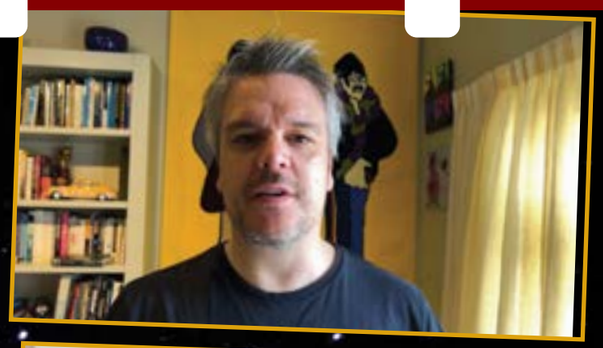
BEST EDITED BRITISH DRAMA
Úna Ní Dhonghaíle, ACE BFE for **Belfast**

BEST EDITED BRITISH DOCUMENTARY OR NON-FICTION PROGRAMME
Nicolas Chaudeurge, Rebecca Lloyd BFE and Jacob Secher Schulsinger for **Cow**

MICHAEL JOHNS BFE AWARD FOR BEST ASSISTANT EDITOR
Mark Burton



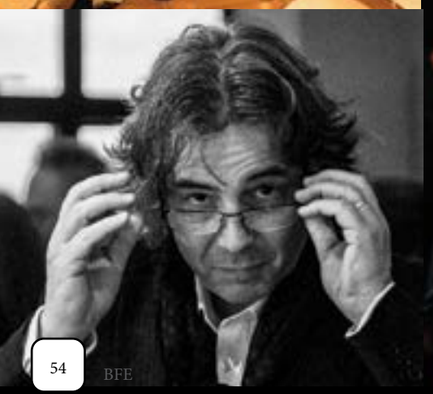






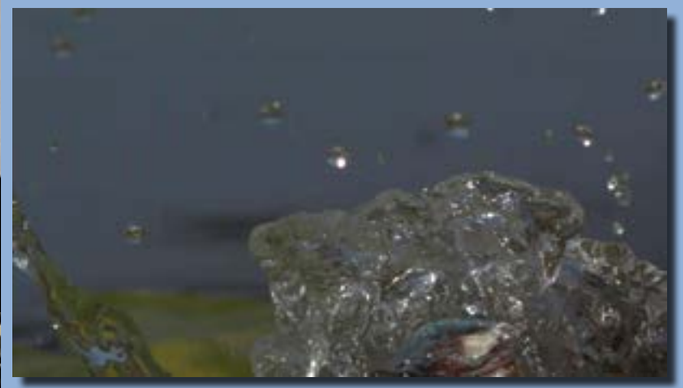






A Perfect Shot

Returning: Kingfisher - Cinematographer Cees van Kempen



First of all, there's the placement of the camera via the height of the tripod. You have to know your subject well enough for an educated guess. The action you are attempting to shoot probably lasts less than a second.

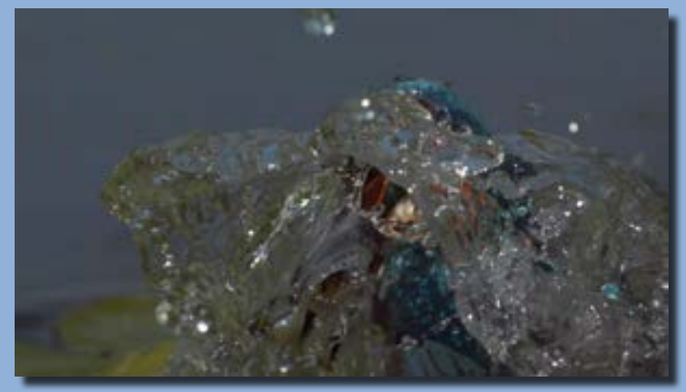
Then there's the choice of lens and shutter speed. Any one of these variables - and variations thereof - can mean the difference between a shot to dismiss out of hand and one to gloriously open your film with.

Patience is required in bucket loads. Be prepared to take take after take after take...

Then there's the variable of focus. Your subject, in a split second, will rise out of the water, shake excess drops off while holding a fish soon to be bashed senseless and devoured.

How do you know which piece of the air above the stream will be occupied by the subject and how do you know when depth of field will render the shot unusable? To both questions, you don't. So take take after take after take...

Then there's the talent. No dressing room, no makeup required, no entourages to deal with.



In exchange for honesty in performance (wild animals, unlike people, never lie), their only need is that you get what you want so you can pack up and leave them in peace. But wild animals do not take direction, hit their marks or even acknowledge your authority over them or their behaviour.

They do what they do when they do it... and if you're not ready... But when all parties are operating optimally and luck and the wind is in your favour, sometimes, just sometimes, you capture something truly magical.

Point your mobile's camera at this QR Code to see a short film featuring this dynamic work of art at 200 frames per second. If you're impatient, it's 3 minutes and 3 seconds in...

VIRTUALLY REAL... REALLY VIRTUAL...

Warsha: a Virtual Production Case Study

by Stefania Marangoni

In June this year I was given the opportunity to attend a 5-day hands-on introductory Virtual Production course. The training focused on the basic operation of the Mo-Sys Startracker Studio system at the company's Academy.[1] My interest in Virtual Production goes hand in hand with a general interest in Virtual and Augmented Reality, so much so that I have often conflated all these technologies together. While VP has become synonymous with the live in-camera LED walls system, recently developed by Disney+ and ILM[2] for *The Mandalorian*, it is also understood to be referring to 'a spectrum of computer-aided production and visualization filmmaking methods'.[3] This became apparent when I was doing the course and when I interviewed Ali J. Dalloul for this article.

The technology in use for Virtual Production is not as recent as one may imagine and has been around for sometime in broadcast and animation. Unreal Engine, the 3D graphics game engine developed by Epic Games and used so extensively in VP, has been around since 1998.[4] Live CGI graphics on sport events or other programs have also been used in television for sometime and so have Ultimatte chroma keying processors. It was particularly during the pandemic, when my students didn't have access to the film studios, that I often thought that it would be useful to have access to some kind of easy-to-use previz software for them. That is when I stumbled onto the world of VP and Unreal Engine.

Anyone in the world of VFX and high-end productions would be familiar with Pitchviz, Previz, Techviz and various hybrid systems available for high-end productions and animations. But they do require specialist skills and admittedly most of the required technology is beyond the economic reach of the average student. Needless to say, the VP course was very interesting and my head was buzzing with ideas and potential uses of such technology. However, it's one thing to do a course, with no pressure to produce the right results, and quite another to work within a budget, with deadlines looming and high end results to achieve.

So, I took the opportunity to discover a little more from Ali J. Dalloul, the editor of *Warsha*, a short film that was partly shot in a Virtual Production Studio. Directed by filmmaker Dania Bdeir, *Warsha* tells the story of Mohammad, a crane operator working in Beirut. One morning he volunteers to take on one of the tallest and notoriously most dangerous cranes in Lebanon. Away from everyone's eyes, he is able to live out his secret passion and find freedom.

1 https://www.mo-sys.com/mo-sys-academy/
2 Industrial Light and Magic
3 Knader, N. (2019) The Virtual Production Field Guide. Epic Games. Available to download at: https://cdn2.unrealengine.com/vp-field-guide-v1-3-01-f0bce45b6319.pdf , there is also a volume 2 available at: https://www.unrealengine.com/en-US/blog/volume-2-of-the-virtual-production-field-guide-now-available
4 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unreal_Engine

The Mandalorian © Disney

The story was inspired by the director witnessing on a neighbouring construction site, a crane operator answering to the call to prayer on top of the crane cabin.[5]

Warsha has screened at more than fifty festivals, including London's BFI Flare Film Festival, where I had the pleasure of watching the film. It has also been the recipient of more than 30 awards including Sundance 2022 in the Short International Fiction category. I caught up with Ali on a zoom call on a hot July afternoon.

SM: How did you get involved in the film?

AJD: The writer/director Dania Bdeir contacted me in 2019, after a common acquaintance gave her my details. She was looking for an editor to work with her on a teaser for her crowd funding campaign. She wasn't happy with the way the previous editor had put together the teaser, so she asked if I could have a go. I edited the material within a day and she was happy and used the teaser for fund raising and pitching. After that, I ended up working on several of Dania's commercial projects and when she had the funds to start the production on *Warsha*, she invited me to edit the film.

SM: Did she plan from the start to shoot some of the film in a Virtual Production stage?

AJD: Not at all. Realism was always a very important part of the production, therefore the look of the film was crucial to support the aesthetic. There was no plan to shoot in a studio and against a green screen even though the producer always encouraged it. When Dania started working with her, she was trying to raise funds to shoot everything on the crane, the dance inside the cabin and the aerial acrobatics on the hook chains of the crane. However, after she shot the footage for the teaser on top of the crane, she experienced first hand the health and safety issues associated with such a risky shoot and that's when she told the producer that she'd be open to other solutions. Dania had incorporated the dance performance into the script as a result of meeting Khansa, the performance artist who plays the main character and watching his live concert in which he performs while suspended with chains.

SM: You mentioned that you started working with Dania during the preproduction can you tell us more?

AJD: Dania asked if I could work with her and the cinematographer to plan the storyboard in preproduction. It was Coralie Dias, the French producer, who suggested using a Virtual Production studio and set out to find the best deal. Of course, that put the budget up quite a lot, I think it ended up being about $150,000 dollars, way more than the average short film budget here in the region. But we were lucky, Coralie managed to raise funds from Arte, who were interested in the story and bought the rights to screen it on their TV channel. Also, La Planète Rouge, the VFX company, was about to build a stage with a 360° LED volume and they suggested using the film to test it in their set up.

SM: Did the use of Virtual Production change the storytelling?

AJD:: Yes, of course. It freed us from some of the constraints that the crane location would have imposed on it.

5 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U940YulNaiM
In this Sundance video, Dania explains in details how she came up with the idea and shares the video she took of the man praying on a crane and the development of the film.

DoP S. Chaaban and Director D. Bdier planning the shot list on Zoom

SM: How much of it was shot on location and how much in the virtual studio? I'm assuming that all the crane shots were done in VP.

AJD: Not all the crane shots. Some were still done on location. When the main character walks on the scaffold bridge that connects the crane to the building and also when he climbs up the length of the crane, which was all shot on-site in Beirut. The part on the bridge was shot with a skeleton crew and the actor wearing safety harnesses and wires. The climb up the crane was shot with a camera mounted on a drone. So you get these really wide shots emphasising the difference in scale between this small figure, the crane and the city landscape.

The Virtual Production material starts when he reaches the crane cabin and he sits there for a moment catching his breath and taking in the Beirut skyline. That was all shot at La Planète Rouge's Next Stage Virtual Studio in Martigue, in France.

Stills from *Warsha* courtesy of D. Bdier

SM: Can you talk to us about the process and were you involved in it at all?

AJD: I was not involved in the practical side of the Virtual Production, my role really was helping the director with the visual storytelling. The pandemic and the lockdown actually turned out to work in our favour. It gave us a few months gap between the location shoot in Beirut and the VP studio shoot in France.

The construction of La Planète Rouge studios in France had suffered some delays, so they had the time to complete it. The delay also gave us the opportunity to test material for the second part of the film and make some crucial decisions that helped us tell the story.

As far as the process was concerned, the cinematographer had to send to France all the plates that they needed for the LED walls. The camera team filmed the Beirut skyline with a 360° camera mounted on a drone.

The crane cabin on set © A. Vermorel

They had to shoot at different times of the day from morning to sunset, as the crane sequence starts in the morning and ends with the end of the working day just before sunset and the call to prayer. They also shot various pans and tilts as they would have to be incorporated into the dance sequence and the character's POV.

Director and DoP prepping a close up © A.Vermorel

During the lockdown months, while they were completing the studio, the VP team prepared all the different plates in Unreal Engine ready to be uploaded on the 360° LED wall. Another benefit was the ability to delete an unwanted building, a cloud or whatever element was chosen. When they were ready to shoot they brought in a full-size crane cabin into the stage and filmed the main character inside the cabin looking out at what he would see from the real crane. They also had the flexibility to choose what they wanted exactly his view to be. I continued to help with the preparation throughout the lockdown period. By then I had the rushes for the first part of the film, which included his arrival at the crane, but we also needed to make some decisions about the VP shoots. For example, the main character, Mohammad, takes his inspiration from a photograph that he keeps with him. You see it once at the beginning of the film when he unfolds it in his digs' bathroom and once when he unfolds it and places it on the dashboard of the crane's cabin, before he starts dancing. This is the photograph of Sherihan, an Egyptian singer and performer who had a huge success in the 80s. Everyone in the Middle East and Arab countries would know her music, her dancing and the look and colour saturation of the music videos she made in the 80s.

So I felt that it was important to make that link visually and I suggested treating those shots in a way that would emulate Sherihan's music videos. In that way, the film takes us into Mohammad's inner life and emotional journey during the dance routine. This was a very important decision to make before the VP shoot, because the VP team had to prepare the sky with the right colour grade and uploaded on the LED walls ready to shoot that sequence. Dania was initially reluctant to go with this idea, because she wanted to keep the realism of the film. This meant testing different looks on a mock edit so that she could feel confident about the results.

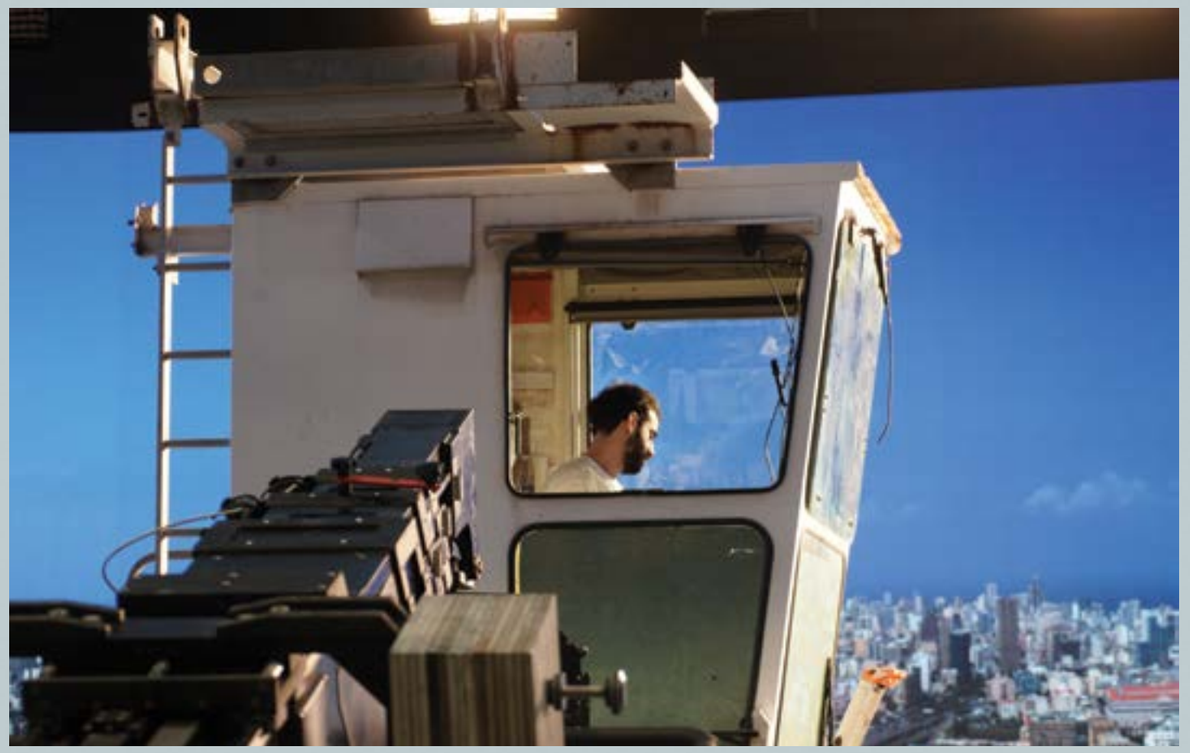
I also helped with the dance shot list. While we resolved the health and safety issue of shooting on a crane above Beirut, we only had two days in the VP stage so it was still important to plan as much as we could in advance of the shoot. While the team was already in France to prep for the shoot, I filmed the whole dance routine with Khansa and edited a couple of versions before we decided on the shots that we needed in the final film. If you look at the film, the sequence consists mostly of close-ups. Again, it goes back to the character's emotional journey at that moment. We realised that we wanted to see his facial expression and close ups of hand gestures and part of the body to get the full impact of that moment for him.

Khansa performing the dance on set © A. Vermorel

On one of the close shots you can see a tear on his face and you can feel the release that he is experiencing. These decisions were really quite important for the post production, because the wide shots wouldn't have told the story but also they would have required further VFX work in post, while in fact, because of the LED background the close shots could be used immediately as they were recorded by the camera.

SM: Why further work in VFX?

AJD: The LED walls were high but there was no ceiling or floor so every time there was a wide shot or an overhead shot of Mohammad suspended above Beirut they needed to composite the background in. Also, on the second day of the shoot the LED wall didn't work so they ended up having to resort to green-screen VFX. Fortunately, they had already shot the bulk of the film.



Khansa at The Next Stage studios for the cabin shoot © A. Vermorel

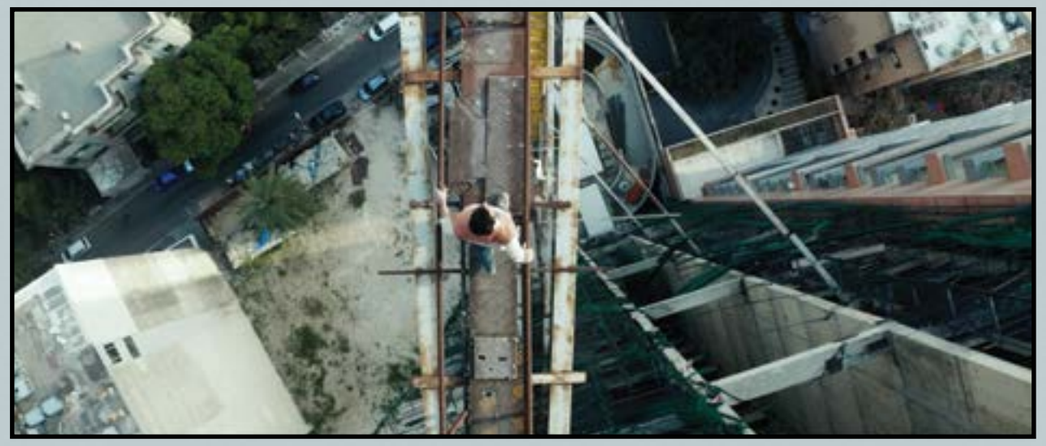
SM: What was it like then to work with the LED wall system in post-production?

AJD: It was great! Aside from the very wide shots that needed some extra compositing, all the other material shot with the LED walls background didn't need any extra work and I treated them very much like any location shots. Working with VP really helped us a lot, from the point of view of the lighting, you don't have any green spill on the actor's face and hair, it's all as if you are shooting on location. Also all the reflective surfaces on the crane cabin and the chain were picking up the Beirut skyline and didn't have to be treated in post. In a way, we think of VFX and Virtual Production as a way of creating worlds that don't exist, like in science fiction, but what we did was recreate the real world but in a situation where we could control it or almost.

SM: Which brings me to the sound of Beirut. You mentioned that you ended up doing a lot of work on it. Can you tell us more?

AJD: Because of the funding structure, the VFX colour grade and mix had to be done in France, but of course the director and I knew what Beirut sounds like, all the sound details that you hear in the film had to be recorded in Beirut.

So the director and I had to go around the city, recording all the sounds that we felt were important for the film. I then prepared all the tracks for the sound studio, so that they could get on with refining them. Of course they added more, but we knew what we wanted to incorporate and what sounded authentic from the point of view of the location and we worked on that ourselves first.



Stills from *Warsha* courtesy of D. Bdier

SM: Finally, I wanted to ask a question about the visual structure of the film, which you have already touched upon when talking about the dance sequence. Much of the film is shot in close up. Can you say something on whether that was decided before or after the shoot?

AJD: Many of the scenes in the film were covered in wide shots that clearly show the surroundings of Mohammad in the film. In the early drafts of the film, we were using many of these wide shots in the edit, thinking that would help understand where he lives and what motivates him to do what he's going to do in the film later on. At some point, we felt that there was something not working in the film and we couldn't spot it directly… until we took the decision of using more CUs of the main character and fewer wide shots. An excess of wide shots was pushing the film more into social realism and that wasn't the point. It was important to remember that this is a short film and it's character driven. When we experience Mohammad's story in more CUs - especially since he's a silent character - we feel more with him. His facial expressions and eyes were our only connection with him and the getaway for his desires. The film opens and closes on Mohammad's face, where the light and his look make all the difference.

Ali J. Dalloul is an editor, filmmaker and video essayist from Lebanon. He holds an MA in Editing and Post Production from the London South Bank University. Since 2013, he has worked on several projects including documentaries, short films, music videos and video essays. Some of his video essays and compilations participated in the European Media Arts Festival, Barakunan: Literature Day, Redzone Festival. His short film *Circular* (2020) was selected for several festivals worldwide and won the best short film in competition at the European Film Festival (2021). Among the short films he has edited are *Warsha* (2022) directed by Dania Bdeir, winner of the Jury Prize for Best International Short Fiction at the Sundance Film Festival, and *Pas de Ports pour les Petits Bateaux* (2017) directed by Joelle Abou Chabke, winner of Silver Tanit at the Carthage Film Festival (JCC).

Stefania Marangoni is a Senior Lecturer and course director of the MA in Editing and Post Production at London South Bank University. She is a BFE Governor co-vice chair and part of the mentoring subcommittee. At LSBU she is a member of the Creative Technology Research Centre and part of the Researching the Screen Group. She is an editor and filmmaker primarily working on experimental hybrid documentaries. Her current project is an experimental documentary that incorporates video projection mapping.

For further information about Virtual Production, Unreal Engine has published The Virtual Production Field Guide Volume 1 and 2 both available for free from:

www.unrealengine.com

BAD MOVIES, GREAT LESSONS

Can The Worst Movies Be The Best Teachers?

by

Edward Ash

"How can the editing be this bad?"

Jay Bauman

***Editor's Note**: Far be it for me to condone the frankly merciless criticism of a nascent filmmaker's assumed first feature film. I've been there. I know how vulnerable and thin-skinned a filmmaker can be given that particular situation. But there is a flip side to that coin toss. Can a four foot three inch, albeit terribly enthusiastic player, start in the line-up of a basketball game and stand any chance of delivering the goods? Is it unfair to say that perhaps the filmmaker didn't stand a chance from the word go? And should we mock them for it? No. But if - in their career - a four foot three inch player can actually grow in stature, is it unfair to suggest how that might happen with a little correction from critics? If the following article comes across as needlessly critical, perhaps that criticism can actually do some good. I am still on the fence, but you do need to see this film to actually believe it...*

How many times have you seen something badly cut? Can you remember ever saying, as you watched a film or TV show "Ouch, that didn't work," after an edit that took you right out of the drama or narrative? What this demonstrates, just to give you a bit of a lift, is that you have sound editorial judgement. It is incredibly rare or more accurately it is incredibly rare in my own experience to witness 'bad editing'. Even poorly written or sub-par films and shows have a level of professionalism in the edit that mitigates some lack of imagination or standard craft in other departments. But rarely will you encounter a film that actually ignores the art of editing to such a degree that it becomes simply (and I regret saying this just a little bit) absolutely hilarious to watch.

Yes, there are editors out there wanting to break out of expected norms, straining at the leash to be experimental but editing is too fine, exact and yet conversely, too broad a craft to sit still for very long. Eventually, experimentation sails unapologetically into the mainstream and before you know it, we're all effortlessly following **The Bourne Supremacy**'s plot with ease because of the nature of its unique direction and the amazingly brilliant and sympathetic editing of Christopher Rouse and Richard Pearson who both expertly manage to make perfect sense presenting blizzards of sometimes overly staccato jump cuts. The style *should* disorient. But it feels absolutely magical. Forgive the **Blazing Saddles** quote but it seems appropriate…

"Nietzsche says out of chaos comes order."
"Ah, blow it out your ass, Howard."

Juxtapose (what a simply marvellous word that is) the best with its polar opposite. In the case of **Clash in the College**, every single film craft is presented at its most rudimentary and resource denied basics. This isn't just low-budget filmmaking (we've all been there). This is, one assumes, a first-timer making every mistake in the book and then inventing some of their own bespoke clangers. And it's a scream despite how mean-spirited that may sound. My thanks to Red Letter Media's Mike, Jay and Rich for bringing it to my attention despite my initial guilt at agreeing to every one of their points. Sometimes, an avalanche of 'not good' is incapable of being brushed aside but can we learn from it?

Red Letter Media is an American YouTube Film and TV review channel founded by Mike Stoklasa in 2008. After watching **Star Trek Generations** many years after its release, Stoklasa took on the identity of 'Mr. Plinkett', (changing his own voice which he thought was too dull to an inexplicably duller one) and presented a heartfelt review hinting at his own murderous fantasy persona throughout. I've no idea why this aspect was necessary and some may find it offensive but his views and criticisms are valid and presented in a very off kilter style, one he honed for his breakout 70 minute review of **Star Wars The Phantom Menace** which was my introduction to Mike and co. Not only was the serial killer identity fantasy more integrated (played for laughs but some may not find it amusing given the current cultural climate), but it was still a startlingly insightful review that really nailed why the film didn't work for him.

After racking up five million views in the first four months, Stoklasa, an independent amateur filmmaker, found a home. He enlisted his friends (both as smart and insightful as himself) Rich Evans and Jay Bauman and went on to storm the internet with a classy, original home for measured and frequently funny online reviews. Their film-making side peeks out every now and again but at the core of the company are remarkably perceptive reviews based on knowledge of the old fashioned tenets of traditional filmmaking and basic common sense. More often than not I've disliked a film or TV show and couldn't put my finger on why and then spent 30 minutes or so with Mike, Rich and Jay and between them, they answer my own questions. In Covid times, watching their work was the digital equivalent of discussing the merits of popular culture with good friends in a pub somewhere without the exorbitant prices.

Red Letter Media has several review formats (created to keep themselves from getting bored perhaps?) and the one I'm headlining is featured in their '*Best of the Worst*' category in which a reliably bad film or TV show is exhumed for another withering blast of criticism. It struck me as I watched this that perhaps the best way to learn how to do something is to watch examples of how *not to do something*. As mentioned, the film on the skewer is called **Clash in the College**, a 2011 independent film written and directed by Paul Kattupalli. Typos on the cover of the DVD do not augur well. Mr. K. also stars in the film as an older student named, without any seemingly obvious irony, Krishna (the 8th avatar of Vishnu and a Supreme God in his own right). Okay...

Red Letter Media is sometimes in the habit of recutting clips from films and TV shows for comic effect but for this film, they deny any re-editing and stress up front that every clip you see from the actual movie is in fact the way the finished film was served up to its audience. We are talking about:

1. Standard definition (in 2011?) but to be fair, all DVDs are SD
2. Nonexistent bespoke lighting
3. Black frames
4. Ferociously ill-timed jump cuts
5. Continuity errors that actually startle
6. Framing that forces you to want to re-frame
7. Camera and tripod shadows
8. Holiday Inn locations
9. Even more Holiday Inn locations
10. Stilted unconvincing rhetoric as dialogue
11. Characters who arrive at bus stops who then just have a chat and walk away
12. Severely questionable acting
13. No plot or flowing through narrative
14. Sound mixing that… wait. No sound mixing
15. Star wipes, Paper Peels, transitions circa 1981 TV
16. Crew and tripods in shot

I mean the screw-ups are endless. It's almost miraculous.

"*They were breaking the 180 degree rule… vertically!*"

Rich Evans

I am assuming that the writer/director has seen a few films and had control over the editorial process. The editor is front credited as Jon Craig (over a shot of a propellor spinning that has no physical relationship with the plane landing that opens the film). One suspects this name is a pseudonym for Mr. K. Even if you've only seen a handful of movies, you should understand some basics, surely. Clearly not. Watching this film, you are almost encouraged to believe that the director and editor fell out big time (even if they were the same person) and that the film was cut against the director's wishes but he had to make a festival deadline so trusted his editor to deliver something workable… If the editor was determined to wreck Mr. K's career with deliberate screw-ups and pure amateur hour production mistakes then he/she couldn't have done a better job. Every first time filmmaker deserves a break. One-person filmmaking is a tough gig but the tsunami of trampled craft cannot be ignored and if offered up for judgement, can only be perversely enjoyed.

"*Almost every mistake is made.*"
"*It should be taught in film schools…*"

Mike Stoklasa and Jay Bauman

I imagine that any enjoyment watching this film would be derived from your friends' commentary as you watch it. There are one or two truly unintentionally troubling scenes in **Clash in the College**. For example, Mr. K. as Krishna wanders around the college interacting with students decades younger than himself. He walks after a young girl who clearly wants no help after he offers it and when she finally manages to lose him, he hesitates, one might even say loiters, giving the world the impression that he is just exactly as creepy as we think him to be and not some well-meaning middle aged man inadvertently hanging around the edges of stalkdom. It's a ludicrous pursuit to try and figure out how someone could make such basic mistakes. If Mr. K. was going for Ed Wood levels of awfulness, then I doubt if the multi-presentations of different political stances from all the characters in the film would be so evident. It's suggested by Mike that Mr. K. might have arrived at a US campus as a young man and was struck by the blizzard of varying opinions and political ideas, so much so that he shoehorned them all into his film. This suggests a huge cultural shift for him to deal with too.

When you actually experience bad film editing – and to be fair, as I mentioned earlier, editing standards across the world are pretty high these days – what is usually invisible shocks you with its crassness. A badly timed cut or a frantic cutaway because of a flubbed line plays like the ultimate in comic entertainment. It is the visual equivalent of watching comedian Les Dawson deliberately play the piano badly (that's a reference for the old guard in our hallowed association). Watching the film, you'll soon run out of paper if you're taking notes. At one point, Stoklasa just gives into the flow of dreadfulness and says that they shouldn't say anything and let the film do the talking. Craft-wise, this film puts its foot in its mouth so repeatedly, it hardly ever bothers to remove it.

But without wanting to crush the soul of a would-be filmmaker, the result is a film that is entertaining for all of the wrong but frankly hilarious reasons.

CLASH IN THE COLLEGE
Full Movie on YouTube

BEST OF THE WORST
Red Letter Media Review

BRIAN BLAMEY

15.06.30 to 08.07.22

Although I had met Brian earlier, we didn't actually get together to work until June 1970. I was the assistant Foley editor on **Ryan's Daughter** with Bill Butler in charge of this and extra sound effects on the film. Brian was called in to help out with various effects having a speciality of waves. The film was shot in Ireland with wonderful scenery but hopeless to record sound so we had to recreate a lot of it in Theatre Five at Pinewood. Waves in stereo were quite difficult to recreate and it was a combination of library sound and water effects that we created in the theatre. David Lean particularly wanted to hear the sound of the foam as the waves receded from the beach. We recreated this using Andrews Liver Salts and Alka-Seltzer and a microphone held very close to it. It was amazing how well it worked! For those that are familiar with the film there was a spectacular storm sequence, we used depth charges ,tube trains and all sorts of explosions at various speeds to create the violent climax to this, not to mention lots of wind effects from **Lawrence of Arabia**!

We chilled out by playing table tennis when we had a chance. This was a great leveller for all of us, Brian being particularly good at it. We worked long hours but we didn't have a big crew, the magic of Gordon McCallum as final sound mixer made it all come together. Brian and Bill Butler went on to work for Stanley Kubrick on **A Clockwork Orange** but that's another story.

A Touch of Class was being made at Elstree Studios in 1972 and I got a call from Brian as his assistant was moving on to another film and could I come and help him out. The film was deep in post-production and had a deadline that had to be met as it was to have a Royal Premiere. It was fair to say it was chaos, the edit was not locked off and they kept previewing it to get audience reaction as it was a comedy. It was impossible to get all the soundtrack sorted out for the dub without having to keep making massive changes. It was a very mechanical process for us and it meant lots of overtime, staying over and even sleeping in the cutting room. Brian and I got on very well despite all this stress and we both managed to keep a smile on our faces. Bill Butler was editing it and was pulling his hair out trying to get it finished. It gave us four months of work so I guess we shouldn't complain.

The film was a success commercially and an Oscar winner for Glenda Jackson but its post-production costs must have been pretty high.

Billy Two Hats was a western that was shot in Israel in early 1973 in conjunction with **Jesus Christ Superstar** at the same location. The editor was Tom Noble, the sound editor Michael Hopkins and Brian and I were in charge of Foley on this one. This was my second western in a year so I was quite used to horses hooves and gunshots! The horses were not shoed in Israel so we had to produce noises for all the horses' hooves. Can you imagine that? Added to that we had jets constantly flying over making the original soundtrack even more unusable. Brian and I spent many a happy hour in Pinewood's Theatre Five again, surrounded by saddles, coconuts and sand. We were very pleased with our contribution to this film and I have to say it's one of my favourite movies.

Brian continued to increase his portfolio of work as a sound editor as his credits show. Sadly we did not work together again but I can say the times we did was a most enjoyable experience, he never lost his temper and always remained calm in a crisis. Brian continued to support the GBFE and AMPS. We also have our Sprocketeers' lunches and get-togethers at Pinewood Studios. We still keep these going today but sadly numbers are dwindling. It's hard to think that Brian will no longer be with us at these meetings. I guess we thought he would carry on forever, an amazing guy whose career started in 1947, the year I was born!

Brian Sinclair BFE

I have known Brian ever since I started at MGM in 1959. He was one of many sound assistants that came and went, always ready for a chat and a laugh, a really happy person to have around although I never worked with him as I followed the picture side. Brian first started in the cutting rooms in 1947, possibly at MGM in Borehamwood or maybe Merton Park Studios and progressed in his chosen field of sound editing. Over his working life he worked on over 80 films, not all of them credited on IMDb.

I suppose he will best be remembered as the sound editor working with editor Bill Butler GBFE on Kubrick's **A Clockwork Orange** for which he was nominated for a BAFTA in 1971. He was also known for work on **Survivor** in 1987, **The Remains of the Day** in 1993 and **Emma** in 1996 with other picture editors. Brian retired from the industry around 2001 but kept in touch with films by coming to the GBFTE screenings at Pinewood studios, and meeting up with many of us Sprocketeers by coming to lunches and Christmas parties.

Brian unfortunately gradually fell foul of the dreaded Alzheimer's and was stopped from using his car. He still looked after himself in his house and had his daughters helping him and the Alzheimer's Society also provided a carer. Nicki was wonderful to him and brought him to many of our Sprocketeer lunches. We will miss Brian and his laughter and anecdotal stories of the old times in his favourite job… making sound work to tell the story.

John Grover BFE

GAVIN MILLAR

11.01.38 to 20.04.22

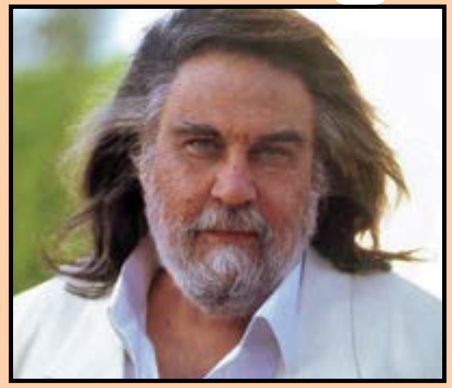
Everyone has mentors throughout their lives, hugely important souls who find the time to guide and support younger, inexperienced people simply because they want to or are driven to, understanding that those who follow are in need of their guidance. One of mine, the very first in fact, died on the 20th April 2022 at the age of 84. Gavin Millar was primarily known as a writer, broadcaster and TV and film director. He also co-wrote one of the very first serious books on our blessed craft, *The Techniques of Film Editing*.

I wrote to Gavin after seeing an edition of *Arena: Cinema* which he hosted in the 70s. I mentioned I was off to the US as an 18th birthday present and he agreed to meet me in Los Angeles and introduce me to a few insiders. He had to cancel his own trip but gave me contact details for writer/director Joan Tewkesbury which led me to DoP Billy Fraker which led to **1941** and Spielberg. After this dream of a trip, Gavin offered me the job of being his assistant on his cinematic masterpiece **Dreamchild**. To say I learned a lot is an exquisite understatement. Throughout my career, Gavin was always there, supporting me.

My most vivid memory of Gavin (apart from his ultra-cool Citroën car, a French classic) was his extemporaneous remark upon hearing his producer Rick McCallum reply to Gavin's concerns about a scene. It was so crude, he'd be locked up for saying it in 2022. Twitter would have a bespoke digital dungeon for Rick to lock himself into these days. Despite the offensive remark, the three of us were reduced to stunned hysteria by it, tears pouring out from all six eyes. Rick, I seem to remember, dropped to his knees as he was laughing so hard – *at his own remark*. After gaining any composure available to him, Gavin simply said "Rick is the only man I know who can disgust himself!"

But above all, Gavin was the first person I met in the film industry who saw potential in this odd teen who so wanted a career moving audiences to tears, joy, laughter and sorrow. To him I owe a massive debt and will do my utmost to pass on the essence of his mentorship to others in my past position now struggling to get a toehold in this vibrantly attractive but sometimes frustrating business. Bless you, Gavin. I remain always in your debt.

Alan Miller BFE



VANGELIS

29.03.43 to 17.05.22

Evángelos Odysséas Papathanassíou (aka Vangelis) has died, aged 78. A Vangelis score was unmistakably recognisable and his work, more often than not, held me and millions more in thrall.

While never meeting the man, Vangelis is a champion of mine for other more personal reasons. I started work in the mid-80s with a company that had made an extraordinary film on the Namib desert. Watching it, I was stunned by how high the music budget must have been as Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* - almost the album's entirety - was lathered all over the film. It worked brilliantly but I still couldn't see how they could have afforded it. I asked this question to the executive producer Michael Rosenberg, who became a close friend over the decade I worked with him…

"Oh, that's easy," he said. "We just asked Pink Floyd and they said 'Yes!'" OK. Good life lesson. So, my then partner had produced a stunning film on ice whales of the world narrated by Claudius himself, Derek Jacobi. The editor had temped it with the gorgeous front and end credit music from **The Bounty** and no one could see (or hear) how any other score could possibly have worked as beautifully as Vangelis' cues. So, the next move was to somehow get to the man himself. I wasn't privy to how my then partner (and now wife) managed to do this but do this she did paying a vastly reduced rate to use the music and the film is graced now and forever with his sublime cues. Now, not only once but twice did the great man allow us to use his music. He wrote two pieces titled *Roxane's Dance* and *Bagoas' Dance* for the less than stellar epic **Alexander** but I was taken by these cues and temped them on to a promotional film for an ocean conservation organisation. Wheels turned and Vangelis must have had a soft spot for natural history filmmakers and conservationists because he gave his approval wholeheartedly. We got to use them for free.

His magnificence as a film composer was sensing the emotion, sometimes hidden, and bringing it to the forefront via his glorious and unmistakable sound. His generosity of character was another aspect of the man's life I will always celebrate too. And what a legacy. The man and his music will be sorely missed.

Alan Miller BFE

Are you an editor sitting in a post house and wondering what the BFE can do for you?







We've all seen the 'American Cinema Editors' credit in movies, the nominal after the name having the coincidental and I'm sure readily accepted 'ACE'. The UK equivalent is 'British Film Editors'. 'BFE' is an acronym perhaps not as cool as 'ACE' but the advantages of membership are quite significant.

A flick through this *First Frame* magazine will give you a flavour of the organisation. In it you'll find interviews with editors, film and TV reviews, articles on the industry and the encouragement of diversity, articles supporting an overhaul of the stressful conditions many of us labour under and bespoke articles tailored to the curious film editor and assistant and in a broader sense, the cineaste. The magazine editor encourages members to submit ideas for articles or articles themselves and combs the internet for hidden gems to publish. Any bespoke material is written by the editor keeping up with all the latest news pertaining to our extraordinary industry. Members receive two sixty-eight page magazines a year.

The BFE has become a vibrant organisation, forward looking, inclusive and friendly. We are building a community of editors who share their experiences and gain insights and ideas from editors worldwide. We have connections with both ACE and the Canadian equivalent, the CCE. We have also made contact with and attended European editing events.

The Corona virus has obviously impacted our social events over the last two years but Zoom calls, while necessary, make it easier for anyone, anywhere to join in. While you can't beat face to face contact with others, the Zoom events have enabled those of us not nestled in the capital to tune in, join in and learn from the vast reservoir of other editors' experiences. BFE's primary online events - 'A Virtual Glass of Wine' - are joyous occasions, an hour interviewing some of the best editors in the world (see photos left and right), and half an hour of member's questions. We usually secure private online screeners to preview so we can discuss their latest projects.

Please point your smart phone camera at the Quick Response Codes below to open the BFE joining page or the code next to it for the BFE home page to explore further.

JOIN BFE

BFE HOMEPAGE

Be part of this growing community and add your voice to improve editors' working conditions, encourage diversity industry-wide and gain invaluable advice from the best of us. You may feel like it sometimes but you're not alone. BFE is here to unite us and support you.







LEFT: 1. Úna Ní Dhonghaíle, ACE BFE 2. Mark Towns BFE, 3. Justine Wright BFE, 4. Colin Goudie BFE, 5. John Grover BFE, 6. Peter Chang Yao chung BFE, 7. Paolo Cottignola BFE. RIGHT: 1. Stephen Mirrione, ACE, 2. Axel Geddes, ACE, 3. Joel Cox, ACE BFE, 4. Kabir Akhtar, ACE BFE, 5. Rosanne Tan, ACE BFE, 6. Skip MacDonald, ACE BFE, 7. Tatiana S. Reigel, ACE BFE.