

THE MAGAZINE FOR FILM & TELEVISION EDITORS, ASSISTANTS & POST-PRODUCTION PROFESSIONALS

CINEMA EDITOR

THE EDDIE AWARDS ISSUE

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American Symphony
Poor Things
Maestro
American Fiction

FEATURING

ACE Golden Eddie Honoree
John Waters

ACE Career Achievement Honorees
Kate Amend, ACE and
Walter Murch, ACE

ACE Heritage Award Honoree
Stephen Lovejoy, ACE

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ACE EDDIE AWARD NOMINEE
BEST EDITED FEATURE FILM

(DRAMATIC)

JENNIFER LAME ACE

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NOMINATIONS

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



Hello editors from far and wide! Welcome to *CinemaEditor's* 2024 Eddies Issue and congratulations to all of this year's nominees! It's another year of amazing editorial magic done on films, television shows and documentaries. Your work has made us proud! So congrats again, good luck and enjoy the love and respect of your fellow editors.

Congratulations also to this year's recipients of ACE's prestigious Career Achievement Award. First to educator, documentary editor and longtime ACE Board member, the generous, talented and kind Kate Amend, ACE. And to a boundary pushing editor, teacher, filmmaker, author and philosopher Walter Murch, ACE. We are thrilled to be honoring and celebrating these two incredible editors. And with gratitude for years of dedication, time and service to ACE we are proud to present Stephen Lovejoy, ACE, with ACE's Heritage Award. And of course congratulations to this year's Golden Eddie recipient, writer, director, actor and all around subversive raconteur Mr. John Waters. In this issue we're fortunate to highlight these extraordinary editors and artists with articles about their long and fascinating careers.

In other ACE news, the Connect Committee had its final luncheon of 2023 with life member Kaja Fehr, ACE. It was a lively affair full of laughter and spice as Kaja told stories from her long career. And check out *CinemaEditor's* new Life Lessons column. A sometimes funny, sometimes poignant, but always interesting reflection from our esteemed life members.


Also inside is a full report from the International Relations Committee on the 4th annual meeting of TEMPO (the United Nations of film editor organizations). This year's meeting took place in Copenhagen with editors

from all over the world attending physically and virtually and ... don't mean to bury the lead but our very own Michelle Tesoro, ACE, was elected Board Chair of this important and growing international organization. Way to go Michelle!

And with the help of the Social Committee, Michelle Tesoro (yes that Michelle) and Jeff Israel, ACE, organized the first ever Slicing ACEs Tennis Tournament. It was a 'hit,' a lot of fun and well attended so make sure you sign up for the next one.

It was great to see everyone at the ACE Holiday Party! There is truly nothing better than a room full of editors. The photos inside prove the point for both Los Angeles and New York. Thank you to Jenni and Team ACE for once again throwing a terrific party.

Time for you to dig into this issue where inside you'll find in-depth interviews with some of today's top editors. Hilda Rasula, ACE, talks about editing her hit film *American Fiction*. Yorgos Mavropsaridis, ACE, talks turkey on cutting the wild *Poor Things* and Michelle Tesoro discusses her editorial mastery on *Maestro*. And we spotlight the editors of the documentary *American Symphony*: Sammy Dane, Matthew Heineman, Jim Hession and Fernando Villegas. Plus, as always, there's more inside!

2023 has come to a close and I'm sure most of us feel 'good riddance!' Double strikes and the many months of many of us being out of work has been incredibly difficult. The ebb and flow, the ups and downs of our business are a true challenge and are never easy to get used to. So remember: Keep an eye out for each other. 2024 will be better. Stay strong, stay healthy and be brilliant and see you on March 3rd at Royce Hall! 

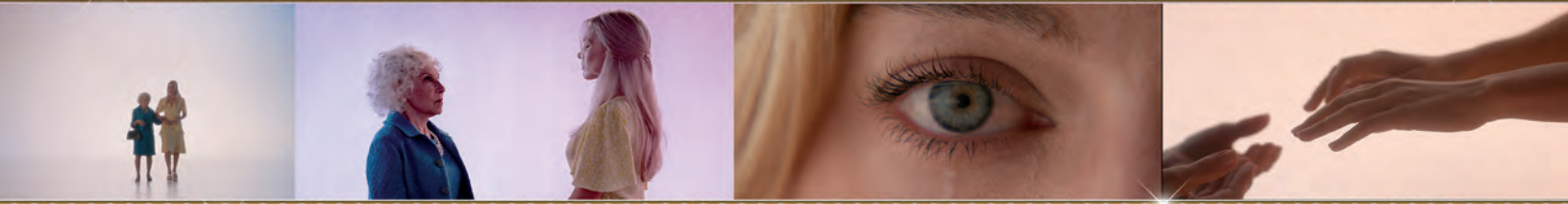
– KEVIN TENT, ACE, BOARD PRESIDENT

8

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“A deeply hopeful film—something much-needed in the world right now—

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OBSERVER

Barbie

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Official Periodical of American Cinema Editors, Inc. Founded November 28, 1950.

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Matt Allen is the recipient of the Eric Zumbrennen Fellowship (2020-2021). In late 2022, he finished editing the feature film entitled *American Murderer* starring Tom Pelphrey, Ryan Phillippe, Idina Menzel and Jacki Weaver. His feature film assistant editor credits include *A Man Called Otto*, *Christopher Robin* from Disney, *Bloodshot* and *Sweet Girl*. As an associate member of ACE, he always enjoys working with and being mentored by other ACE members! He hopes to work with another ACE member on a film very soon!

Edgar Burcksen, ACE, NCE, is an award-winning, veteran, working editor. He was the Editor in Chief of – and is a regular contributor to – *CinemaEditor* magazine.

Walter Fernandez was the Editor in Chief of *CinemaEditor* magazine from August 2010 until June 2013. He has worked in marketing and distribution at IMAX and the MPAA. He has written for *CinemaEditor* since 2003.

Justine Gunn is a writer for film and television with a longtime admiration for the storytelling artistry of editors.

Harry B. Miller III, ACE, is a feature, television and documentary editor. His recent credits include *Turn: Washington's Spies* and *The Predator*.

Bobbie O'Steen is a film historian and author of *Cut to the Chase*, based on interviews with her late husband, editor Sam O'Steen; *The Invisible Cut*, which deconstructs the editing process; and *Making the Cut at Pixar: The Art of Editing Animation*, with Bill Kinder, an authoritative media-rich book about the editor's pioneering role in animation. Bobbie hosts an ongoing event series, "Inside the Cutting Room," honoring master editors and has taught at AFI and NYU. More info at bobbieosteen.com

Adrian Pennington is a journalist, editor and marketing copywriter whose articles have appeared in the *Financial Times*, *British Cinematographer*, *Screen International*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Premiere*, *Broadcast*, *RTS Television* and *The Guardian*. He is co-author of *Exploring 3D: The New Grammar of Stereoscopic Filmmaking* (Focal Press, 2012) and his favorite film of all time is *Gilda*.

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The objects and purposes of the American Cinema Editors are to advance the art and science of the film editing profession; to increase the entertainment value of motion pictures by attaining artistic pre-eminence and scientific achievement in the creative art of film editing; to bring into close alliance those film editors who desire to advance the prestige and dignity of the film editing profession.

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NIMONA



**THE ANIMATED
FEATURE
OF THE YEAR.**

GENUINELY NECESSARY."

San Francisco Chronicle

**"A VIVID CREATURE
ALL ITS OWN.**

At its heart, it's a pointed allegory about politicians who build their national profile on the backs of queer and transgender children.

Nimona the character doesn't claim to speak for them, but does try to speak to them and to others grappling with the concept of *what it might feel like when your shell doesn't match your soul.*

The New York Times



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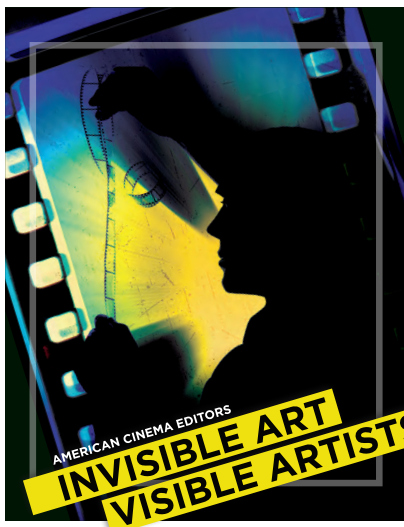
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2024



2024 EDDIE AWARDS SCHEDULE

Fri., Feb. 2	Final Ballots Sent
Fri., Feb. 9	Deadline for Advertising
Tues., Feb. 20	Final Ballots Due (5pm PT)
Sun., Mar. 3	2024 ACE Eddie Awards

For more information visit www.AmericanCinemaEditors.org



SAVE THE DATE

Join us Saturday, March 9 to watch this year's Oscar-nominated editors discuss their art

The 2024 Nominees

Laurent Sénéchal
Anatomy of a Fall

Kevin Tent, ACE
The Holdovers

Thelma Schoonmaker, ACE
Killers of the Flower Moon

Jennifer Lame, ACE
Oppenheimer

Yorgos Mavropsaridis, ACE
Poor Things

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Coming up next
The Eddies/Television Issue



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WHAT'S NEW!

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

75TH CREATIVE ARTS EMMYS

Congratulations to the winners of 75th Creative Arts Emmys, which were presented by the Television Academy on Jan. 6 and 7 at the Peacock Theater at L.A. Live. Winners in the picture editing categories included:



OUTSTANDING PICTURE
EDITING FOR A MULTICAMERA
COMEDY SERIES

Kirk Benson and Chris Poulos
Night Court "Pilot"

OUTSTANDING PICTURE
EDITING FOR A SINGLE-CAMERA
COMEDY SERIES

Joanna Naugle, ACE
The Bear "System"

OUTSTANDING PICTURE
EDITING FOR A LIMITED OR
ANTHOLOGY SERIES OR MOVIE

Nat Fuller and Laura Zempel, ACE
BEEF "Figures of Light"

OUTSTANDING PICTURE EDITING
FOR A DRAMA SERIES

Timothy A. Good, ACE, Emily Mendez
The Last of Us "Endure And Survive"

OUTSTANDING PICTURE EDITING
FOR A NONFICTION PROGRAM

Michael Harte, ACE
Still: A Michael J. Fox Movie

OUTSTANDING PICTURE EDITING
FOR VARIETY PROGRAMMING

**Stephanie Filo, ACE, supervising editor,
Malinda Zehner Guerra,
and Taylor Joy Mason, ACE**
A Black Lady Sketch Show
"My Love Language Is
Words of Defamation"

OUTSTANDING PICTURE EDITING
FOR A STRUCTURED REALITY
OR COMPETITION PROGRAM

**Jamie Martin, lead editor,
Paul Cross, Ryan Mallick,
and Michael Roha**

RuPaul's Drag Race
"Wigloose: The Rusal!"

OUTSTANDING PICTURE EDITING
FOR AN UNSTRUCTURED
REALITY PROGRAM

**Mohamed El Manasterly,
Curtis McConnell, Michael Brown,
Charles Little, ACE, and
additional editor Bryan Rowland**

Welcome to Wrexham
"Do or Die"

WELCOME

American Cinema Editors would like to welcome new ACE members:

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BEST ACTOR
PAUL GIAMATTI

WINNER

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DA'VINE JOY RANDOLPH

PRODUCERS GUILD OF
AMERICA AWARD

NOMINEE
BEST PICTURE

DARRYL F. ZANUCK AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING
PRODUCER OF THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURES

WINNER
BOSTON SOCIETY OF FILM CRITICS
BEST PICTURE

WINNER
DALLAS-F.T. WORTH FILM CRITICS ASSOC.
BEST PICTURE

The Holdovers

MIRAMAX
A HUB MEDIA GROUP / PARAMOUNT COMPANY



WRITTEN BY DAVID HEMINGSON

Sign up at FocusInsider.com for exclusive access to early screenings, film premieres and more. For more on this film, go to FocusFeaturesGuilds2023.com.

DIRECTED BY ALEXANDER PAYNE

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LIFE LESSONS

Life Lessons is a new column during which our veteran life members share their personal musings, views and recollections about their experiences in our business. This issue's column is written by Oscar winner and ACE Career Achievement Award recipient Richard Chew, ACE.

It was already dark and the shooting day was over when John Belushi corralled a bunch of us outside the main house at Jack Nicholson's rental villa. Belushi was hopping mad over some perceived slight by the producers. Standing in the driveway, still in his cowboy sheriff's wardrobe from the set, Belushi scratched a line with his boot across the dirt. He called on us to back him by stepping over the line to his side.

He was urging us, "Chew, you with me man? Carlos, how about you? Kathleen? Come on, don't play kiss ass with the producers!" Not knowing what set him off, none of us took a step. What's he steamed about? We were in the dark.

It was late August 1977 and we were in Durango, Mexico where Jack Nicholson was directing his second feature, *Goin' South*, a comedic Western set in the 1870s. Jack played the lead and surrounded himself with lots of fresh, young talent. Along with Belushi, known for his characters on *Saturday Night Live*, Jack tapped Mary Steenburgen, a theater actress, for his female lead, as well as Danny DeVito and Christopher Lloyd in smaller roles. Belushi and Lloyd played deputy sheriffs who were foes to Jack's character, a roguish, second-rate outlaw.

Off the set Belushi was mercurial, a teenager inside an adult body. Flouting the rules was part of his DNA. He would drive one of the producer's cars around town, despite a production rule prohibiting American cast or crew driving locally. One night returning to the hotel after a night of carousing, he set off all the fire extinguishers in his hallway.

He made it his mission to find locally produced intoxicants. One Sunday during an afternoon party at Jack's house, he pulled up in a producer's car he was prohibited from driving, and collared me in the driveway to show me his haul. From a paper bag he pulled out a quart-sized jar of bootleg mezcal he picked up from a gas station. A colorless, thick liquid, it looked harmless enough. He offered me the bottle. I took a swig that burned all the way down, making my eyes water.

Another time he showed me a bundle of cannabis he scored. This time he didn't offer me any, probably because he could see I was working at my KEM. Per Jack's wishes, my editing equipment – two interlocked KEMs, an editing bench with rewinds, film racks and bins – was set up in the foyer outside Jack's bedroom suite. My assistant editor Carlos Puente and I worked there six days a week.

Despite the unspoken rule that no visitors were allowed in Jack's house without his okay, on a different afternoon, a slightly ripped Belushi showed up unexpectedly, saying he had to see Jack, though he must have known Jack was still shooting on the set. None of us – the house domestic staff, Carlos nor I – interfered as he wobbled his way into Jack's bedroom. I called the production office to summon Harry Gittes, one of the producers.

A long 10 minutes later, Harry arrived and went into Jack's bedroom. "Aww, what the hell, John!" Harry came out and announced, "He's passed out on Jack's bed. He threw up all over the goddam floor!"

As shooting extended into late September, Belushi's commitment to *SNL* required him to commute from our location in Mexico to New York for his weekend appearances. Flying out Thursday, flying back Sunday, for weeks in a row. Then in late October after *Goin' South*, he was scheduled for another movie, *National Lampoon's Animal House*, to be shot in Oregon.

I'm guessing that this convergence of working with different casts, playing different characters in dissimilar environments, fermenting with inner demons, may have produced the despair and desperation of this moment outside Jack's house.

Memory is a deceptive map to the past. Sometimes our picture of it lingers long after the words fade away. What lingers now is the image of me standing in the driveway with a couple of the housekeepers, my assistant Carlos, Jack's cook Tim, and Jack's PA, Kathleen, all mystified by Belushi's mindset.

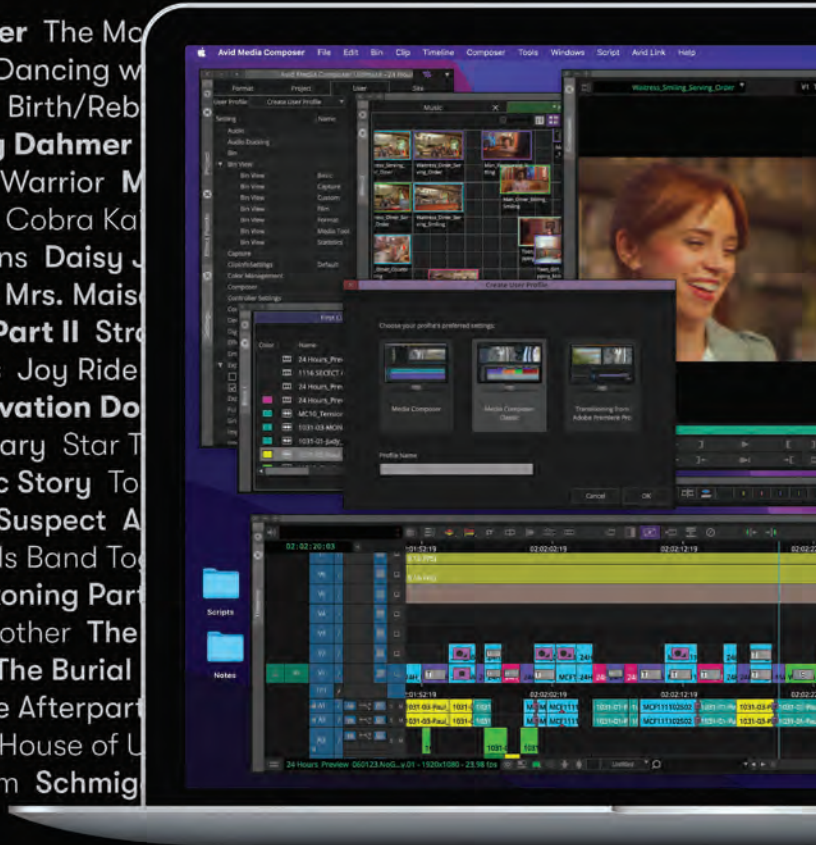
After almost 50 years, I don't recall the subject of his distress or words, but do picture myself standing and looking at Belushi in his Western costume, sympathetic to his anguish despite his past misbehavior. I walked over the line. I motioned for Carlos to come too. Slowly Tim and Kathleen followed. We wanted to boost Belushi even when he left us bewildered. **CE**

CONNECT COMMITTEE LUNCHEON



ACE's Connect Committee hosted a luncheon with Life Member Kaja Fehr, ACE, on Nov. 16 at Marino Ristorante. There was lots of laughter as Kaja shared some colorful stories of her life. There were also tears shed as she recounted growing up with her father, Rudi Fehr, who went from editor to executive before he and Kaja's mother died in a car accident. Kaja shared the special story of what it was like to work alongside her father and share in the Academy Award nomination for their work on *Prizzi's Honor* in 1986. In attendance were Susan Vaill, ACE; Chris Kirkpatrick, ACE; Peter B. Ellis, ACE; Natasha Gjurokovic, ACE; Sabrina Plisco, ACE and Jenni McCormick. Thank you to our generous sponsors Pacific Post and Marino Ristorante. Photo courtesy of Sabrina Plisco, ACE. **CE**

The Righteous Gemstones **Mythic Quest** **Chevalier** **The Mandalorian** **Only Murders in the Building** **Poker Face** **Creed III** **Dancing Queen** **The Crown** **Gran Turismo Sport** **Oppenheimer** **The Boys** **Birth/Rebirth** **Wednesday** **9-1-1** **Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story** **Barbie** **American Idol** **Call Me Kat** **American Ninja Warrior** **Masters of Sex** **The Amazing Race** **S.W.A.T.** **The Orville** **Fire Island** **Cobra Kai** **Air** **American Horror Story** **Ted Lasso** **Next Goal Wins** **Daisy Jones & the Six** **Prey** **The Last of Us** **100 Foot Wave** **The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel** **Jury Duty** **Deadliest Catch** **History of the World, Part II** **Stranger Things** **BEEF** **The Masked Singer** **Past Lives** **The Holdovers** **Joy Ride** **The Great British Baking Show** **Yellowjackets** **Reservation Dogs** **How I Met Your Father** **Night Court** **Abbott Elementary** **Star Trek: The Next Generation** **Queer Eye** **So Help Me Todd** **Weird: The Al Yankovic Story** **To Die for** **Better Call Saul** **Barry** **RuPaul's Drag Race** **Victim/Suspect** **American Horror Story** **Saltburn** **What We Do in the Shadows** **Survivor** **Trolls Band Together** **Vanderpump Rules** **Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One** **The White Lotus** **A Black Lady Sketch Show** **Big Brother** **The Contender** **Succession** **Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny** **The Burial** **Hijack** **One Piece** **Still: A Michael J. Fox Movie** **The Afterparty** **The Upshaws** **Moonage Daydream** **The Fall of the House of U.S.** **Nimona** **House of the Dragon** **Welcome to Wrexham** **Schmigadoon!**



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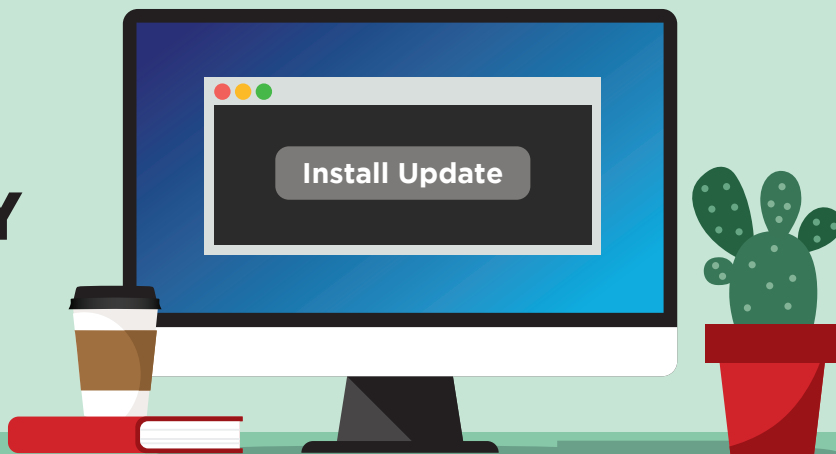


**POWERING
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SOME NEW SOFTWARE TO TRY

BY HARRY B. MILLER III, ACE

Jack: "Wendy ... You're distracting me."
- *The Shining*



You sit down at your computer with an urgent task to complete, fire up the necessary software but you get stopped by an onscreen message: "A New Version of XXXX is now available. Install Update?"

Arggg! Few things are as annoying as that message. I just wanted to do one simple but very important thing, but now I have to choose to get the update, go through all the various screen prompts to accept the new update, then 10 minutes later FINALLY take care of the original task. Wait, what was I going to do before that update distracted me?

If I don't get that update, who knows what woe and disaster would befall? Probably none. Probably the developer is just diligently maintaining her/his software as best as possible. But when you have around 171 applications (the current tally on my laptop) the chances are that every time you open one, you're likely to get stopped by Install Update.

Some apps can update automatically, such as the Microsoft 365 suite of apps. Those are pretty rare. Some apps constantly offer new versions. Browsers like Chrome and Vivaldi need to update seemingly every day, mostly for security reasons. But that has downsides. In September 2019, Chrome pushed out an automatic update that caused Macs with Media Composer installed to no longer boot up. And caused a great deal of heartburn among editors and assistants. And got me to turn off 'automatic update.'

There is a program I've come upon that simplifies the process of keeping your software up to date: MacUpdater.

MacUpdater is a program that scans your macOS Applications folder, compiles a list of the apps there, then compares that list with a database it maintains of versions of those same apps. If there is a newer version, it offers various options for updating (or not) to the latest version.

MacUpdater can be set to automatically update some apps. If set this way, it will go through the list of newer versions and update each one. For those automatic updates, you can store your computer login credentials so you don't have to type them in for every update. That is a little scary, as it could open your computer to a bad actor. Like Google Chrome...

Other apps, such as those purchased through the Apple App Store, can only be updated there. And some have to be manually updated. Avid Media Composer, for example, needs to be updated through the Avid Link app, or by going onto their website.

There are other options as well, which can be set for each program. Those include ignore the latest update, ignore for a set length of time or no longer update that app.

Another option is to have MacUpdater open automatically every day (or other time period you set), scan your applications, then update the new ones.



MacUpdater Window

The surprise for me was not only how many applications I had on my laptop, but how many needed an update. Out of 171 apps, 76 apps needed updating. Yikes! That's a lot. But many were outdated programs that were no longer needed or demo versions that weren't worth buying.

Noise Reduction Update: Clear

In the last tech article (*CinemaEditor* 2023 Q4) I reviewed four noise reduction plugins: Absentia, CrumplePop, iZotope RX and Waves Clarity. Turns out, there is an even better noise reduction plugin. It is called Clear. Made by Supertone, it retails for \$99. It has been on sale for \$69. As with the other plugins, Clear boasts that it uses AI. This plugin is so good, I think it actually might.

It is a very simple interface. There is one dial each for Ambience, Voice and Voice Reverb. Clear is attuned to the human voice, so it isn't merely filtering out ambient noise. It filters out everything that it thinks isn't a human voice. In my tests, I could lower the ambience to '0' and only human voices were audible. And there was less degradation of the voice compared to the other plugins tested.



Clear Interface

Doing the reverse was more interesting: Lowering the voice to '0' leaves all the air/movement, etc. from the recorded track, and removes any dialogue. It did leave a couple of breaths. This could be an easy way of creating fill/ambience for dialogue tracks.

I didn't find anything appropriate to try the Voice Reverb control. Reverb is rarely a problem I need to fix, though.

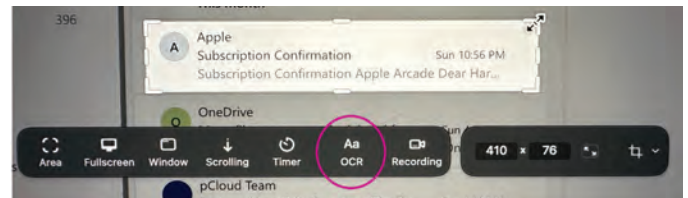
I would choose Clear over the other four plugins. Its results were very surprising.

CleanShot X

MacOS has a built in screenshot function where you can capture the entire screen, or select a portion to capture. CleanShot X adds a great deal more functionality.

As pictured at top right of page, CleanShot X can capture an area, a full screen, a window and a scrolling image, such as a web page.

It can also record video or a gif, which can include sound. Very useful for recording tutorials where you need to show mouse clicks and hear a narrator. Even more helpful, you can



CleanShot X

highlight a section of text and it will use optical character recognition (OCR) to put that text into your macOS clipboard, which can be then pasted into a document.

CleanShot X is an extremely useful tool, by greatly expanding the basic screenshot tools of macOS.

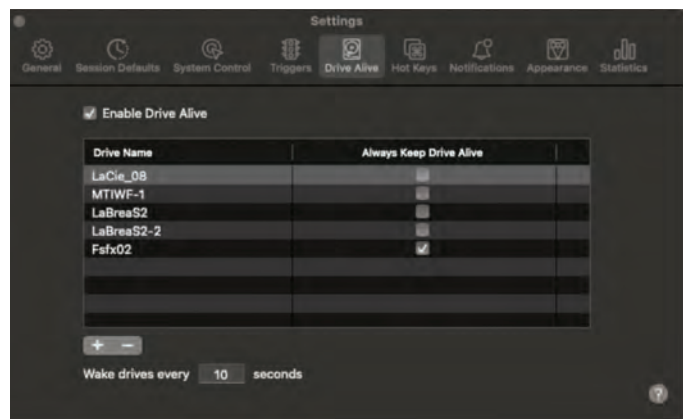
Amphetamine

If you have external drives attached to your Mac, you can find that accessing those drives at times to be slow. Mechanical hard drives have spinning discs. When not in use, the OS spins them down until more data is requested. But if you need to quickly access data you need to keep your drives from falling asleep. Amphetamine is the best answer I've found.

I am always accessing external mechanical (not SSD) drives where I store music and sound effects. Amphetamine allows me to specify those drives in settings and to send each drive a 'wake up' signal at regular intervals. This particular function is termed Drive Alive.

In this example, I've set only one drive to be kept awake, and it is sent a signal every 10 seconds to wake up.

You can also set up Sessions, or periods of time when Amphetamine is active. Mine is currently set to Indefinitely – I want that drive to stay awake! There are many other controls you can set, but this is the essential function of Amphetamine.



Amphetamine Settings Window

So, to keep from being distracted by random software updates, noisy dialogue, inferior screen shot tools or sleeping drives, you now have some solutions.

Now, what was I doing Wendy?

Fourth TEMPO General Assembly

Edgar Burcksen, ACE, NCE, reports on developments from international editors' federation TEMPO, for which Michelle Tesoro, ACE, has been named board chair



“I didn’t know what to expect and I didn’t know what they were doing,” Michelle Tesoro, ACE, says of her attendance at the fourth annual meeting of TEMPO on Nov. 10 at Den Danske Filmskole in Copenhagen. Tesoro – who talks about her work editing *Maestro* elsewhere in this issue – left the meeting as not only a board member but also elected Chair of the board.

For those who may not be familiar, TEMPO is a new and fast growing federation that connects associations of film editors from all over the world. Established in 2019, as a European organization, it currently has 35 members from North and South America, Africa, Europe, Asia and Oceania, thus connecting over 8000 film and TV editors worldwide.

At the same meeting, Job ter Burg, ACE, NCE – already a board member of TEMPO – was chosen as Vice Chair. When TEMPO co-founder and Chair Alex Berner, ACE, stepped down from his position on the board, ter Burg lobbied for Tesoro to replace him.

“I already knew Michelle very well from our Zoom meetings with the ACE International Relations Committee (IRC),”

ter Burg says. “I was very impressed with her organizational and coordinational skills. She can focus sharply on what needs to be done and how to best achieve it.”

Tesoro acknowledges that when she met all the editors from different countries, she was surprised how much they had in common. She says she was inspired by their enthusiasm and excitement to meet colleagues from Hollywood representing ACE and MPEG (Motion Picture Editors Guild).

Alan Heim, ACE, who is the president of MPEG, was also in Copenhagen representing the union. He said that his presence there is important because the union recognizes how international the media and entertainment business has become.

For me, having served on the ACE board and as Editor in Chief of *CinemaEditor*, I have long advocated the strengthening of ties with editors and editors’ organizations all around the world.

With Michael Ornstein, ACE, my then fellow co-chair at the IRC (Ornstein retired from this role and Tesoro is now co-chair), I have tried to find ways to educate the ACE membership of the importance of reaching out to our colleagues outside the United

States. This has become all the more important now that the streamers have established themselves globally.

It was Dody Dorn, ACE, who first alerted us to the existence of TEMPO while on a trip to the Edimotion Film Festival in Cologne, Germany a few years ago. Edimotion is the only film festival solely dedicated to the art of film editing. Dorn enthusiastically told us about the invigorating experience she had had in socializing with colleagues from other countries.

In 2022, ter Burg told me that both he and Berner were planning to expand the membership of TEMPO globally. Likewise, Ornstein and I decided that we needed to encourage ACE to join TEMPO and in 2022 the ACE board voted in favor of becoming a member of the organization. I was delighted to represent ACE in Cologne at the third General Assembly of TEMPO.

The fourth General Assembly was an in-person meeting in Copenhagen though the majority of the representatives attended virtually via Zoom. Both ter Burg and I were on Zoom when we saw Tesoro sitting next to Berner who was running the meeting. She told me that he wanted her to sit close to him so that she could look over his shoulder.

TEMPO is like “a start-up company,” according to Tesoro. “It is a very young organization with all the growing pains that come with it.”

There is no official office or paid employee. Berner basically runs it from his home with occasional help from the German editors’ organization BFS. Tesoro explains, “The TEMPO board is a group of full-time editors.

“We definitely need more sponsors because the membership fees of one Euro per member of the participating organizations per year will never cover the costs of running it. Right now, Netflix and Adobe are contributing but there’s a big potential that needs to be mined to get TEMPO to the next level.”

TEMPO also has various ‘task forces’ that operate similar to the ACE committees. One of the major ones is the task force that deals with editorial authorship and how that can be enforced (in credits and advertising, for example). The aim is to elevate the artistic and creative respect for editors among directors, producers and the general public. A side effect of this is the place of the editor in the creative hierarchy of film production and the distribution of residuals.

After this was discussed at the General Assembly, the meeting was dominated by debate about AI (TEMPO has a task force on this topic too). Generative AI has engulfed the whole industry especially since the writers and actors strikes in the U.S.

Everybody was incredibly interested in what Heim had to say about what MPEG was doing about the next wave of technical changes that will ripple through the industry. He disclosed that a lot of people in post-production were not aware of the dangers of AI and that MPEG had formed a task force that delivered three reports about AI.

One was for the MPEG Board of Directors, one for the picture editors and another for the sound editors. They had



It will enhance the prestige and respect for ACE around the world as a champion of the art of editing and as a leader of the best in the business.”


produced video illustrations for each report to show how things were evolving and the possible directions this could go in. Heim revealed that of all the genres of work that would be affected, comedy was pretty safe. I guess computers do not have a sense of humor.


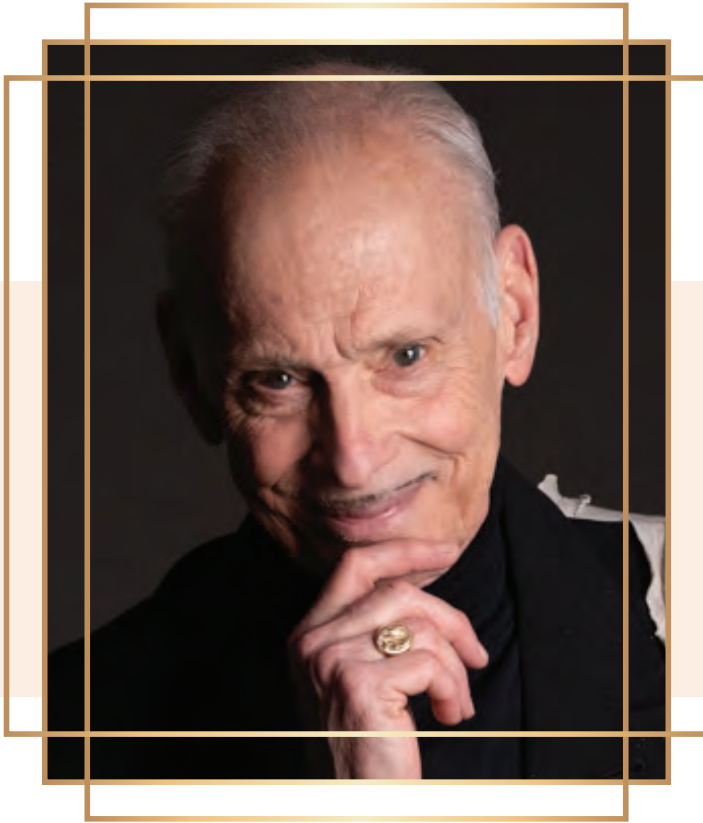
He made clear that the union is not against progress but they have to protect the jobs that will most certainly be affected by AI. Giving a personal perspective he says, “As a veteran editor, I’m glad that I don’t have to start my career now.”

When asked about the fact that Tesoro is going to lead TEMPO going forward, Heim tells me, “She’s a star, professionally and personally.”

Ter Burg will assist and help Tesoro to get going and familiarize her with all the different aspects of being the leader of this community of editors from around the world.

“She’s appreciated by all her colleagues and she’s one of the generation that is going to edit all the films we’re going to see in the next 15 years,” ter Burg says.

I asked Tesoro how she sees the future for TEMPO and the ACE IRC. She sees them as complementary. “Becoming the chair of TEMPO would invite ACE to become more part of the international community of editors as a whole. We can better promote the experienced and accomplished editors of foreign countries to become part of the ACE brand through the ACE-IP (International Partner) membership. It will enhance the prestige and respect for ACE around the world as a champion of the art of editing and as a leader of the best in the business.” 



JOHN WATERS

2024 GOLDEN EDDIE HONOREE

BY WALTER FERNANDEZ

He's been called many saucy sobriquets throughout the years. Filth Elder. Pope of Trash. Prince of Puke. Sultan of Sleaze. Baron of Bad Taste. While those capture some of the bawdy spirit of his work, they don't quite encapsulate the full impact that his movies had on counter-culture, pop culture, queer iconography, irreverent comedy and, well, Baltimore.

John Waters is a true American original. The baby boomer from Baltimore proved that edgy environments weren't exclusive to New York, San Francisco or New Orleans. His aesthetic was bold and his origins were humble. He was very much of his era, yet wholly ahead of his time. And it all began with a gift.

"My grandmother gave me a Brownie camera," he recalls. "I made all the early movies myself. I taught myself, really. I got thrown out of film school within a month. That wasn't their fault. I just didn't want to watch *Potemkin* over and over. I did, however, go to movies on 42nd street every day."

Waters particularly enjoyed the cinematic gimmickry of William Castle films and the underground movies of the early '60s from Warhol, Kenneth Anger and the Kuchar brothers.

He shot his first short, *Hag in a Black Leather Jacket*, in 1964. It centered on an interracial marriage officiated by a Ku Klux Klan member, had a budget of \$30 and was shot at his parents' house. Waters served as director, writer, editor, cameraman, gaffer, et al. It was screened once at a Baltimore coffee house and marked the first of many times he would work with his friend Mary Vivian Pearce.

Casting friends was a key component of his successful formula. They referred to themselves as the Dreamlanders after Dreamland Studios, Waters' production company. This tribe of

recurring cast and crew members added a raw authenticity to his early work that made it feel as though they only existed within the John Waters universe. People like Mink Stole, Pat Moran, Cookie Mueller, David Lochary, Edith Massey and, most notably, Harris Glenn Milstead became staples of his life and his work. It was Milstead's female persona, Divine, however, who would become Waters' cinematic muse.

She was a larger-than-life drag queen who was as crass as she was curvy. She made her debut in *Roman Candles*, Waters' sophomore short. A hodgepodge of sex, drugs and religious imagery, the short did not get much play, but a star was born.

It was around this time in 1967 where Waters' output was picking up steam and he was still wearing many hats. He explains, "The people that taught me were Teamster-types whom I would rent the equipment from. They would take [the equipment] from the TV stations without letting them know and rent it to me. They would teach me how to do it. Or, I would learn from the guy at Quality Film Labs in Baltimore."

As far as editing was concerned, Waters was somewhat clueless at first. He admits, "I didn't know there was editing. I thought what came out of the camera was the movie. And in this case, it was. It was very Dogma 95 and I didn't even realize it."

He even edited his first out and out feature, *Mondo Trasho*. A musical without any dialogue, it was shot on the John Hopkins University campus without permission. Perhaps it was the lack of authorization or the nude actor being filmed, but he and some of the cast members were arrested. He admits now that *Mondo Trasho* should have been a short but seems fine with how it all went down.

Multiple Maniacs followed in 1970 and the scale of Waters' movies was increasing. The movie is about a band of murderers and perverts posing as a traveling freakshow with Divine as their leader. It was clear that Milstead was down for anything, but would audiences feel that way?

Robert Shaye entered Waters' life during this time and would become one of the most important partnerships in his career. Shaye formed New Line Cinema in 1967 and was interested in packaging movies for college crowds. Waters remembers, "When I first went to his company, it had six people working on University Place in New York. They had *Reefer Madness* and a Godard movie. I sent them *Multiple Maniacs* and they said, 'Come back when you have something more commercial.'" That would be his next film.

Pink Flamingos starred Divine as Babs Johnson, the repugnant matriarch of a trailer park family. In a bizarre subversion of the keeping-up-with-the-Joneses mentality, Babs' title as the 'Filthiest Person Alive' is challenged by a couple of would-be usurpers. Dreamlanders Lochary and Stole play Raymond and Connie Marble, Babs' rivals in depravity. In the movie, Babs declares, "Kill everyone now. Condone first degree murder. Advocate cannibalism. Eat shit. Filth is my politics. Filth is my life."

Pink Flamingos was made thanks to a \$10,000 loan from Waters' parents (which was paid back). He purchased some set pieces like the trailer, and hired Vincent Peranio as art director and production designer. Peranio had previously worked with Waters on *Multiple Maniacs* so he knew what he was getting into. The Dreamlander cast worked very low budget and in the beginning did their own hair and makeup, but then makeup artist Van Smith stepped in and created the quintessential look that Divine is still known for to this day.

The movie premiered at the University of Baltimore in 1972. Soon after, it screened at a Boston theater usually dedicated to horror and gay porn. Exhibitor Ben Barenholtz picked up the film for his 'Midnight Movie' showings. Waters and Shaye



went to one of those screenings to film audience reactions upon leaving the theater. Those reactions would eventually be the trailer for the movie.

"Bob Shaye shot that trailer," explains Waters. "He just went back to the theater the next week after it became a hit and filmed people coming out stupefied. The trailer didn't show any of the scenes. You have to come in to see. I think Bob knew that I was a showman in a way and Bob was the first to mix exploitation films and art films together. I owe my career to Bob. He greenlit most of my movies."

Write-ups in *The Village Voice*, *Interview Magazine* and *The New York Times* gave Waters a level of visibility he had not seen before but Waters had no intention of cleaning up his act. For his next two features, *Female Trouble* and *Desperate Living*, he found editor Charles Roggero.

"I had to get a real editor this time," confides Waters. "I got all the equipment through a professor at University of Baltimore (UMBC). A lot of my assistants come from there. I think I paid for use of the kit that they were supposed to be using in school. Charlie was, I think, part of that class or people knew him. He had a Steenbeck in the basement of his parents' house. The crew was mostly students but he was older."

Waters continues, "I don't think we even had dailies then. I learned everything about editing from sitting down with him. I never really had any teachers except real life."

Regarding whether Roggero understood the director's style, Waters exclaims, "I don't know that he did at first. Charlie was not a wild bohemian type at all. But he soon took the plunge. He got me the song 'Female Trouble.' He had a friend that had another recording of it and we made the deal. We could use the music and I wrote the lyrics."

By the 1980s, Waters had cemented his cult status even though he dipped into the mainstream quite often with interviews on Letterman and bit parts in films like *Something Wild*.



“My films always did the very best in the richest, smartest neighborhoods and in the worst ones with real grindhouses,” shares Waters. “Mine were ironic exploitation movies.”

Pink Flamingos, *Female Trouble* and *Desperate Living* were collectively known as his Trash Trilogy. After *Polyester* (also edited by Roggero), which reinvigorated Tab Hunter’s acting career, Waters shocked even himself with his next film.

Hairspray marked his most commercial endeavor to date. He hadn’t intentionally written and directed a family-friendly movie but the PG rating was right there. So was *Divine*. *Hairspray* was a critical and commercial success. It was screened at film festivals around the world, and was even a nominee for the Grand Jury Prize at the 1988 Sundance Film Festival. The story of zaftig sweetheart Tracy Turnblad and her quest to make it as a regular on a local dance program in 1962 Baltimore had critics and audiences smitten. The movie introduced Ricki Lake and included Debbie Harry, Sonny Bono, Ruth Brown and Jerry Stiller. *Divine* played Tracy’s mom. Waters jokes, “*Divine* started her career playing a psychotic and ended playing a loving mother.”

Divine passed unexpectedly in 1988 shortly after the release of *Hairspray*. Perhaps the grim specter of death kept some audiences away, but many felt *Hairspray* should have been an



even bigger hit than it was. Gone was Waters’ muse and all the coarse beauty that she brought to his movies. His editing partnership changed as well.

Janice Hampton, who later became an ACE member, came in to edit *Hairspray* with Roggero. It would be Roggero’s last collab with Waters. “We were in Hollywood and suddenly we were into a new phase,” Waters recalls. “Janice and I were really in the trenches a lot. I’m still great friends with her. She was probably introduced to me through [producer] Rachel Talalay, but I don’t remember. We got along well from the beginning.”

Waters delighted fans in the ’90s with *Cry-Baby* and *Serial Mom*. Both were set in Baltimore and were sprinkled with Dreamlanders. Regarding *Serial Mom*, he divulges, “I don’t want to name any of the executives, but when we screened it at the Directors Guild, the audience loved it, and the executives hated it. I think it’s my best movie, and it’s very loved today, but it was not a hit when it came out despite opening widely. So, the studio were right from their viewpoint. They don’t care if something goes down in history as a good movie. They want it to make money that week. I understand that. Hollywood treated me fairly. Every time when I would go in to pitch a movie, I would bring an ad campaign. I know we have to sell it.”

John Waters the actor was a welcome addition to many a show. In 1997, he lent his voice to *The Simpsons* for the episode “Homer’s Phobia” which played into the zeitgeist of discussing gay characters on TV.

In 2002, *Hairspray* was given new life as a Broadway musical. Waters gave his blessing for the adaptation and Marc Shaiman wrote the music, and Scott Wittman, the lyrics. The show won various Tony and Drama Desk awards including Best Musical. A film adaptation of the musical followed in 2007 starring John Travolta in the role *Divine* immortalized. It was a box office smash and revived interest in Waters’ work.

Pecker (which he refers to as his “nice film”) from 1998, *Cecil B. Demented* (2000) and *A Dirty Shame* (2004) were his last features. The latter garnered an NC-17 rating, proving Waters had not lost his edge. Both were edited by Jeffrey Wolf, who later became an ACE member. Waters shares,



“I loved working with Jeff. I’m really still friends with all the editors I’ve worked with because you do go through a lot of drama with them. They have to be on your side, but pretend to be on the distributor’s side. It always gets down to these test screenings where they really try to make everyone like it, which is impossible. If that was true, every movie would be a hit. You have to learn how to deal with all that, so I think an editor’s loyalty is very important.

“They also have to know how to negotiate because it usually can come down to you and the editor,” he continues. “Sometimes you get good notes and sometimes you get really bad ones. You have to be able to negotiate your way through them. I never put out a movie I didn’t want to put out after all you go through. I give a lot of credit to my editors for that.”

Waters hasn’t been sitting on his hands these past 20 years. “I didn’t take a break on purpose,” he exclaims. “I’ve written five movies that were developed by studios. Four were different sequels/TV shows of *Hairspray*. Another one was *Fruitcake*, my children’s Christmas movie, that could still happen. I’ve been paid to write and develop five movies since *A Dirty Shame*.”


He appeared in various cameos and featured roles in TV shows like *The Blacklist*, *My Name is Earl*, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Law & Order: SVU*. He’s also written several books




including *Carsick: John Waters Hitchhikes Across America*; and his first fiction novel *Liarmouth: A Feel-Bad Romance* published in 2022, which may evolve into a feature.

On being selected to receive the Golden Eddie, Waters confesses, “I thought it was ironic since I didn’t know what editing was when I made my first movie, but I was incredibly flattered by it. I must have done something right. They’re all still playing. My favorite thing that happened was *Pink Flamingos* was shown uncut on Turner Classics. The program description just read, ‘Fat woman lives in trailer.’” He laughs, “That is the best thing that has ever been written about me.

“It’s astonishing how easy it is to see my most hideous movies,” he adds. “*Pink Flamingos* was named to the National Registry as a great American movie. So was *Hairspray*. I feel just really proud and really delighted and just glad I lived to see this. Getting the ACE award is great because I eventually did learn about editing, I even edit myself when I talk. Editing is so important. Everybody should edit their life and make it better.”

In 2023, he received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and had an exhibition of his work open at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures called “John Waters: Pope of Trash.” That title was given to him by legendary Beat writer William S. Burroughs. Waters shares, “They did a great job on the exhibit. I guess they want a new diversity. A lot of boxes get checked when I come in, even though I’m a white man. I always say, if anything, I made trash 1% more respectable. Which is an accomplishment. I’m proud of it.” 



KATE
AMEND, ACE

2024 ACE CAREER
ACHIEVEMENT HONOREE

BY WALTER FERNANDEZ

Rarely have activism and artistry been interlaced with such vigor and compassion than in Kate Amend's, ACE, body of work. Her filmography includes a roster of searing portraits (*Beah: A Black Woman Speaks*, directed by LisaGay Hamilton), issue-centered examinations (*The Case Against 8*), and shocking crimes (*The Keepers*). Whether it's diving into a subculture or confronting injustice, Amend revels in non-fiction filmmaking and all its inventive challenges. She has even extended her skills into academia as an adjunct professor at the University of Southern California. Yet, the prolific editor may have remained a humble teacher in the Bay Area had it not been for a documentary that lit a fire in her soul.

Amend confesses, "I didn't even know about editing or filmmaking. I got a master's in humanities around the time that the women's movement was happening. There were a lot of women filmmakers making feminist films; really strong films. I was teaching humanities at City College of San Francisco, and I used a lot of documentaries [in my lesson plan]. I learned to appreciate documentaries and documentary filmmakers. A friend and I had an idea for a documentary film, but neither one of us knew how to do that. City College had a film program, so I enrolled in some basic film classes. My love of filmmaking developed from there."

MEETING JUDY CHICAGO

The big turning point for Amend was viewing the 1974 documentary *Womanhouse*. The film chronicled one of the most important feminist cultural events of the decade – the 1972 *Womanhouse* art installation held in Los Angeles.

Womanhouse opened as part of the first Feminist Art Program at CalArts. Judy Chicago, with her co-educator artist Miriam Schapiro, worked with a group of students and local artists to transform a dilapidated house into a setting for a series of imaginative installations. During its month-long run, over 10,000 visitors came to see the exhibition, which later captured a global audience through filmmaker Johanna Demetrakas' documentary on the project.

The documentary was also a transformative event for Amend's career. "I heard Judy speak at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1978, and I thought, 'If she ever does another collaborative project, I'd love to be involved.' Then, she announced that she was doing something called *The Dinner Party*, and Johanna Demetrakas was making a documentary about it."

The Dinner Party is a large art installation that documents the history of women in Western civilization. It's now permanently housed at the Brooklyn Museum.

"Judy said that she was accepting working with volunteers. It was something that was just so exciting to me that I literally quit my teaching job, packed up, moved to L.A., and volunteered as a researcher on *The Dinner Party*."

She continues, "I became totally immersed in *The Dinner Party*, but also, I had to get a job. A friend got me an assistant sound editing position at a big post house in Hollywood. Those were the days when we were still working in 35mm. I was syncing dailies or helping build soundtracks. That was my first film job."

She ultimately achieved her goal of working as assistant picture editor to director Demetrakas on the film, *Right Out of*

History: *The Making of Judy Chicago's Dinner Party*. Released in 1980 it marked Amend's first editing credit.

BREAKTHROUGH CREDIT

Her breakthrough would be Henry Jaglom's *Sitting Ducks*, for which Amend was editor Joanne D'Antonio's assistant editor. However, she was still trying to make a name for herself. Amend explains, "The first feature length film I cut was something that I did totally on spec. It was a film about women bodybuilders [*Women of Iron*]. I lived in New York for three or four months to work on it. With that, I now had a reel of my work to show and I was able to get work as a picture editor. I've never looked back."

Amend's decision to stick with documentary was a conscious one. "I've done a couple of low-budget fiction films, but I always preferred the creativity involved in documentary. You're working with all the elements. You're writing, you're composing, choreographing. It's so creative. I always joke, 'Having a script is cheating.' The flexibility to move things around and to change the structure. I find it a very stimulating and challenging process."

Despite her penchant for serious subject matter, it's the people behind that camera with her that dictate where Amend will devote her time. She explains, "I choose a film based on the director, the person I'd be working with most, more than the subject matter because it's such a collaborative process." One of these early collaborators was writer-director Mark Jonathan Harris.

"I met him on a job I was doing as an assistant editor on a film that Johanna was editing," recalls Amend. "Mark was the writer and I was the assistant. It was back in the days of working in film. I'd be in the room with the editor and the director all the time, so I got to know Mark very well. A few years later, he was asked to direct a film called *The Long Way Home* which depicts the plight of Jewish refugees after World War II. By then I had established myself as a feature documentary editor, so he asked me to cut that. It was a really compelling film to work on."

It won the 1998 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature and pushed Amend and Harris into the front ranks of documentary filmmaking. "[Producer] Deborah Oppenheimer saw Mark and me on a panel about *The Long Way Home* and approached us separately about working on *Into the Arms*



of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport. We didn't know if we could immerse ourselves again in another film about the Holocaust, but the story was so compelling and Deborah was very convincing. The fact that it was partially her mother's story meant that she had a very personal connection to the Kindertransport, so Mark and I both came on board."

OSCAR WINNING WORK

Amend remembers fondly, "I loved working on that film. It had a different kind of challenge because there was no footage of the Kindertransport. I think there was maybe one newsreel story and that was it. The visuals were whatever photographs the people might have taken with them and saved all these years. We mixed it at Skywalker Ranch with sound designer Gary Rydstrom. Deborah and Mark build such trust with the people that they're working with. Mark is such a good interviewer and good listener. People open up [to him] and the interviews were really beautifully done. Heartfelt and powerful."

This film would also go on to win the Oscar for Best Documentary Feature and garnered Amend an Eddie for Best Edited Documentary Film in 2001. She shares, "When they got the Oscar, I was in the audience. That was very cool. Mark thanked me. I came home to about 15 messages on my answering machine."

By this time, editing was undergoing its digital transition. "I'd mostly worked in 16mm," details Amend. "I have my own flatbed and my own cutting room at home. The thing about the digital revolution is that there was this nightmare period in



between where we were cutting on tape. I hated that. Cutting on three-quarter tape to tape was just clumsy, inelegant and time-consuming. You didn't want to make any wrong cuts because then you'd lose generations and your image would get worse and worse."

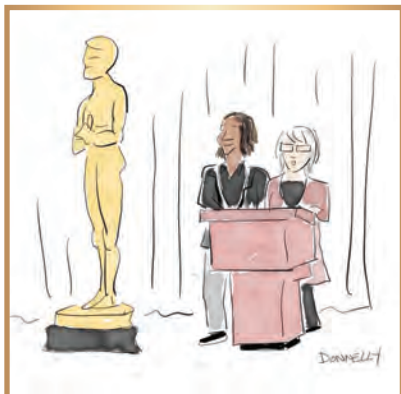
As for editing software, Amend's tone takes a noticeable shift. She asserts, "My first experience with non-linear was a revelation. I loved it so much because it was such a relief not to be cutting on tape. It took me a while to learn and I went through several systems including Lightworks. Christo Brock, who was my wonderful assistant on *The Long Way Home*, taught me Avid.

"My assistant editors have been really strong support systems for me," she adds. "I like to involve them and make them feel like they're part of the creative process. I get a lot of insight and help from them all. There are a few others who are working quite successfully now, like Alicia Dwyer, Monique Zavistovski, ACE, Susan Metzger and Helen Kearns, ACE. They're very strong."

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Kearns was assisting Amend when she started her very successful collaboration with director Ryan White and producer Jessica Hargrave. "Sheila Nevins at HBO introduced me to Ryan and Jessica," says Amend. "We've had an incredible time working together."

In 2014 they made *The Case Against 8* about California's controversial Proposition 8, which sought to define marriage as being between a male and a female in the eyes of the state



government. The passing of Prop 8 reversed a California Supreme Court decision to permit same-sex marriages earlier in 2008. The documentary follows a group of people for nearly five years as they take their case to the highest court in the land.

When editing began no one knew what the outcome of the case would be. Amend remembers, "They didn't start editing until after the case had been brought before the U.S. Supreme Court, but it hadn't been resolved yet. That decision came out three or four months later." In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and same-sex marriage was given the same distinction as opposite sex marriages. The HBO documentary which premiered at Sundance, scored Amend an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Picture Editing for Nonfiction Programming.

The creative tribe behind *8* went on to work on a biographical documentary about Serena Williams and the TV docuseries *The Keepers* and *Visible: Out on Television*.

"Ryan and I discovered we both love tennis. In the cutting room, we sometimes have to take a break to watch the U.S. Open or Wimbledon. So, the Serena job was just a no-brainer. We were definitely going to do that together. All the time that we were working on these films, he and Jessica were following *The Keepers* story. It just kept evolving and they thought they were making a feature and then it became obvious that it was much bigger than that. When Netflix got involved it became a series."

The Keepers chronicles the brutal and suspicious 1969 murder of Sister Cathy Cesnik that remains unsolved to this day. Interviews with former students and Baltimore residents detailed

that shock and potential cover-up of the murder. The series received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Documentary or Nonfiction Series in 2017.

Amend has shown no signs of slowing down despite some 45 years of filmmaking. In addition to working on several projects at once, she's also a professor of editing teaching at the USC School of Cinematic Arts.

"I teach advanced documentary production and it's team-taught by five professors. I think one of the crucial things about this class, but also the way we all try to teach, is the collaboration. It's really important for everyone to be part of the process and feel like they own the film."

CUT FROM THE GUT

Not only does Amend know the joys of many successful film partnerships, she's also familiar with a negative work environment. She divulges, "The worst insult I ever received from a producer was that I was a pair of hands. I wasn't in the room. Somebody overheard it and told me. I really want all editors to feel part of the process, and for directors to listen to them and take them seriously."

She also stresses the benefit of watching dailies with the director and laments this happens less often than it used to. "I always loved that process of sitting with the director and just watching. I'd advise any aspiring editor to watch as much as you can or watch significant selects together with your director so that you can get each other's take on things. Part of watching dailies is having fresh eyes and responding. Be aware of your reactions.



What moves you? I've been known to cry watching dailies or even laugh. It's about emotion and about the heart. I say what most editors say, 'Cut from the gut.'"

In an interview during the 2011 Vancouver Film Festival she expressed a preference for being left alone when cutting: "I do my best work when no one else is in the room because it is such an internal process. A lot of it has to do with rhythm and timing and pacing. I think those are all extremely important, and I can only feel those when I'm by myself with the material."

Her latest project may be her biggest and most personal to date. From her humble beginnings as a volunteer on *The Dinner Party* she is in the process of co-directing and editing a documentary on the life and work of Judy Chicago. "It's been an incredible experience," shares Amend. "I've had a deep commitment and friendship with Judy over the years. We're trying to get 60 years of a person's life into a feature instead of a series. That's a challenge, but we got to do it."

If you're lucky enough to have seen Kate Amend's work, you'll know how invested you become once you start watching. It could be one of the episodes of *American Experience* or the 2023 feature doc *Peter Case: A Million Miles Away* about the singer-songwriter, one of the short films she worked on with frequent collaborator Christine Fugate, or any of the compelling works in her oeuvre. She cares deeply about the subject matter and works hard to craft delicate, respectful representations.

She says, "I wanted to work on films that made a difference, that contributed to change. Work that is intended to teach and inspire." Amend has more than fulfilled that mission. **CE**



WALTER MURCH, ACE

2024 ACE CAREER
ACHIEVEMENT HONOREE

BY BOBBIE O'STEEN

Walter Murch, ACE, has aptly described himself as “a filmmaker, sound designer and ceaseless student of cinema,” but his full essence and impact cannot be contained within those designations. His body of work as a sound ‘wizard’ and film editor, along with his lucid and eloquent writings and lectures have enriched us immeasurably. He is a kind of lab scientist studying modes of perception. He is also a lover of the arts, making the most unexpected connections among many disciplines. Most of all, Murch is an intrepid explorer, always trying to understand and explain the alchemy of filmmaking.

Murch’s exploration of sound started when he was a boy growing up in New York’s Morningside Heights, after he convinced his parents to buy the family a tape recorder. While his artist father used the dining room as his studio, Murch created his own workshop in his bedroom, experimenting with his new treasure: “You could cut the tape, paste the tape in different positions, turn the tape upside down, flip it over and play the sound through the back.” While studying art and literature in Paris as a junior at John Hopkins University he discovered another passion: cinema, at the height of the French New Wave movement. During that period, a friend offered him a motorcycle, which he had to retrieve from a nursing student in England named Aggie. He “instantly fell in love with her and wound up with the motorcycle and the girl.” They have been happily married for 58 years.

More serendipitous events soon followed. On a fellowship at USC’s graduate film program, he met George Lucas, and they both ended up competing for an internship program at Warner Bros.

In the moments before they went in to have their final hearing, they made a kind of Tom Sawyer/Huck Finn pact: If something good happens as a result, whoever gets it will turn around and help the other one. When Lucas won and met Francis Ford Coppola at Warner Bros., he came through on that promise, telling Murch that not only did Coppola want somebody to do the sound effects and mix on his film *The Rain People*, but that they were all going to move to San Francisco and start a new film company.

That company would be American Zoetrope. Free from the rigid hierarchies of the studio system at that time and inspired by foreign films, they planned to break the rules on how films were made. Murch became a “one man band” for all matters relating to sound and much of his pioneering work laid the foundation for how sound is crafted on films to this day. Zoetrope’s first production was *THX 1138* (1971), based on a student film Murch and Matthew Robbins had written, which George Lucas directed, about a subterranean future world, perfect subject matter for Murch to experiment with.

On Coppola’s *The Godfather* (1972) Murch’s sound innovations had a profound effect. For instance, in the climactic scene where Michael (Al Pacino) is tasked with killing Sollozzo and McCluskey in a Bronx restaurant, Murch had the idea to use the offscreen sound of elevated trains to convey the tremendous anxiety inside Michael’s head, starting with a rumbling pulse and escalating with the metallic screeching of the wheels until that moment when Michael suddenly decides to act and shoots both men. “Sound effects are like people who can travel around the world without any passports,” Murch says, “which gives you more freedom, of course, to play with

people’s imaginations.” He certainly did – and contributed to an indelible moment in cinema history.

For Lucas’ film *American Graffiti* (1973), Murch had a new challenge. For the screenplay, Lucas wrote scenes that were each based on 42 different songs. Verna Fields, their former USC teacher and the film’s co-editor said, “Walter, you’ve got to convince George to drop this idea of having all this music in the film. People are going to want to reach out and turn that music off.”

Murch needed to find a way to keep the wall-to-wall song lyrics from competing with the dialogue. First, he and Lucas recorded a radio program with the DJ and music, then re-recorded it again from various distances and directions in Lucas’ Marin County backyard. At the final mix, Murch effectively removed the sharp edges from the lyrics in relation to the dialogue’s defined words by manipulating the recordings and, overall, controlling the depth of field of the sound. Murch called this method ‘worldizing,’ “taking a sound and exposing it to the acoustics of the world.” He would continue to not only use this method, but find creative solutions as a re-recording mixer on many films.

Murch again explored new territory on Coppola’s *The Conversation* (1974), about a sound surveillance expert Harry Caul (played by Gene Hackman). “Coppola said, ‘Walter, you work in sound, you’re kind of like this character. Why don’t you edit the picture?’” Murch remembered in an interview for website *Web of Stories*. Although he had edited commercials and educational films before, this would be his first time editing a



feature. The film ended up being a haunting, meditative thriller, which garnered him an Oscar nomination for sound and BAFTA wins for sound and editing (shared credits), the first of many dual accolades Murch would receive.

One of the challenges on this film was unraveling the mystery from Caul’s singular point of view, and during the long hours Murch spent problem solving he also, characteristically, analyzed his choices as a novice editor. What he found was that over and over again, when he made the mark on the film to cut, within a few frames of that cut, Hackman would blink.

Soon after that discovery, he came upon a newspaper article about director John Huston. In a *Web of Stories* video interview, Murch relates that Huston told *The Christian Science Monitor* something to the effect of, “Look at me, now look at that lamp, now you’re looking at the lamp and now look at me again. Do you see what you did? In that process you blinked. That’s what the cut is. The cut is a blink between two focuses of attention.” ... [That made me think,] that also must be happening internally within the minds of the audience.” Murch would later write about this epiphany and, overall, deconstruct why cuts work from a practical, aesthetic and philosophical perspective in his book *In the Blink of an Eye* (1991) – which became a gold standard of editing theory.

On Zoetrope’s wildly ambitious *Apocalypse Now* (1979) Murch would again play a dual role in film editing and sound work. At one point during this years-long production Coppola told Murch he wanted four-track sound, which used four surrounding



stereo speakers. Murch explained that dialogue needed to have its own “central spine, a direct projection of sound from behind the screen: a fifth speaker.” Coppola also wanted the audience to feel the explosions, not just hear them and have frequencies down below the audible frequency range. They ended up, after partnering with Dolby, pioneering the use of the 5.1 format, which was invented for that film.

When Coppola asked Murch what his credit should be he decided – since he was decorating the three-dimensional space of the theater with sound, as a production designer decorates the space of the set – that he be called “sound designer.” Another first. Once again, he would receive double honors: an Oscar win for sound, BAFTA nominations for editing and sound, and an Eddie nomination (with multiple editors).

Murch would continue editing and shaping sound for many different directors, such as Philip Kaufman, Fred Zinnemann, Jerry Zucker, Kathryn Bigelow – and Anthony Minghella, with whom he shared a beautiful collaboration on three films, the first of which was *The English Patient* (1996). Murch would be the only person in history to receive Oscars for both editing and sound. He also collected an Eddie win for this wondrous, epic love story; it was also the first time a digitally edited film had won these editing awards.

At this point, 22 years into his journey as a feature editor, Murch had firmly established his cutting room set up. It was also quite unique, revealing how he fully explored the potential of the footage. He was surrounded by hundreds of stills that he captured from the footage, and when he scanned the images, he

would often find “chance juxtapositions to spark something.” A wall of scene cards were also on display, each color conveying an emotional ‘temperature,’ and their size and shape suggesting the scene’s role and importance.

Eddie Ichioka, ACE – then his assistant on *The English Patient*, who would later decide to make an illuminating documentary about Murch – says, “His notes on dailies could be: ‘She looks like a banana in this.’ Well, what does that mean? This is a man who speaks in the most lucid and flowery speech, but his notes are quite the opposite. He’s expressing himself with the most unvarnished emotions, as if he’s reacting with the fresh eyes of an audience.” Ichioka describes going in the cutting room, often finding that Murch’s eyes were closed, and “he’s clearly playing something in his head.”

He was also, back in the mid-‘80s, the first editor to stand while editing at a flatbed, so he had to lift a 600-pound KEM up on a platform he built from plywood boxes. He felt the necessity to experience what he calls “a kinesthetic thing, the whole body gets involved in the rhythms of the film.” Everything in service of finding, as Ichioka describes it, those “accidental collisions. That is his secret sauce.”

The ‘laboratory’ calm of Murch’s cutting room turned out to be quite a contrast to his somewhat overwhelming experience of directing for the first time on the very ambitious *Return to Oz* (1985). Murch uses wonderfully surreal metaphors to describe this new challenge: Despite all the preparations, he shows up on set, “the door opens up and on the other side of that door, there are



five acrobats in clown costumes. ‘Surprise!’ They throw hundreds of ping pong balls at you, and your job as director is to catch all these balls [whose colors reveal a range of outcomes: from surprisingly successful to disastrous] before they hit the ground.”

The film’s box office ended up being disappointing, but Murch very openly talks about this and, generally, the vagaries of the business. “You can never predict when you launch a film into the world, what its reception is going to be and how is that going to affect your life.”

The most recent case in point: the last film Murch edited and also co-wrote, *Coup 53* (2019), a documentary about the American and British government-backed coup that brought down Iran’s democratic leader in 1953. The British never admitted to their role. While researching the film Murch and director Taghi Amirani made a stunning discovery: a transcript of an explosive interview with an MI6 operative who ran the coup, which was recorded but never used for a 1980s British TV documentary. Once again, Murch used colored cards and images to explore and find structure for that interview and interweave the many narrative threads.


What followed was a series of stomach-churning ups and downs. The film premiered to much acclaim at Telluride and got what he said were “the best reviews I’ve ever gotten on a film.” But a month after their VOD release of the film, they were hit with the threat of a defamation lawsuit for using that British spy’s interview. The threatened lawsuit was eventually dismissed as groundless, but it ultimately prevented them from

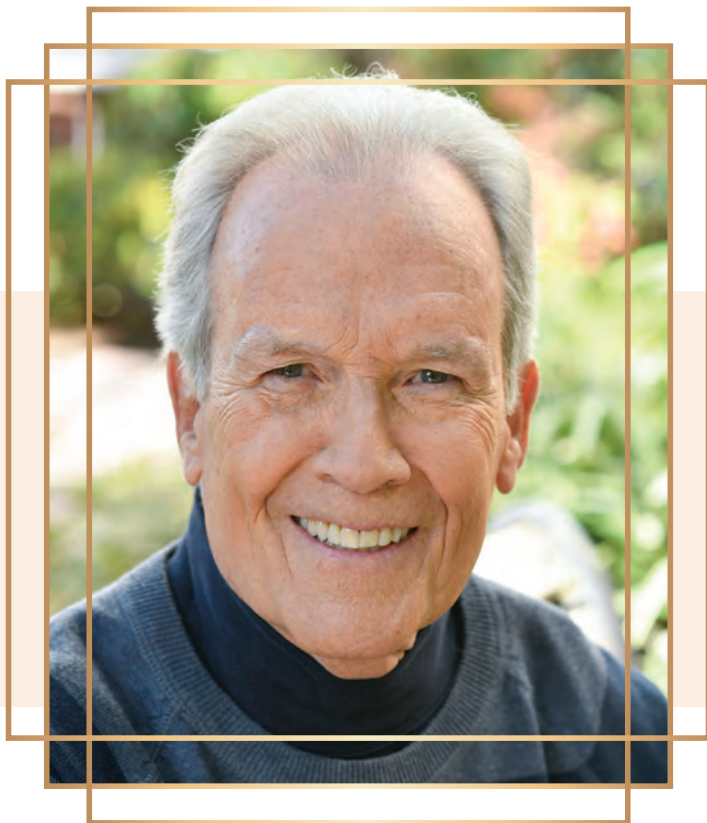


getting a proper release. “The wonderful part is, the film is the film that we wanted to make.” It is available through online distribution and the ever-hopeful Murch is also planning, in his own meta way, to make a documentary about the making of that documentary.

Murch recently completed an inspiring new book, *Suddenly Something Clicked*, which will be published later this year and “covers more topics than *Blink*, is longer, more speculative, looking back at the last six decades of my life, of my love affair with cinema and wondering about the future of the medium.”

In his upcoming book, Murch writes about his adventures in technology: “It has been a fascinating privilege to work in cinema during this revolutionary transition, and to have those 58 years split almost equally between analogue and digital.” He goes on to write that he never stops re-examining his work: “Rules are useful, but they should be broken at the right moment. So in this book I am going to break my own rules and be specific about my stylistic do’s and don’ts.” He also continues to contemplate the elusive magic of editing and cinema.

True to form, Murch used a compelling metaphor to communicate those mysteries, describing filmmakers as “sailors on the sea of cinema ... each film worth making is a voyage of discovery, with hidden reefs, shifting shorelines and monsters to frighten us. The hopeful prize is the discovery of new cinematic continents – even hemispheres – which make the risk of sailing uncharted seas worthwhile.” And Murch’s audiences are forever grateful that he continues to be our enlightened navigator. 



STEPHEN LOVEJOY, ACE

2024 ACE HERITAGE
AWARD HONOREE

BY WALTER FERNANDEZ

The Heritage Award isn't bestowed every year so when American Cinema Editors decides to add this recognition to its annual Eddie Awards roster, you know the recipient is someone of high regard. Stephen Lovejoy, ACE, is poised to receive the honor this year "in recognition of his unwavering commitment to advancing the image of the film editor, cultivating respect for the editing profession, and tireless dedication to the American Cinema Editors." Throughout his five decades in the industry, Lovejoy carved out a successful career in features, episodic television and TV movies. He also sought to give back to the profession he cares so deeply about and started teaching the next generation of editors. Additionally, he served 23 years on the ACE Board, including 5 years as treasurer.

Despite his Hollywood pedigree, it was a random request from an acquaintance in college that would redirect him to filmmaking. Lovejoy recalls, "My dad was an actor named Frank Lovejoy. He died when I was 17. He had a heart attack while on the road in New York. He was a really, really good guy. I absolutely adored him. Don't get me wrong, he didn't walk on water – but there are many things that I learned from him and took forward."

"He treated everybody the same no matter who they were or what they could do for him." Frank Lovejoy is best remembered for his scene-stealing work in the creepy *House of Wax*, the moody *In a Lonely Place* and the culty *The Hitch-Hiker*.

Stephen Lovejoy attended Loyola University (now Loyola Marymount) in Los Angeles where he found an affinity for philosophy, which would become his major. The teen angst that preceded his father's death and the grief that followed really put

Lovejoy to the test, and learning about the nature of existence became a source of comfort and strength. By the time he was in his senior year, his grades were good, he was in love and life was much better than it was at the start.

Lovejoy was never one for the fraternity life in college, so it came as a surprise when he was approached by a fraternity to help with a project. They asked him to shoot a little movie for a Loyola carnival booth.

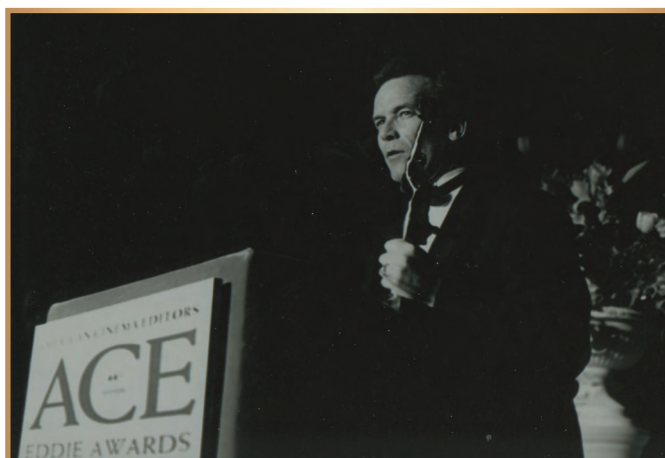
They reasoned that since Stephen's father was an actor, Stephen must know how to make movies. Still Stephen accepted. "[The university] didn't have a film department, but they had a 16-millimeter camera. So I teamed up with my friend Robert Perry and we made the film. What I learned from the experience was that I knew more than I thought I knew. It was strictly instinctual." Later, that movie, *Examination*, ran on television during halftime of the first (1967) Super Bowl. "They ran this little movie and had us on discussing it."

After finishing school, he was introduced to Lew Wasserman. "I got married young and [my then wife's] family had some connections, got me an interview with Lew and he was just so nice." With the exec's support, Lovejoy landed an apprentice job at Universal Studios. "In those days, you were an apprentice for four years, and then you became an assistant for four years. Then, you became an editor. That's how it worked. As an apprentice I schlepped film around to screening rooms and everything. I loved it. I'd sit there at the window and watch the dailies, and it was like, I'm home."

Not even one month had gone by before a chance encounter with an acquaintance teed up Lovejoy for greatness. He met

Gordan Eckhart, an assistant on 1969's *Winning*, which starred Robert Wagner and Paul Newman, and was invited to drop by editor Ed Biery's cutting room. "Paul [Newman] was getting ready to go do another movie. He wanted to see the assembly of the Indianapolis 500 race, which was in this movie. So, they brought on two more editors, another assistant, and they needed an apprentice. Biery said, 'Get that Love kid that's been running around here.' So, in a very short amount of time, I'm the apprentice on the biggest movie at the studio. Then, within three weeks, all the assistants were gone, because they wanted to go on to other projects. They moved me to assistant, which was unheard of. They had to, because to do the job I was doing, I had to be an assistant," explains Lovejoy.

He gushes, "The gods must have been smiling upon me because Ed Biery was really kind. He was into metaphysics. I was into philosophy, so we had this kind of thing where we would talk in the same sphere. He taught me everything I know about editing to begin with. I was a quick learner. After I'd been doing my job well for a while, he gave me a 20- or 25-second scene. 'Here, cut this, let me see what you can do.'



It usually doesn't happen that fast. This was on a show called *Marcus Welby, M.D.*"

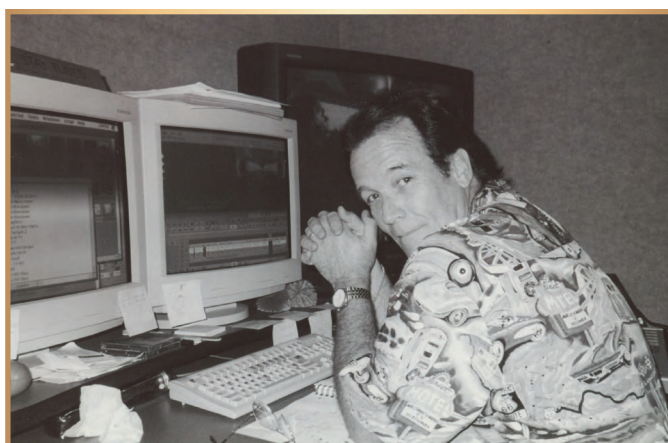
He remembers, "I was working on this scene for two or three days. Ed's sitting over in the other room kind of watching me, but trying not to watch me. I'm getting more upset and I look over and I see him kind of [laugh to himself] then go back to work. 'So, Stephen, what is the problem?' he utters as he starts walking over to me. I said, 'Well, the guy's supposed to do this thing, but I can't go off him.' [Ed] just stands next to me at the Moviola and he puts his hand on the brake and he says, 'Okay, run it.' And I run it. And 20 seconds goes by and he sees it and he says, 'Okay, back up and run it again.' And I ran it again and he hits the brake and he says, 'Mark that frame,' which I did with a grease pencil. He said, 'From there to the end of the cut. I had it put together before he even sat down and I ran it and I went, 'Damn!' He said, 'What's the matter?' I said, 'I've been working on that for four days and you fixed it in 15 seconds.' He stepped closer to me and said, 'It's 35 years and 15 seconds, Steve.'" So, he'd give me things to cut. I started editing shortly after that. He contributed so much to my life. He is the one that set me on the road."

Lovejoy closed out the '70s with a decade's worth of quality, on-the-job education. In the early '80s, the famed James Burrows, who had seen success on TV in the '70s, was hired

to direct his first feature, *Partners*. Lovejoy's colleague Danny Green was editing the quirky buddy cop picture and he was first assistant. The studio got into a rush and said they were going to bring somebody else in to help finish cut the movie. "I engineered the process and got in that position," confesses Lovejoy. "They let me stay in that position. I didn't know enough at the time that what I was doing really wasn't acceptable." Nevertheless, he completed the picture and got his first editing credit. From that point on, Lovejoy didn't look back.

He hopped from genre to genre working on features like *Songwriter* with Alan Rudolph and *Born in East L.A.* with Cheech Marin. In the '90s, Lovejoy returned to television with several TV movies and some episodic shows. Most notable of these was *Tales from the Crypt*, for which he won an Eddie. The popular horror series was a hit on HBO and spawned several features as well. It also led to Lovejoy meeting a director who would become one of his most frequent and favorite collaborators.

Lovejoy explains, "There's a director that I've worked with named Ernest Dickerson. Ernest worked with Spike Lee all the way up through *Malcolm X* as his DP. He got a chance to direct the first *Tales from the Crypt* movie that was called *Demon Knight*. I had been working on the series and the producer, Gil Adler, was very happy with me and he asked if I'd want to do this. I said, 'Yes!'" With 1995's *Demon Knight*, he had his first



solo credit on a feature film and the beginning of a multi-year collaboration with director Ernest Dickerson that spanned 18 years and 13 movies (some for theatrical release and some for cable TV) the last of which was *Double Play* in 2016. By the time Lovejoy cut *Double Play* he had been fully vested in teaching film editing as well as cutting for a number of years.

When the digital transition in editing was becoming the rule, not the exception, Lovejoy realized he wanted a plan B and that he could teach editing. "With [non-linear editing], you're only limited by your imagination. Fifteen years into my editing career, I started teaching," he says.

He gushes, "I love teaching. When you see a light go on in somebody's eyes, that's what's worth it of me. If a teacher's any good, his students stand on his shoulders. 'Go get 'em!' That's the truth."

He taught at The Art Institute of California for six years and at the University of Southern California for seven years. The latter gig came about through his friend, editor Doug Ibold, ACE, and then Norman Hollyn, ACE, actually hired him for the job. Both of those ACE luminaries are gone now, but their legacy remains in all of their work and all those they taught.

As for Lovejoy's legacy, one major part of it is his progeny. "My daughter is Katie Lovejoy, and she's a screenwriter. She's fourth generation film. My grandfather worked for Deluxe Labs." Of his daughter, he relates, "She just had a movie come out called *Love at First Sight* on Netflix. When it came out,

within two weeks, it was top in 92 countries around the world. It was based on a book. The author of the book, when she gave her interview, spoke about the things that she liked in the movie the best, which were the changes that the screenwriter brought that rounded out and focused the story. You don't get an author usually giving it up to the changes. For somebody that really makes a gigantic contribution to something, it's really nice when you hear it. Especially when it's your kid. Now, she's had four projects produced."

When she was younger, Lovejoy got the opportunity to take his daughter to a 3-D screening of *House of Wax* at the American Cinematheque in Hollywood. "It was the first time she saw her



grandfather act on the big screen," remembers Lovejoy. "It was a big, brand-new print for a 3-D film festival. It was magic. [My family] wouldn't let me see it when I was younger. I guess they thought it was too creepy for me at the time," he laughs.

On receiving the Heritage Award, Lovejoy was completely blown away. He has witnessed ACE evolve over the decades and salutes executive director Jenni McCormick for her vision, hard work and commitment to ACE. "I was there the day Jenni McCormick was hired," explains Lovejoy. "ACE is what it is today primarily because of Jenni McCormick. Absolutely. Jenni's the one that took us international. Jenni's the one that put us on the map. She's the one with boots on the ground."

Looking toward the future of his craft, Lovejoy admits to concerns about AI. Thinking back to his days of episodic TV on the Universal lot, he divulges, "The producers knew that the editors were the ones with the keys to the kingdom back then. They'd come up to the room and go, 'What are we gonna do here?' 'We gotta fix this.' And [the editors] would with all their tricks of the trade.

"Most of the producers would take the credit for it in front of the other executives. That's how it worked. But they knew," he continues. "They were really good to their editors and very complimentary. They treated them with respect and regard." He sums up, "If the editing's really good, you don't even see it."

We may not see the cut, but we see the work. Thank you, Stephen Lovejoy, for sharing yourself with us and countless future storytellers. **CE**

THE 2024 EDDIE AWARD NOMINEES

BEST EDITED FEATURE FILM (DRAMA, THEATRICAL)

Laurent Sénéchal
Anatomy of a Fall

Thelma Schoonmaker, ACE
Killers of the Flower Moon

Michelle Tesoro, ACE
Maestro

Jennifer Lame, ACE
Oppenheimer

Keith Fraase
Past Lives

BEST EDITED FEATURE FILM (COMEDY, THEATRICAL)

William Goldenberg, ACE
Air

Hilda Rasula, ACE
American Fiction

Nick Houy, ACE
Barbie

Kevin Tent, ACE
The Holdovers

Yorgos Mavropsaridis, ACE
Poor Things

BEST EDITED ANIMATED FEATURE FILM (THEATRICAL OR NON-THEATRICAL)

Stephen Schaffer, ACE
Elemental

Randy Trager, ACE, Erin Crackel
Nimona

Michael Andrews, ACE
Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse

Eric Osmond
The Super Mario Bros. Movie

Greg Levitan, ACE
*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles:
Mutant Mayhem*

BEST EDITED MULTI-CAMERA COMEDY SERIES

Joseph Fulton
Frasier "Blind Date"

Russell Griffin, ACE
How I Met Your Father
"Daddy"

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20 Days in Mariupol

**Sammy Dane, Matthew Heineman,
Jim Hession, Fernando Villegas**
American Symphony

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Joan Baez: I Am a Noise

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Little Richard: I Am Everything

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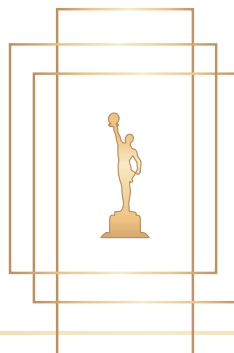
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“Editor Hilda Rasula hits the right rhythm.”

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American Symphony

How editors Sammy Dane, Jim Hession, Fernando Villegas and director Matthew Heineman crafted an intimate portrait of a couple's relationship and the healing power of art

BY MATT ALLEN

American *Symphony*, which premiered at the 2023 Telluride Film Festival, follows Jon Batiste, his music as he composes an original symphony, and his love story with his wife Suleika Jaouad through a struggle with cancer. The audience sees the couple through highs, lows and the mundane – including Jaouad's treatment and Batiste's multiple Grammy wins.

The film begins with a thought-provoking statement. While Batiste overlooks a winter landscape, we hear his voiceover that serves as the thesis for the film. "Since I was child, I've always made things. My mind is always making things. It continues to be more and more of a survival mechanism as the years move on. It's the way I process all the things in my life."

"We called that the thesis," editor Sammy Dane tells *CinemaEditor*. "In addition to being a musician, and a husband, and then a band leader, he is also a philosopher. It was amazing just to be able to sit with all of his thoughts and ideas and soak those in."

Dane was one of four editors on the project including Jim Hession, Fernando Villegas and director Matthew Heineman (*Retrograde, A Private War*). Together they had the difficult task of mining thousands of hours of footage shot by Heineman in 2022.

"They were shooting in the field for at least 12 hours every day, going up to 18 hours with Jon. They would literally wake up with him, put him to sleep. Often Jon is kicking them out at three in the morning."

For Dane *American Symphony* extends beyond the story of the symphony or even the portrait of a couple battling against cancer together. "What I found most compelling about Jon was his faith and the way his faith guides him in everything he does and keeps him sane amidst all of the chaos," Dane remembers.

As they were building the documentary, Batiste was nominated for 11 Grammys. He won five including Album of the Year ("We Are"). "So many things were up in the air," Dane says of the difficulty of creating a story while the story is unfolding. "We just knew that Jon had all these dreams and ambitions and that his story with Suleika was so intense and so beautiful and passionate. I just moved into the office and started watching footage and making selects. Then once the other editors came on board, we broke the film into storylines and each editor took a storyline and started to cut a rough assembly of those."

This was not Dane's first collaboration with Heineman. They initially met when the editor got called in for a two week stint as an assistant syncing 10 cameras of a concert Heineman had filmed for a documentary about reggaeton artist J Balvin (*The Boy from Medellín*). This led to Dane being asked back for Heineman's documentary *The First Wave* which chronicled New York health care workers on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"*The First Wave* was trial by fire," he recounts. "If you can make it through that, you can make it through anything because the intensity of that footage was so palpable."

That difficult experience bonded Dane and Heineman and laid the foundation for their work on *American Symphony*. "The confluence



of creativity and overcoming hardships is something we both care so deeply about. Plus Suleika's journey in the film and her finding another form of creativity to get her through this moment of such uncertainty. This was an 18 month edit, so Matt and I, and the entire post team, really needed to hold on to each other for dear life in the process."

To foreshadow the collaboration to come, the score for *The First Wave* was also composed by Batiste. Dane recalls, "There was over a thousand hours of footage on *The First Wave*, and that was mostly set in a hospital that we thought of as a 'war zone.' To see the way that Jon put his heart and soul into the score for that film, I just had a love and appreciation for him. So when Matt reached out to me about this film, I was immediately in."

Making *American Symphony* was a career changing film for Dane. He says, "This was my first time sitting in the big chair and really being an editor. I had spent about eight years coming up as a post-production assistant, assistant editor, junior editor and co-editor. It felt like it was all building to this."

He admits that Batiste has been an inspiration in his own life. "I can be very thin skinned in this [editorial] process. I'm so emotionally connected to the dailies that for a while it was really hard for me to let go of scenes that we needed to remove. It took a really long time for that to sink in."

Batiste's unique process of constructing a symphony with a group of artists, slowing down spiritually, and feeling his emotions during his wife's cancer treatment provided a spark. Even in the midst of extremely difficult times, his informal process invites joy, grief and empathy.



"We [the filmmakers] took inspiration from that," Dane says. "Trying not to be a perfectionist at every step of the way because you can't. As an editor you'll be crippled by indecision."

"What I learned in a larger sense is what Jon's piano teacher says in the film. You have to breathe. Sometimes I would find myself taking my own hands off the keys the way that his teacher pulled his hands off the piano keys just to let a moment breathe. You feel that most when Jon dedicates a song to Suleika halfway through the film. It's just a moment to process everything that we've thrown at you," Dane remembers.

"We were pulling tons of all-nighters to get the film ready for Telluride. We're so in love with this film that we're not going to let time get in our way of making it the thing that we wanted to make. I just had Jon's inspiration in my head the whole time – his unwavering faith."

American Symphony is available to stream on Netflix. [CE](#)

Poor Things

Yorgos Mavropsaridis, ACE, reshapes Bella in her own image for Yorgos Lanthimos' fairy tale

BY ADRIAN PENNINGTON



For Yorgos Mavropsaridis, ACE, the editing process for *Poor Things*, and his collaborations with Yorgos Lanthimos (six in total, including *Dogtooth*; *The Lobster*; *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* and *The Favourite*, for which he was Oscar- and Eddie-nominated) really started taking form 25 years ago when the pair first started working together on commercials.

“Our relationship has gone through many phases,” Mavropsaridis says. “In the beginning neither of us knew each other well and neither of us was very talkative. But from the beginning I knew I had to conform to something new. The basic thing was that he wanted to create his own audio visual language, his own narrative language, nothing that I or maybe anyone had seen before.”

I do believe in *Poor Things* we have reached the point of complete understanding.”

The Searchlight Pictures release is an adaptation by Tony McNamara (who co-wrote *The Favourite*) of Alasdair Gray’s 1992 novel and stars Emma Stone as Bella, a young woman who is ‘made’ in a lab by Frankenstein father figure Godwin Baxter (Willem Dafoe) and then proceeds to remake herself as she explores the world. Filmed in a studio, the world of *Poor Things* is a bizarre concoction of alternate Victorian era contraptions and cities including Paris, Lisbon and Alexandria.

Mavropsaridis read Gray’s book “out of curiosity” but notes a crucial difference between the works. “The film is based on Bella as is the novel but in the novel we never really see her.”

The book’s narrative is a memoir of people’s recollections about her and contains a long letter written by her from abroad. The film puts Bella’s experience front and center.

“From the book I did get the essence of the character which is this strange creature not only in the sense of being a grown up woman’s body with a baby’s brain – but one who is independent. She becomes her own self, she chooses with whom to be and

who to follow. So this would be a different character even if it wasn’t for the Frankenstein situation. Society wants women to be in their place – especially in the Victorian era – but she is an independent spirit.”

This feminist critique was clear from book and screenplay leaving the main creative discussion between Lanthimos and his editor to be about portraying Bella’s evolution.

“How do we show this strange grown up woman with a mind of a toddler? She grows up fast and all her puberty and adolescence and her education in the world comes very fast. That was the principal thing we discussed. How would people feel about this strange being? How do we make her come alive? We’ve never seen a character like Bella Baxter before. As Godwin says at one point, ‘She’s an experiment.’”

Mavropsaridis had one other observation reading the script which was to suggest that having two characters called Victoria might be confusing to an audience. “Since Bella assumes the name Victoria Blessington they changed the other character’s name to Felicity.”

When it came to creating Bella’s physical and emotional journey Mavropsaridis had a lot of options to play with, the result of improvisation encouraged by the director on set.

“For example, in the opening breakfast scene there were a lot of options. Emma gave us performances that veered from very mild to the more aggressive or more baby. She climbed onto the table in one take.

“Also the expression of her sexuality was expressed differently with different ideas. We had to find a balance which was also informed by time limit. We felt the film shouldn’t be too long.”

During the Gothic arc of the film’s first 20 minutes Bella’s early development is shown. “We sped this growth up in a sequence when Max comes and observes her,” he says.

“In Lisbon she’s a bit more grown up but still not a mature woman. In the end you have to believe in her development and accept her as a responsible human being. She is responsible but also different – for example, even when she gets married it is not for romantic love. And, although she has the independence of spirit to want to know the world, she exhibits her humanity with naivety.”

Lanthimos and cinematographer Robbie Ryan, BSC, ISC, create a visual language to portray Bella’s journey through the fantastical studio sets. This included shooting three different types of 35mm film stock.

“Black and white references the gothic atmosphere and when we are introduced to scenes in Lisbon we burst into a lot of color to express her sexual awakening,” Mavropsaridis says. “The darker colors from Kodak Ektachrome were used for example when Godwin Baxter describes how they found Bella in the first place. The end the film gets more serious with darker color until the last scene in the garden which has the feeling of happiness.”

Mavropsaridis was able to view black-and-white dailies the next day via an Aspera link from the processing lab in Hungary but had to wait three to four days for the Ektachrome material to arrive since this had to have an additional processing step in Berlin.

Lanthimos and Ryan also work with a number of extreme wide angle and fish-eye lenses including a 4mm lens which creates an iris mask around the picture.

“We always tried to find some reasons to use these shots,” says the editor. “The first was after we introduce, in a tracking shot, the face of Godwin Baxter, this benevolent monster.



Fundamentally what it means to work with Lanthimos is to overcome your own inner difficulties. You cannot rely on what you think you know.”

I thought it would be fun to use the 4mm as his POV and to see Bella through his eyes.

“When we visit the university where Baxter teaches it was interesting to see how the whole place is contorted and concentrated by the lens.

“Later, in a dance sequence, there is a fight between dilettante Duncan (Mark Ruffalo) and another man over Bella. Using this lens with the camera low to the ground we can see from her perspective how it might look like two giants fighting.”

While production took place on soundstages in Budapest, Mavropsaridis was in his office in Athens, a place that he finds preferable to being on set.

“I did work from set in Ireland when we shot *The Lobster* but I remember the experience was not so good for me because I felt I was influenced by the situation on the set and your perspective changes. I would rather have my experience of the artists’ performance direct from the celluloid.”

On *The Lobster* and *The Favourite*, Lanthimos had used existing classical music as the basis for his score but on *Poor Things* he turned to English composer Jerskin Fendrix.

“Previously, I would do the first assembly, and we’d watch it and correct a lot of things. Then when we were ready, we’d start the second phase, which is most important and this is to deconstruct what we have constructed. That is when the music comes in to inform us about the changes we need to make.

“The big difference here was that we had music even before we shot. Having read the book and the script, Jerskin was free to write musical themes. Lanthimos used some of the score during production to help the actors understand the mood of a scene.”

Mavropsaridis found the music score helpful to edit with. “I don’t think this film could be done with temp music and then by asking for a composed score. Here we would edit and adapt picture to music or music to the picture and send it back to Jerskin to make the changes. It was continuous feedback until the final orchestration.”

They have stuck together as a team through Lanthimos’ first feature project *Kinetta* (2005), via *Alps* (2011), *Dogtooth* and *The Favourite*, even earning an affectionate nickname from Lanthimos: ‘Blackfish.’

“When we were working on *The Lobster* people were getting confused by having two [Yorgos] around. My surname



translated from the Greek to English means Blackfish. That was an easier way for us to avoid confusion on set or in emails!”

All the time Mavropsaridis says he was trying to keep pace with the director’s artistic ambition. “I had to abandon my own preconceptions about what editing should be and try and observe what it means to work with Yorgos. I began to see the camera as the consciousness of the director who experiences what is happening.”

He says, “Fundamentally what it means to work with Lanthimos is to overcome your own inner difficulties. You cannot rely on what you think you know. He expects that from all his collaborators but he is the first to give the example. He is working much harder than anyone, not so much in terms of long hours, but pushing people to find creative solutions to small problems while keeping in mind the big picture of his vision.”


The environment is friendly, not one of intimidation, he says. “In that space you are free to do whatever you want but you cannot bring the DNA of someone else’s mind into the cut, or the sound or any of the small details.”

Typically, editor and director will have a few issues that can only be resolved in the edit but there is now an almost telepathic connection between the pair that is only the result of like minds working together for so long.

“There was a problem about a scene on the cruise ship. While Yorgos was emailing me I sent over my solution and he



said, ‘That is exactly what I have in mind.’ I have reached a point of being able to understand his thoughts without talking to him. After so many years I know what the small things are that bother him and what he tries to achieve. At the same time, he has helped me to overcome my laziness of the mind, so it is now easy to me to throw a scene out and do it a different way.

“I always have in my mind Lanthimos’ own phrase – ‘Is that all we can do?’ So I have to prove each time we can do more and better.” 

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American Fiction

How Hilda Rasula, ACE, found truth in Cord Jefferson's satire

BY JUSTINE GUNN

From *Dr. Strangelove* to *Trading Places*, and *Borat* to *Blazing Saddles*, comedy in its many flavors has often proved to be the perfect genre for delivering social commentary disguised with laughs. This year's *American Fiction* from writer/director/producer Cord Jefferson is the freshest addition to the genre.

Based on the novel *Erasure* by Percival Everett, the film pits a frustrated novelist – Monk, played by Jeffrey Wright – in a desperate financial situation against his better judgment as he leans into cultural stereotypes only to find success beyond his wildest dreams. The result is a satire with heartbreaking tragedy, all with an unwavering tone that balances the hilarious with the deeply moving.

Editor Hilda Rasula, ACE, knew she wanted to work on this project the moment she read Jefferson's script. The editor, whose previous work includes television and film with hits like *Transparent*, *French Exit* and *Our Flag Means Death*, knew that *American Fiction* would be something special, and she jumped at the chance to be a part of it. "When choosing a project, I try to weigh all the factors, but I'm a sucker for a good script. If something moves me, I feel like I have to do it."

Rasula had begun her career working in documentary film in Canada after film school at York University in Toronto. She then moved to Los Angeles to try her hand at narrative editing. The transition happened during the time of the industry shift and Rasula began editing television. Now, she takes projects in both TV and film: "That matters less to me than really caring about the creative forces behind it." When it came to *American Fiction*, there was something special. She knew she had to do it.

She met with Jefferson and immediately connected creatively. The team hit the ground running. According to Rasula, working with the first-time filmmaker made for a dynamic creative collaboration. "[Jefferson] was amazingly collaborative. He was so open to all of the experiments that we wanted to try, or that I wanted to try. Starting from the foundation of a good script gives you that freedom to let things go. We knew we had the building blocks in place in such a solid way with the writing, and the cast was great, so from there we could play with performance and pace."

Having a good foundation meant that they could tinker with the energy and the power dynamics of the movie once



When choosing a project, I try to weigh all the factors, but I'm a sucker for a good script. If something moves me, I feel like I have to do it.

they got to the cutting room. The film walks a tonal tightrope. One moment it's hilariously funny, then it's moving, then biting. Getting that balance right was one of the biggest challenges for Rasula. "A lot of the work was finding the tone and the rhythm. Working very hard, over and over and over again, tightening the screws of pacing. It was the process of kind of sculpting the marble, honing it down to really what it needs to be." The scene at Monk's agent's office, where Monk finally gives in to the temptation to lean into stereotype is a perfect example. It's a microcosm of the movie – a moment's decision he pays for the rest of the film.

Jeffrey Wright as Monk has a "tightly controlled vibe that was weirdly comical in some of the more satirical scenes. He became the straight man at the center. But every actor there has their own style and way of working. You want to be bringing out the best of each performance and what the essence of that character is and then finding the kind of Venn diagram where those characters are overlapping and it feels like they're living in the same world in the same room."

For Rasula, the sibling scenes gave her the chance to sculpt that marble and illuminate the intricate character dynamics. Monk has a brother, Cliff, played by Sterling K. Brown and sister, Lisa, played by Tracee Ellis Ross. "We carved out moments where we wanted to show, for example, the sibling



relationship, how Sterling's character had the ability to undercut Monk, but also give him permission to laugh at himself. Or with Tracee Ellis Ross, showing those sibling power dynamics that are like a ball that keeps bouncing back and forth in a way that's so true to real sibling relationships. And I was always looking for the best moment that these gifted comic or dramatic actors gave."

Sometimes, it was creative problem-solving that led to inspirational breakthroughs. When the hospital set where the critical scene with Ross unfolds was too small, Jefferson shot through a window. Wright watches medics attending to his sister, separated by a pane of glass – isolated and powerless. It was a solution born of necessity, but one that fits the moment beautifully. The audience is immediately in the shoes of a helpless outsider to the action unfolding on the other side of the glass.

Rasula also credits the results to Jefferson's collaborative nature. She says, "He had this incredible discipline about being open to killing his darlings that is rare, especially for a first-time director. And I love that about him. He was very open to my suggestions and what I had to offer and there was great creative freedom in that." **CE**

MAESTRO

While Bradley Cooper conducts, Michelle Tesoro, ACE, orchestrates the love story at the heart of the drama

BY ADRIAN PENNINGTON



Michelle Tesoro, ACE, was working as a second editor on director-actor Sean Penn's *Flag Day* in spring of 2021 when she was introduced via Penn to his friend Bradley Cooper who was lining up his sophomore directing project to follow *A Star Is Born*.

"By the time we'd finished *Flag Day*, Sean had been talking me up and so they made the introduction," Tesoro says. "Bradley asked if I would be interested in doing 'this little art project?' The script for *Maestro* was still in draft but I thought it would help me if I could read it. From that Bradley and I fashioned a 30-minute proof of concept using technical camera tests and clips from interviews that Bernstein had given." This helped Cooper make critical decisions before commencing principal photography and after six weeks of working on it together he asked Tesoro if she would cut the whole film.

Co-written by Cooper and Josh Singer, *Maestro* tells the story of composer Leonard Bernstein (Cooper) and his wife, actress Felicia Montealegre Cohn Bernstein (Carey Mulligan). The film muses on the drivers of creative passion but what appealed to Tesoro was that they were not trying to tell a conventional biopic.

"We were really focused on a love story, on family and on a marriage. It's a very complicated relationship but ultimately a loving one and one that many people would identify with," says Tesoro, who earned an Eddie and Emmy for *The Queen's Gambit*.

"By the time we'd finished the POC Bradley had decided that intercutting different aspect ratios would be too distracting but that he liked 1.33. He said that *Maestro* was about the foreground and the background and he liked this aspect ratio as a viewing container. He also really honed in on the idea of shooting black-and-white film instead of black-and-white video or color for b/w and explored being able to shoot more with less coverage."

Bernstein's career is well documented. Although familiar with the more famous of his music such as *West Side Story*

("and my mom was a big classical music fan so I grew up listening to him") Felicia was more of a black box. "I didn't know about her at all so I dived deeper to learn more about her background (born in Costa Rica, raised in Chile) her stage and TV acting career, her social activism and so on to get more of a clue about their relationship."

The first few scenes of *Maestro* are an exuberant rush of dialogue reminiscent of classic rom-coms of the Cary Grant/Katharine Hepburn era.

"Bradley wanted to represent tonally and visually what you might have seen on screen in the 1940s and '50s. Certainly the scene that follows his debut at Carnegie Hall [with Bernstein bantering with two colleagues while seated on a toilet] was very rhythmic and a wonderful way to follow up the opening of a movie."

The film features some bravura transitions such as an overhead shot of them running hand in hand from a garden into a theatre. Most of these were scripted but Tesoro did find the need to hone the opening sections to make sure they achieved the right balance between the lead characters.

"We had wonderful scenes of young Lenny charting his early career but we felt, after looking at many runs, that the movie really started when he and Felicia meet. We knew we couldn't linger too much on either if we wanted to really zero in on this idea that it was a story about the two of them and not just him."

That meant losing an early scene of Bernstein as a guest conductor at Carnegie Hall showing one of the other conductors trying to strangle him out of jealousy. The scene is referenced in dialogue later in the film. "It was a wonderful scene, full of humor, but we had to let it go because it would have added to the idea at the top of the movie that this was a story about Lenny rather than about the two of them."

After the pair kiss for first the time in an empty theatre at night they begin talking about their careers. Tesoro transitions from a shot of Felicia receiving applause after an acting performance mid-bow to one of Lenny receiving even bigger applause at Carnegie Hall.

“The latter was something that Bradley had shot for a scene of Bernstein’s debut and he thought, when we were cutting, that it would be great to use to juxtapose their two careers and help create this dynamic relationship.”

Maestro is open about Bernstein’s sexuality from the first scene without ever labeling him as either gay or bisexual. Cooper deploys the musical ballet number “Fancy Free and on the Town” to illustrate how Felicia realizes – and accepts – who he is. It acts as a warning of how their relationship might pan out.

“I love cutting dance because everything is already choreographed (originally by Jerome Robbins). You know where the actors are going to be,” says Tesoro. “Bradley was very exacting in terms of how they covered it. For me it was just a matter of getting the rhythms right. What I love about that sequence is it represents the film as a whole; about the obstacles that they have and how they came together and were pulled apart. There’s a shot where Bernstein is looking at a single sailor which is the moment where – if you didn’t know it before – he loves men as well. Now Felicia knows it too.”

Tesoro says it didn’t take long to figure out how to shape performance. “As we received dailies I could tell that it was usually the last take or the one before that was Bradley’s choice.”

She testifies to Cooper’s energy during production where he would be in make-up to shoot early and addressing editorial notes throughout the day and night.

“Usually I was on Evercast,” she says. “Sometimes I’d post sections on PIX and we’d communicate via text or phone or on Evercast. We were always working at different times of the day. Even if I didn’t hear from him all day, he would sometimes send a text in the middle of the night. I never felt wanting for his attention. He just cared about the film so much but it was also informative for him to be in contact at all hours. He was able to make a lot of decisions during filming that way.”

The monochromatic first half of the film moves into full color in the second act with a transition which illustrates how far apart



the married couple have become. Felicia is watching Lenny’s performance from the wings, arm aloft with cigarette, which transitions to a color shot of a similar pose this time of her back, gazing out of a window. It wasn’t originally in the script.

Tesoro explains, “In the script there was another scene which was to be shot in Italy, but as he was shooting Bradley started to think maybe he didn’t need it. Just in case he covered the scenes with shots that mirror off each other to give him a way to transition. What’s wonderful is what takes us from one scene to the next is the music. The Adagietto from Mahler’s Symphony No.5 in C# Minor is one of Bernstein’s favorite pieces.”

The filmmakers had access to Bernstein’s entire collection and had pre-cleared many pieces for use. Most of the music cues were written into the script but for others it was a matter of finding the right place, sometimes swapping cues around in the edit.

The Adagietto, for instance, was earmarked for a scene after Felicia’s death but they began to feel that the “beautiful bittersweet tone” more appropriately represented the development of their marriage.

“A lot of times the music dictated how we came into a scene, where we came out and how much of a shot we stayed in. Bradley had a running list of cues that he knew could be licensed so even if it wasn’t initially written into the script it was a matter of waiting until we had the full film to see where the best fit would be.”

One of Tesoro’s favorite cues is Psalm 23 from Bernstein composition “Chichester Psalms” used at the end of the film but only placed there toward the very end of editorial. “It’s such a beautiful and strange cue that contains all sorts of musical elements. We tried it in so many different places until we finally found the perfect place.”

The Dolby Atmos mixed soundtrack mostly consists of new recordings by the London Symphony Orchestra under Yannick Nézet-Séguin, who taught Cooper to conduct in Bernstein’s signature style. A scene set in Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire, England showcases the work that both Cooper and Nézet-Séguin had put into his performance and perhaps more than any in the film provided Tesoro with a multiple choice of coverage.

“They shot over two days. On the first he used a crane and technocrane, wonderful shots including of the location itself but on the second day after shooting with the orchestra he wasn’t sure if he had the scene yet. So he decided to try it in a ‘oner’ and that’s what we ended up using as the scene’s spine. It was his strongest performance and the orchestra’s strongest – they



were really feeling him there. The camerawork [by operator Scott Sakamoto] is amazing.

“We also had other shots and tried putting more of these in but every time we felt it wasn’t working. The edict became ‘how long can we stay?’ and ‘when do we feel we want to be somewhere else?’ so it made emotional and story sense.”

Ely Cathedral comes after a period when the Bernsteins have been separated and it becomes apparent by the end of the scene that this is actually the answer to the scene before. In that scene Felicia is chatting with Shirley Bernstein (Sarah Silverman) about what it’s like to be single again.

Tesoro relates, “Felicia is telling a terrible story about a date gone wrong and how she can’t live without Lenny. She’s telling her truth. We had filmed a sequence showing Felicia driving up to Ely Cathedral and we hear the beginning of Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 (“Resurrection”) but in editorial we decided to cut straight to Bernstein at the cathedral. You see the exaltation of his genius, the reason why Felicia would feel the way she does. Then right at the end we reveal her. I feel that the scene emotionally delivers because the tension is held throughout. We’ve seen them apart, knowing they really need each other, and we keep that tension until they finally reunite.”

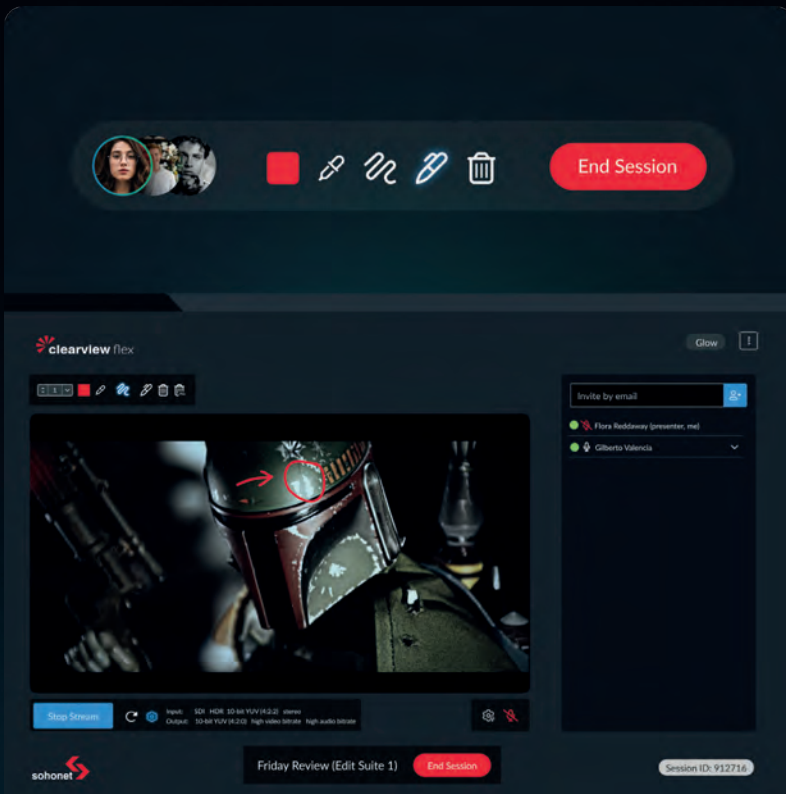
As if to avoid feeling like we’re in the middle of a married couple’s argument, there’s another cute tension reliever at the end of perhaps the pair’s most heated debate set during Thanksgiving Day.

“Bradley was ready to shoot coverage but he got what he wanted from the third or fourth take which was a wide. I think



he felt that they couldn’t repeat that energy again if they turned around camera for a new setup.

“Once again we’re coming from a previous scene where Felicia and Lenny are talking close together but in a wide shot by the pool. Felicia is not able to express herself and they’re both kind of cramped. So, when he was blocking the scene he wanted them to be far apart but here she is in more of a power position sitting on the window sill. He lays on the couch and they start to come together as their argument unfolds. I think you feel like it’s a real moment – that you shouldn’t be witnessing this. It seems more intimate. There’s this great tension in the room which is released all of a sudden when a giant Snoopy goes by outside the window. That shot was VFX and timed to arrive in post. It just felt like magic happened when it all came together.” [CE](#)



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17th Annual HPA Awards



Jennifer Lame, ACE, won the feature editing award for her work on Christopher Nolan’s *Oppenheimer*, during the 17th annual HPA Awards, which were handed out Nov. 28 at the Television Academy’s Wolf Theatre.



Dana Glauberman, ACE, presented the editing award winners, which also included John M. Valerio, ACE, for *The White Lotus* episode “Arrivederci”(episode or non-theatrical feature over 30 minutes); Ali Greer, ACE, for *Barry* episode “A Nice Meal” (episode or non-theatrical feature 30 minutes and under); and Brett Morgen for *Moonage Daydream* (documentary editing).



Lame also edited *Postcard from Earth*, the first movie made for the Las Vegas Sphere, which received the HPA Judges Award for Creativity and Innovation. The award, which recognized the venue and the related production technologies and workflow, was presented to the Sphere team by Jury co-chair Carolyn Giardina.

Engineering Excellence Awards recipients were Adobe for Premiere Pro text-based editing; Flanders Scientific for its XMP550 monitor and Kino Flo for Mimik 120 lighting.

The estimated 600 guests enjoyed a festive party at the venue. [CE](#)



The Winners of the 2023 HPA Awards are

OUTSTANDING COLOR GRADING – LIVE ACTION THEATRICAL FEATURE

Barbie
Yvan Lucas / Company 3

The Fabelmans
Michael Hatzler / Picture Shop

Asteroid City
Garth Spensley / Company 3

Oppenheimer
Kostas Theodosiou, Kristen Zimmerman / FotoKem (Winner)

Tár
Tim Masick / Company 3

OUTSTANDING COLOR GRADING – ANIMATED THEATRICAL FEATURE

Elemental
Susan Brunig / Pixar Animation Studios

The Super Mario Bros. Movie
Jason Hanel / Company 3

Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse
Natasha Leonnet / Picture Shop (Winner)

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem
Mitch Paulson / Company 3

OUTSTANDING COLOR GRADING – LIVE ACTION EPISODE OR NON-THEATRICAL FEATURE

Swarm “Stung”
Alastor Pan Arnold / Keep Me Posted

Winning Time:
The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty
“One Ring Don’t Make a Dynasty”
Walter Volpatto / Company 3 (Winner)

American Gigolo “Pilot”
Shane Harris / Picture Shop

Great Expectations “Episode 2”
Toby Tomkins / Harbor

Wednesday
“Wednesday’s Child Is Full of Woe”
Siggy Ferstl / Company 3

OUTSTANDING COLOR GRADING – DOCUMENTARY

Descendant
Sam Daley / Light Iron

Bono & The Edge: A Sort of Homecoming with Dave Letterman
Taylor Black / Apache

Still: A Michael J. Fox Movie
Stefan Sonnenfeld, Adam Nazarenko / Company 3

***Chimp Empire* “Paradise”**
Blair Wallace / Evolutions Post Production (Winner)

Shaq “From Shaquille to Shaq”
Taylor Black / Apache

OUTSTANDING COLOR GRADING – COMMERCIAL

Zara “Man SS23 Studio Collection”
Tim Masick / Company 3

Levi’s “One Fair Exchange in the Greatest Story Ever Worn”
Sofie Borup / Company 3

Expedia “Wisdom & Obi”
Mark Gethin / Trafik (Winner)

Duracell x Williams Racing
“Scream”
Tyler Roth / Company 3

Belvedere “Daniel Craig”
Matthieu Toullet / Company 3

OUTSTANDING EDITING – THEATRICAL FEATURE
Sponsored by Blackmagic Design

Barbie
Nick Houy, ACE

Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One
Eddie Hamilton, ACE

Oppenheimer
Jennifer Lame, ACE (Winner)

Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse
Michael Andrews, ACE

Tár
Monika Willi

OUTSTANDING EDITING – EPISODE OR NON-THEATRICAL FEATURE (30 MINUTES AND UNDER)

Sponsored by Blackmagic Design

The Righteous Gemstones
“Burn for Burn, Wound for Wound, Stripe for Stripe”
Justin Bourret, ACE

Barry “it takes a psycho”
Franky Guttman, ACE

What We Do in the Shadows
“Local News”
A.J. Dickerson, ACE, Thomas Calderón

***Barry* “a nice meal”**
Ali Greer, ACE (Winner)

How To With John Wilson
“How To Watch Birds”
Cori Wapnowska

OUTSTANDING EDITING – EPISODE OR NON-THEATRICAL FEATURE (OVER 30 MINUTES)

Sponsored by Blackmagic Design

The Last of Us “Endure and Survive”
Timothy A. Good, ACE, Emily Mendez

White House Plumbers
“The Beverly Hills Burglary”
Erick Fefferman, Roger Nygard, ACE

Succession “With Open Eyes”
Ken Eluto, ACE

***The White Lotus* “Arrivederci”**
John M. Valerio, ACE (Winner)

White House Plumbers “True Believers”
Grady Cooper, Jon Merchen

OUTSTANDING EDITING – DOCUMENTARY

Sponsored by Blackmagic Design

100 Foot Wave “Lost at Sea”
Alex Keipper, Alex Bayer

A Tree of Life:
The Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting
Eric Schuman

Being Mary Tyler Moore
Mariah Rehmet

Branson “Episode 2, Atlantic”
Paul Trewartha

Moonage Daydream
Brett Morgen (Winner)

**OUTSTANDING SOUND –
THEATRICAL FEATURE**

Barbie

Ai-Ling Lee, Kevin O’Connell,
Dan Kenyon /
Warner Bros. Post Production Services

Guillermo del Toro’s Pinocchio

Scott Gershin, Chris Richardson,
Masanobu ‘Tomi’ Tomita,
Andrew Vernon, Dan Gamache /
Sound Lab a Keywords Studio

Creed III

Aaron Glascock, Tom Ozanich,
Walter Spencer, Curt Schulkey /
Warner Bros. Post Production Services

John Wick: Chapter 4

**Mark Stoeckinger, Andy Koyama,
Casey Genton, Alan Rankin,
Manfred Banach /
Formosa Group (Winner)**

Puss in Boots: The Last Wish

Jason W. Jennings, Julian Slater,
Greg P. Russell, Paul Pirola, Ken
McGill, Mia Stewart /
Warner Bros. Post Production Services

**OUTSTANDING SOUND –
EPISODE OR
NON-THEATRICAL FEATURE**

Star Trek: Picard “The Last Generation”

Matthew E. Taylor, Michael Schapiro,
Todd Grace, Ed Carr III, Ian Shedd /
Warner Bros. Post Production Services

The Last of Us “Infected”

**Michael Benavente, Marc Fishman,
Kevin Roache, Chris Terhune,
Chris Battaglia /
Formosa Group (Winner)**

Barry “it takes a psycho”

Sean Heissinger, Matthew E. Taylor,
John Creed, Rickley Dumm /
Warner Bros. Post Production Services
Elmo Ponsdomenech, Teddy Salas /
Sony Pictures Entertainment

Wednesday “A Murder of Woes”

Mike Baskerville, Jamie Sulek,
John Loranger, Alastair Gray,
Dan Sexton / Company 3

Star Trek: Strange New Worlds

“Hegemony”
Matthew E. Taylor, Michael Schapiro,
Todd Grace, Ed Carr III,
Sean Heissinger /
Warner Bros. Post Production Services

**OUTSTANDING SOUND –
DOCUMENTARY**

32 Sounds

Mark Mangini, Robert Kellough,
Eliza Paley, Joanna Fang,
Blake Collins / Formosa Group

A Tree of Life:

The Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting
Daniel Timmons / Harbor Sound

Good Night Oppy

Mark Mangini, Dave Whitehead,
Tim Walston, Dave Bach,
Angela Clavierie / Formosa Group

If These Walls Could Sing

**George Foulgham, Philip Moroz,
Alex Gibson, Tom Verstappen,
Miles Sullivan / George Foulgham
Soundscapes Ltd. (Winner)**

Moonage Daydream

Nina Hartstone, David Giammarco,
John Warhurst, Paul Massey /
Public Road Productions

**OUTSTANDING VISUAL EFFECTS –
LIVE ACTION FEATURE**

Avatar: The Way of Water

**Christopher Egden, Nick Epstein,
Wayne Stables, Pavani Rao
Boddapati, Sergei Nevshupov /
Wētā FX (Winner)**

Guillermo del Toro’s Pinocchio

Aaron Weintraub, Jeffrey Schaper,
Cameron Carson, Emma Gorbey,
Warren Lawtey / MPC

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3

Guy Williams, Daniel Macarin,
Mike Cozens, Mark Smith,
Marvyn Young / Wētā FX

Avatar: The Way of Water

David Vickery, Lee Briggs,
Jan Maroske, Steve Ellis,
Miguel Perez-Senent /
Industrial Light & Magic

Transformers: Rise of the Beasts

Matt Aitken, Mike Perry, Aaron Cowan,
Kevin Estey, Jong Jin Choi / Wētā FX

**OUTSTANDING VISUAL EFFECTS –
LIVE ACTION EPISODE
OR SERIES SEASON**

Andor Season One

Mohen Leo, Scott Pritchard /
Industrial Light & Magic
TJ Falls / Lucasfilm
Joseph Kasparian / Hybride
Jelmer Boskma / Scanline

House of the Dragon

“The Heirs of the Dragon”
**Angus Bickerton, Nikeah Forde,
Mike Bell / MPC
Sven Martin, Mark Spindler /
Pixomondo (Winner)**

The Last of Us Season One

Simon Jung, Aaron Cowan,
David Hampton, Dennis Yoo,
Ben Roberts / Wētā FX

The Lord of the Rings:

The Rings of Power

“Season One”
Ron Ames, Jason Smith, Jesse
Kobayashi, Ryan Tudhope,
Sam Scott / Amazon Studios

The Mandalorian

“Season Three”
Grady Cofer, Abbigail Keller,
Paul Kavanagh, Delio Tramontozzi /
Industrial Light & Magic
Bobo Skipper /
Important Looking Pirates

**OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING
VISUAL EFFECTS –
EPISODE OR SERIES SEASON**

Barry “Season Four”

Justin Ball, Laura Hill,
Andrew Kalicki, David Lopez,
Manuel Guizar / Crafty Apes

Citadel

“Secrets in Night Need Early Rains”
**Aladino Debert, Greg Teegarden,
James Reid, Mathew Rotman,
Viv Jim / Digital Domain (Winner)**

Interview with the Vampire

“Is My Very Nature That of a Devil”
Ted Rae, Tavis Larkham, Matthew
Harris, Hugo Leveille, J.V. Pike /
FuseFX

The Night Agent

“Season One”
Grant Miller, Hallana Barbosa,
Pierceon Bellemare, Mariia Osanova,
Ben Stommes / Ingenuity Studios

The Righteous Gemstones

“Season Three”
Bruce Branit, Valeri Pfahning /
Rough House
Fred Ruff / Refuge VFX
Ed Bruce / Screen Scene Studios
David Lebensfeld /
Ingenuity Studios

**OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
IN RESTORATION**

Casablanca, 1942

Warner Bros.

Cinderella, 1950

Disney

Cimarron, 1931

Warner Bros.

The Godfather, 1972

Paramount Pictures (Winner)

Winds of Chance, 1925

First National Pictures
and Christopher Gray
Post Production



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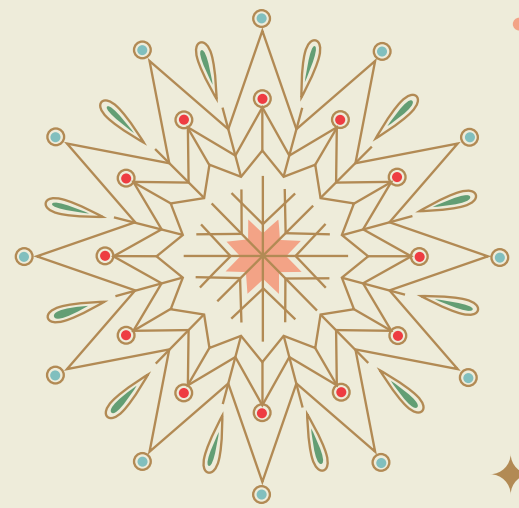
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| Digital Technician | Sound Reader |
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ACE CELEBRATES THE HOLIDAYS

An estimated 700 guests attended the festive ACE Holiday Party, Dec. 9 at Skirball Cultural Center's Herscher Hall in Los Angeles.

During the event ACE President, Kevin Tent, ACE, presented 64 member plaques to new members and associate members. During the celebration, ACE held a new toy collection for Spark of Love to support children and teens in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, Ventura and Riverside counties. ACE also held a raffle benefiting the ACE Educational Fund. Thanks to the companies that donated prizes, including Adobe, Avid, Blackmagic Design, Waldorf Astoria – Beverly Hills, Katana Restaurant, Meat on Ocean, Frequency Wine Company, Lindquist Winery, Malibu Wine & Beer Garden, Coach Rob Silver, Remedy Place – West Hollywood, Los Angeles Ballet, American Contemporary Ballet, A Noise Within Theatre, The Actors' Gang, Geffen Playhouse, Smart Post, Key Code Education and Melrose Mac.

Special thanks to Sohonet for its generous sponsorship of the full bar during the celebration. And thanks to Runway/Atlas Digital for sponsoring Dandy Don's Ice Cream Bar.

Additionally, ACE celebrated the holidays in New York during a Dec. 6 party at the facilities of sponsor Sound Lounge. ACE collected donations for the Entertainment Community Fund during the party. Thank you to Sound Lounge for its generous sponsorship. [CE](#)



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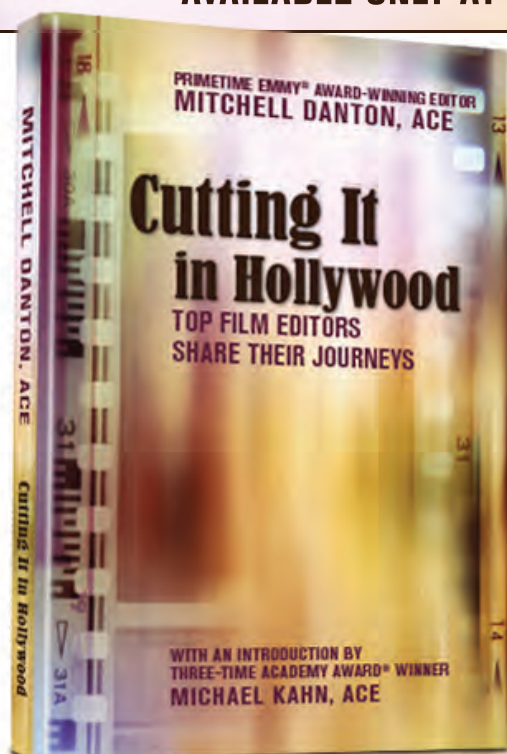
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INTRODUCTION BY THREE-TIME ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER
MICHAEL KAHN, ACE



Zach Staenberg, ACE, recently took the red pill and returned to *The Matrix*, the seminal science fiction film for which he won an Eddie and Academy Award in his second collaboration with the Wachowskis following *Bound* (1996).



“This movie has a strong opening that lays out solid rules which are never broken,” Staenberg says. “You understand how this world is built. Most of the credit for that goes to the Wachowskis. But because the movie is so dense, it is very important that the editing is always clear and leads you to the next point. I want the audience to be intrigued.”



We are introduced to Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) who is quickly revealed as far from “a little girl!” (as the Chicago cops call her) in the film’s first and iconic ‘bullet time’ VFX sequence as she leaps and pauses mid-air.



“The success of this shot was down to really well-planned wire work and the dedication to training [under guidance of martial arts choreographer Yuen Woo Ping] of the principal actors who really pushed themselves. There was very little double work in the movie.”



Wire work was extensively used during the rooftop chase. “That was tricky to edit because as much as Carrie-Anne worked at it, running on wires like that is very hard to do. If you look really carefully the cuts are doubled up: The end of one shot is repeated at the beginning of the next. I did that in order to have enough time to really feel her running sideways around the corner. When she leaps through the window and runs across the roofs, this slowing down is accomplished by the use of intercuts.”





Staenberg also extended a slow motion shot here more than originally planned. “You are following the agents, the cops and Trinity, so the balance of how you intercut them is critical.”



Trinity tumbles down stairs and gathers her breath. Staenberg holds on Moss’ face. “Typically, we’d go quickly to a POV of what she is looking at but her performance conveyed so much that we stay on her several seconds, understanding her tension and the exhaustion of having got to that point. No action sequence works if there’s not really good character in it.”



Now she has to reach a phone booth before the agents run her over. “If you map the scene’s geography, with a truck revving up to speed as it crosses a two lane road to crash into a phone booth, then the situation seems impossible for her. It took a number of tries to get right. By using very short cuts we’re expanding time in a way the audience accepts as real. Until the agents arrive you don’t know that she is not dead.”



“Here, we hold for a long beat of all three agents in the same frame. Prior to that I tried to not show them as a malevolent group. At this moment you recognize them as a force to be reckoned with.”



For Staenberg, “the artistic part of editing is cumulative” so when he did a second pass on the scene he ensured that every cut involving the cops follows the flashlights from their torches.



“The cops are hunting for Trinity but the beam of light becomes a kind of metaphor for the movie. You are following the light, learning about the characters, as the characters find out who they are. We take that concept and philosophically expand it as we expand the universe.”



“I can’t tell you how many times through the process that someone from Warner Bros. would say we love the dailies but we can’t understand them. An editor’s job is to represent the audience and I knew that once they had seen the whole movie then the rules we establish in the opening would be solid all the way through.” [CE](#)





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PETITION FOR EDITORS RECOGNITION

The American Cinema Editors Board of Directors has been actively pursuing film festivals and awards presentations, domestic and international, that do not currently recognize the category of Film Editing. The Motion Picture Editors Guild has joined with ACE in an unprecedented alliance to reach out to editors and industry people around the world.

The organizations listed on the petition already recognize cinematography and/or production design in their annual awards presentations. Given the essential role film editors play in the creative process of making a film, acknowledging them is long overdue. We would like to send that message in solidarity. Please join us as we continue the effort to elevate the perception of editors everywhere.

You can help by signing the petition to help get recognition for film editors by asking these organizations to add the Film Editing category to their annual awards:

- Sundance Film Festival
- Shanghai International Film Festival, China
- San Sebastian Film Festival, Spain
- Byron Bay International Film Festival, Australia
- New York Film Critics Circle
- New York Film Critics Online
- National Society of Film Critics

We would like to thank the organizations that have recently added the Film Editing category to their Annual Awards:

- Durban International Film Festival, South Africa
- New Orleans Film Festival
- Tribeca Film Festival
- Washington DC Area Film Critics Association
- Film Independent – Spirit Awards
- Los Angeles Film Critics Association
- Chicago Film Critics Association
- Boston Film Festival
- The International Animated Film Society – Annie Awards
- Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror – Saturn Awards

Please sign our petition at:

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Committee for Creative Recognition

