

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

# CINEMAEDITOR

THE TELEVISION ISSUE



In This Issue ...

**The Residence, The Pitt, What We Do in the Shadows, The Penguin, Ladies & Gentlemen ... 50 Years of SNL Music, 75th ACE Eddie Awards and much more!**

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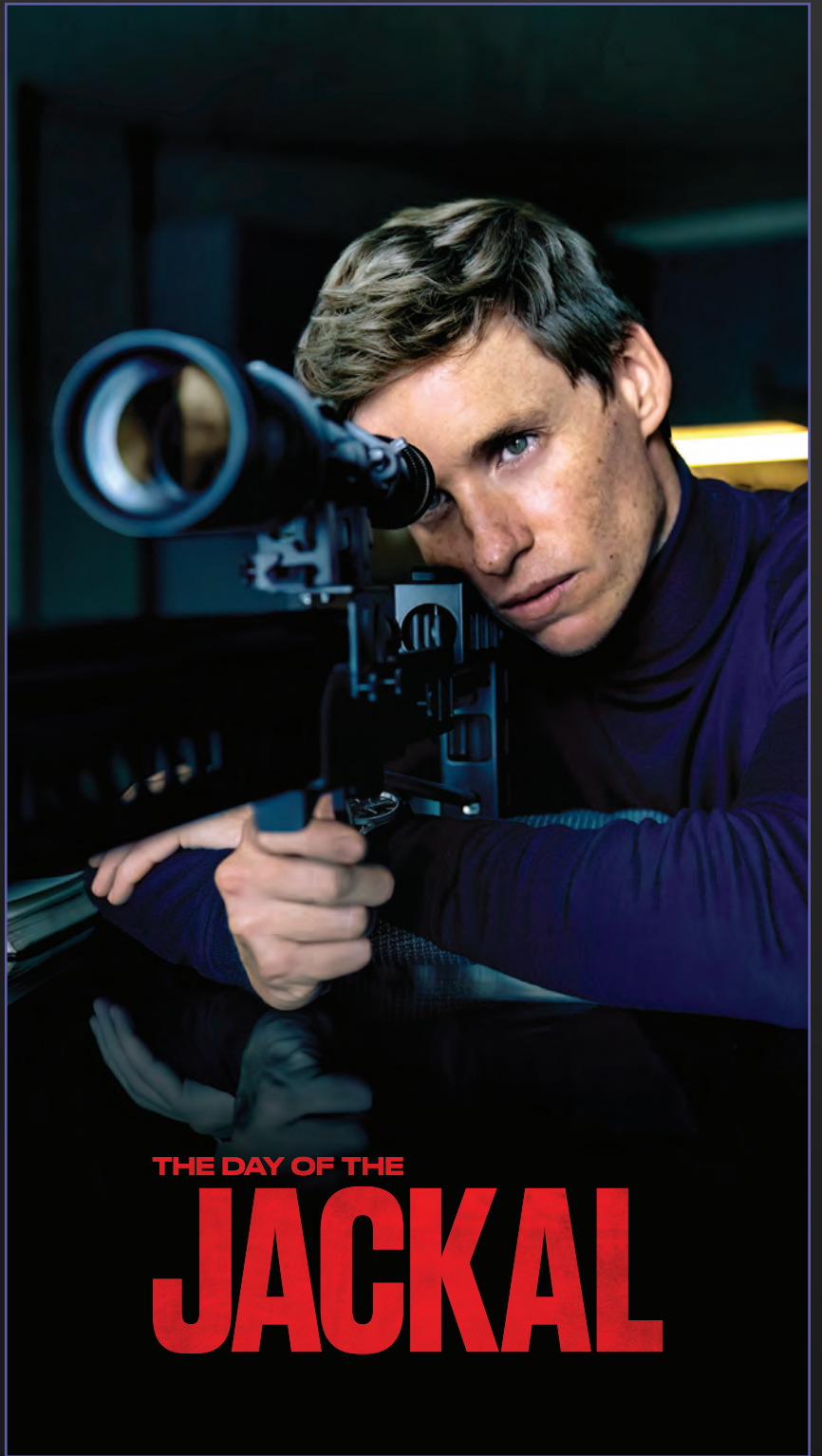




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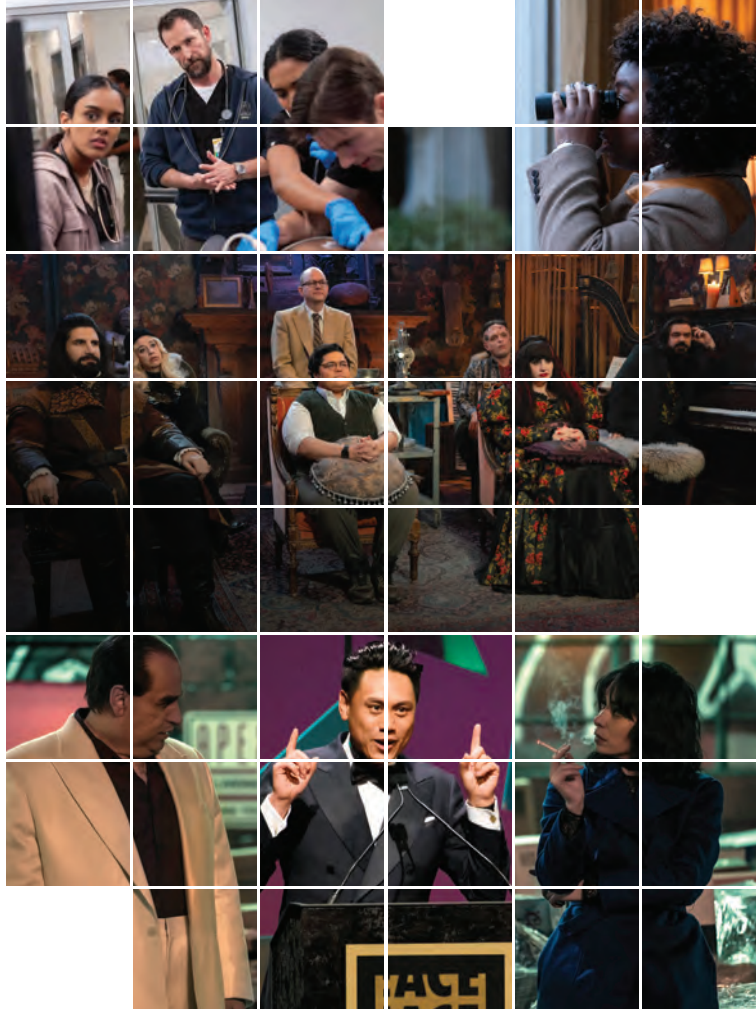
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## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



**H**ello, fellow editors and editing fans around the globe. As Spring is fighting its way through the Southern California fog and flowers begin to bloom, I hope our industry can also fight its way back into bloom to give us all a bit of hope for the future. However, times continue to be very tough for so many, and we can't sweep that fact under the rug. I wish there were easy answers and solutions, but it just isn't so. I can only encourage you to talk about it and not keep your concerns hidden. I also encourage you to step up and offer to help. Or for those of you seeking a helping hand of any kind, I encourage you to have the courage to ask for it. I want ACE to be a community of support, as well as the honor society we propose to be. After all, how can we claim to be the best of the best if we don't offer to help one another? To that end, I am proud to be working alongside the stellar ACE staff and some amazing ACE members who have formed the ACE Connect-Support Committee. We don't claim to be professional healers, but we aim to create a support network within our own community. Because this is a new project for ACE, we will be figuring it out as we go. We will share news of our progress and report personal stories in upcoming issues, along with notifications in our ACE newsletters.

After the rough start of this year, ACE delayed and shifted our Eddie Awards from not only a night of celebration but a night to honor those who suffered from the tragic L.A. fires. Fundraising efforts were a success, and ACE will continue fundraising as we move forward. For example, at the Social Committee's recent fundraising pickleball event, a portion of each ticket was donated to the ACE Educational Fund allocated for those affected by the L.A. fires. There is nothing better than having fun and doing a good deed at the same time.

In this issue, we will recap the most magical night of the year for editors, the 75th Eddie Awards, which was held on March 14 at the wonderful Royce Hall at UCLA. Thank you to all the amazing people

behind the scenes who put on a stupendous show, nearly twice! A huge congratulations to all the 2025 Eddie nominees and winners in every category. It was a glorious evening with 1,300 attendees in the auditorium and many more who tuned in to the live stream. We cheered on Career Achievement Award honorees Paul Hirsch, ACE, and Maysie Hoy, ACE. We were also honored to hear Golden Eddie recipient Jon M. Chu share his filmmaking journey and talk about his long-time collaborator and post-production partner, editor Myron Kerstein, ACE.

In other positive news, ACE recently launched an exciting new project that was years in the works. The ACE Editing Experience is now available to educational institutions, allowing students to choose and download dailies from one of a handful of productions from different genres in order to practice their editing skills. *Gunsmoke* has been tried and true for decades, but we hope that the next generation of editors will enjoy more current programming to hone their skills. Check it out on our ACE website at [americancinemaeditors.org/ace-editing-experience](http://americancinemaeditors.org/ace-editing-experience). In more exciting news, ACE's Animation Committee will soon be contributing a new addition of animation to the selection of options within the ACE Editing Experience curriculum. This will truly be a unique opportunity.

ACE was also well represented at NAB Show as part of FMC's Post-Production World this year. I was impressed with the jam-packed rooms of attendees wanting to listen to topics such as "The Art of Editing" and "*Wicked*: Camera to Cut." We should continue to be present at such events so our art does not remain invisible!

My wish for 2025 is that there is a positive turn upward for our industry. We have endured a tumultuous five years of ups and downs. The upheavals of our industry have tested our patience and our pocketbooks. So, let's come together. Share stories. Share knowledge. Remember to be kind. Be respectful. And cut, cut, cut! **CE**

– SABRINA PLISCO, ACE, ACE President



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**Matt Allen** is the recipient of the Eric Zumbrunnen 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!

**Liza Cardinale, ACE**, is an Emmy-nominated, Eddie-winning editor and occasional contributor to this magazine. Her credits include dark comedies *What We Do in the Shadows*, *Dead to Me* and the fantasy musical *Schmigadoon!*

**Ellen Galvin** worked in the TV and entertainment industry for more than 40 years, including 13 years as ACE sponsorship and advertising director. She now resides in Henderson, NV, with her husband, Gary.

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

**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*.

**Susan Vaill, ACE**, loves to edit feminist, music-driven, inclusive stories: *Grey's Anatomy*, *This Is Us*, *Abbott Elementary*, *Quiz Lady* and *Hacks*. She is a dedicated advocate and mentor for editors – through workshops, panels, lectures and podcasts. Susan is also a member of the DGA and a proud co-founder of the CAFE.

**Jack Tucker, ACE**, Emmy-nominated editor and first-ever recipient of the ACE Robert Wise Award, was at the helm of *CinemaEditor* magazine at the close of the 20th century. He produced documentary feature *American Empire* with his partner, director Patrea Patrick.

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*American Cinema Editors is an honorary society celebrating excellence within the art of motion picture editing. Our objective is to advance the prestige and dignity of the editing profession by elevating recognition for our creative contributions, promoting mutual respect among our peers, supporting diversity and inclusion, and endeavoring to be ambassadors for our unique art.*



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### LIFE LESSONS

*The Life Lessons column was created for veteran ACE Life Members to share their personal musings, views and recollections about their experiences in our business. This quarter's column is written by Farrel Levy, ACE.*

In the early '90s, I secured an editing job at Steven Bochco Productions. Steven was a television legend, having created long running, and award winning shows like *Hill Street Blues* and *L.A. Law*. Steven and David Milch had been working on a new series called *NYPD Blue*.

In those days, cursing, nudity and sex were permitted to be aired on cable stations only. Steven and David knew that if they could convince ABC to permit them to have those 'mature' elements on *NYPD Blue*, the show would be a game changer. They did. It was. I had the good fortune to work on the show for all 12 outstanding seasons. And yes, there were nude bodies, and sex scenes and foul language. But the success of the show did not rest on those elements alone. It was rooted in David and Steven's masterful storytelling skills as well as their deep compassion for the flawed humanness of their characters.

The years spent on that show were some of the best in my career. The value of working with and learning from these two talents was beyond measure. What also made the work experience exceptional for me, a wife and mother, was that my male bosses never made me feel that I had to hide that part of myself in order to show my devotion to the work. If I needed time off to take one of my kids to the doctor or to see a school performance, it was never an issue.

Throughout my years of editing *NYPD Blue*, I remained a fan of the show. It was winning well-deserved awards and critical acclaim for its multi-layered characters whose jobs as detectives challenged them to keep hold of their basic goodness while being confronted with the worst of humanity. The unceasing inner wrestling match between their better angels and their worst compulsions led to unforgettable television archetypes like Andy Sipowicz (Dennis Franz) and Bobby Simone (Jimmy Smith).

However, I felt there was an element that was missing. From my point of view, the writing simply did not do the women characters justice. Yes, there were women in the squad. Their images and their names were in the upfront credits. Their characters worked as cops or lawyers and some had children. But they were not the ones who regularly figured out the missing piece that solved the case. They were back-up.

The other function of the women was to provide 'love interests' for the male characters. And because this was *NYPD Blue*, the various male/female relationships conveniently led

to those nude sex scenes. To tell you the truth, I thought the scenes were rather gratuitous and not particularly sexy. There was an informal tradition at the Bochco company that if one of his series was successful for a number of seasons, Steven would give selected crew members an opportunity to direct a show.

I must have been doing something right because when Season 5 rolled around, I was the first person of the crew to be selected. Steven and David knew how important my family life was to me. I also believe that they sensed that the series might gain something by an episode in which the more female concerns of children and their parents are explored. I was honored that this was the theme of "It Takes a Village," (1997) the script that David crafted for me to direct. It was my responsibility to do it justice.

It was also an opportunity to try to inject my female sensibility where I could. Dealing with disturbed adults who break the law is what the detectives did every day, but in this episode, when these disturbed adults broke the law, they hurt children. This crossed the line and it had a profound and devastating impact on the detectives. Simone, usually a cool cat on the job, is deeply sickened when he must reluctantly encourage a pregnant, junkie mother to turn in her boys for robbery-homicide in order to wrap up his case. Afterwards, in the locker room, he cannot hold back his tears. In another story, Sipowicz has lost patience with the frantic mother who wants to charge her teenage neighbor, a boy who has Down Syndrome, with the violent rape of her young daughter. The little girl's actual rapist turns out so be so deranged and Sipowicz is so sickened by his behavior, that Sipowicz, himself is pushed to the brink of sanity.

Of course, the characters populating the episode were unlike the ones I interacted with on a daily basis, but family ties and vulnerable children have an emotional hold on every one of us. This was something that I understood well. Directing that episode allowed me to help bring those feelings out of the actors.

The show ended with a love scene between Bobby Simone and Diane Russell (Kim Delaney). This one was earned because it represented a desperate need for catharsis after a wrenching day. At the end of the scene, as their passionate breathing is slowing down, Russell says, "We made a baby." Bobby quietly responds, "Good." There will be an opportunity for renewal. It was scary to direct a scene like this as a first-time director, but I realized that it gave me the unique opportunity to put my own stamp on how to portray this intimate encounter.

Counter to the prevailing style, I felt that the power of their experience was not going to come from seeing their nude bodies. I staged it as if they were in such a hurry to connect with one another as soon as they got home, that they did not take the

*(Continued on p. 10)*



# WHAT'S NEW!

## NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LIFE LESSONS

(Continued from p. 9)

time to remove their coats. The emotion and the sexuality came from seeing their faces and hands, and hearing their heightened breathing. I shot the scene this way, not just to be different, but because I felt that by not spelling the whole thing out visually, leaving something to our imaginations, the sex as well as the emotions would be more potent.

As it turns out, when the censors reviewed the finished show, they insisted that this scene be dropped or re-edited. Ironically proving my point, they said it was too erotic for ABC! Bochco pushed back and the scene stayed. In addition, Steven was so impressed with the finished show (beautifully edited by Jane Kass, ACE) that he took the unusual step for a fifth season episode and sent it out to the press. As a result, several highly favorable articles appeared encouraging viewers to watch it. Steven and David granted me, a woman, a wife and a mother, who experienced life differently, the opportunity to bring my point of view to their show.

The success of the episode was proof that the undeniable emotions tied to parents and children can be the basis for a rich and powerful story that is not just relevant to women, but to everyone. It was also a validation that a woman's portrayal of on-screen intimacy could bring something new and exciting to the table. Ultimately their respect for me and their willingness to incorporate a different life experience resulted in a show that was better. That is the gift of diversity. **CE**

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### LILLIAN E. BENSON, ACE, RECEIVES BPM'S TRAILBLAZER AWARD



**L**illian E. Benson, ACE, received Black Public Media's prestigious Trailblazer Award on May 1 at The Apollo Stages in Harlem, New York, during the PitchBLACK Forum & Awards, an annual celebration of filmmaking and immersive media. "This year is especially meaningful as we honor the remarkable Lillian Benson, whose career has helped pave the way for so many and whose commitment to mentoring is shaping a new generation of artists," said Leslie Fields-Cruz, executive director of BPM.

Benson's range of work includes the PBS civil rights series *Eyes On the Prize II*, for which she was Emmy nominated; *Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise*; *Get in the Way: The Journey of John Lewis* and *Beyond the Steps: Alvin Ailey American Dance*.

In 1991, Benson became the first woman of color invited to join American Cinema Editors, and in 2022, she received its Career Achievement Award. She has also been honored by the Motion Picture Editors Guild with its Fellowship & Service Award. She currently serves on the ACE board and as chair of the ACE Diversity in Editing Mentoring Committee, as well as the board of MPEG and as co-chair of its DEI Committee.

For eight seasons, Benson was an editor of the NBC series *Chicago Med*. She directed two educational documentaries, *All Our Sons: Fallen Heroes of 9/11* and *Amen: The Life and Music of Jester Hairston*, and collaborated with director-choreographer Debbie Allen on several projects, including Lifetime Movie of the Week *Life Is Not a Fairytale: The Fantasia Barrino Story*. Benson is currently editing the independent feature *Flash Before the Bang*, a coming-of-age story of a deaf athlete.

"I consider it a gift that I can help tell the stories of everyday people, whether historical or fictional, who do extraordinary things, who make the world just a little bit better by their actions." **CE**



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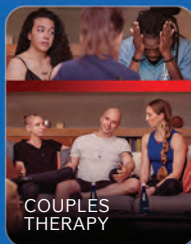


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# WHAT'S NEW!

## NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NAB SHOW 2025


**D**uring an ACE panel at the recent NAB Show for FMC's Post-Production World conference in Las Vegas, a crowd eagerly listened to career advice from ACE president Sabrina Plisco, ACE; past ACE president and current vice president Kevin Tent, ACE; and Michael McCusker, ACE. Emphasized by the panel were the importance of communication and the drive to never give up.

Academy Award winner McCusker (*Ford v Ferrari*) discussed the value of listening to others. "It's important to recognize good answers when they come along, because I don't have all the answers."

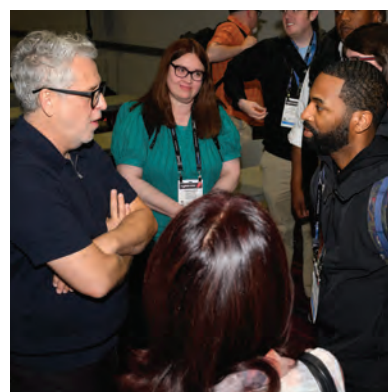
Tent talked about acting performance in *The Descendants*, for which he was Oscar nominated, saying, "95% of decisions made in the editing room were performance generated."

Multiple Emmy nominee Plisco, who skillfully blended live action and animation for the hybrid comedy *Smurfs* said, "Try to hang on to the first laugh, and remember it." She went on to say that this is "an industry built on relationships," as she encouraged the audience to meet people and get involved.

Prior to the panel, Tent and professor/editor Katy Skjerpig, ACE, announced the launch of the ACE Editing Education Initiative. The ACE Educational Center's efforts to improve the student editing experience has successfully culminated in ACE's collaboration with Netflix and with the support of cybersecurity firm Irdeto. Now, participating film students will be provided raw dailies, video instructions and interviews with editors of Netflix's *The Queen's Gambit*, *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *The Old Guard* and *Somebody Feed Phil*, giving students a real-world editing experience and access to ACE editors.

During another special session at NAB, Myron Kerstein, ACE, and cinematographer Alice Brooks, ASC, discussed the importance of collaboration in the filmmaking process before an enthusiastic crowd. A symbiotic working relationship between the pair formed while working together on several projects and was a key element in creating their latest, *Wicked: Part 1*. Trust, respect, friendship and daily communication between editor and cinematographer helped deliver director Jon M. Chu's vision of the musical adaptation. 

— ELLEN GALVIN







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# NAB SHOW 2025

BY HARRY B. MILLER III, ACE



“Add some chimps, we’ll have a carnival”

- Bad Boys (1995)

**W**alking into an NAB convention hall is like entering a carnival. Without the smell. The place is jammed with people, walking in all directions. There are hundreds of booths and displays in three Las Vegas Convention Center halls. Every vendor is trying to attract you with bright lights, big video displays, people talking over speakers about their products. If you aren’t careful, someone will approach you from every booth with “Can I help you? Can I scan your ID badge?” You learn to avoid eye contact with everyone, for fear of getting trapped into an unwanted sales pitch.

The South Hall is where post-production companies are set up. Over a hundred companies have booths/display areas that are from enormous (Blackmagic Design) to tiny (the Associated Press ... why are they here?).

The categories of companies range from video post-production hardware and software, to broadcast production (live switching, on-screen graphics), to cloud storage, to I-don’t-know-what-they-do (and much less why they’re here).

The theme that is repeated all over the hall is ‘integrating media solutions,’ or some variation of those words. An amorphous, buzzword-y phrase, that really is meaningless. What a majority of the vendors were actually selling, and what that phrase ‘media solutions’ may mean, was some version of media in the cloud for editing, broadcast and distribution. Even Avid had their version of a cloud/media product.

The most interesting companies/presentations for a film editor included Blackmagic Design, Adobe and Avid. Avid had the least impressive setup: mostly it seemed promoting its news editing system/workflow called Wolftech News. But attempting to get information about their latest software, including the new integration with Flawless AI, was limited to one presenter showing the current Media Composer, who was busy showing off other things to other people.

Taking more than twice the floor space of Avid was Adobe. At multiple demo stations there was displayed their latest video and audio software. It included Premiere Pro, After Effects and Audition. New features include Generative Extend, to add

video frames, extend or compress music to fit a different run time, and auto-generate captions in multiple languages.

Then there was Blackmagic Design: Their floorspace was over three times the size of Adobe’s (6X of Avid’s). And over many stations were demonstrations of their latest DaVinci Resolve Studio beta. There was also some Blackmagic hardware, but Resolve Studio dominated. This one software package includes the industry standard for color grading, their Edit page (or module), sound editing/mixing page (Fairlight), and VFX page (Fusion). What they are promoting is a single solution for all parts of post-production, that can all be networked and shared.

What was striking was how advanced Resolve is over their competition. On one workstation you can ingest and transcode media, edit picture and sound, create advanced visual effects, cut and mix dialogue/music/SFX, color grade, then deliver a high-resolution master. All for \$325. Not per month – just \$325 all in. Amazing.

The latest beta features include Blackmagic Cloud (of course), cloud folder sharing, proxy generator, vertical timeline layout (for smartphone videos), voice isolation and leveling, automatic depth map for VFX, audio effects chain (up to 6 FX at a time).

Then there is the new technology integration. AI IntelliScript: Each clip is transcribed, and the media clips can be cut into a timeline (including alternates) to match a script. AI Music Editor: Adjust the length of a music clip to a different length, without changing the pitch or speed. AI Dialogue Matcher: Match sound takes for tone, level and room environment. AI Magic Mask: Automatically mask and isolate object in a clip. AI Voice Convert: Model new dialogue to an existing clip. And on, and on.

Resolve’s latest beta is truly impressive. It makes Media Composer look like your grandpa’s NLE. Other NLEs have some of these AI features. Media Composer has a similar feature script building feature through a plugin, but I wasn’t able to see that either.



Several companies offered cloud storage of production media. The most interesting were:

**Strada:** developed by Michael Cioni (Frame.io), Strada creates a peer-to-peer network from a local hard drive to a remote workstation. I can attach a media drive through Strada which then can be viewed remotely. It is designed to have low latency between the server and the remote station. For now, however, it can only be used for viewing media.

**LucidLink:** another system for cloud sharing. But you have to upload your media to their server, hosted on Backblaze cloud storage. It is encrypted and also streams with low latency.

**Avid on AWS:** media sharing over the AWS cloud. Again, the media has to be uploaded.

**EditShare:** This is a hardware storage device which can be linked to several workstations, locally or remotely. The smallest device is \$12,000 for 32 TB of storage.

**Jellyfish:** This was the most interesting and secure solution. It is also a hardware storage device, where media can be shared locally or remotely. One can attach up to 16 workstations, it has 32+ TB of available storage, pricing starts at \$6,000, it can internally transcode media (including .mxf files), and is able to lock folders.

The cloud solution that had 'on prem' (on premises) hardware storage seem to be the better option. Most of the cloud storage options were AWS (Amazon's cloud), Cloudflare, Backblaze, etc. Storing media in the cloud is less secure. Storing editing media on a local device and having that attach to multiple workstations in multiple locations is more secure and, probably more reliable.

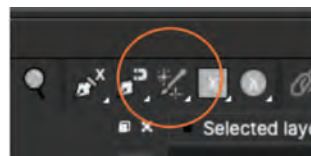
**Then there were these guys:** 'TransMedia Dynamics' which offers 'Media Asset Management' with AI. After a short conversation, I'm still not sure what they do. But they were very nice. And scanned my ID badge. You're welcome.



**Boris FX Adds Amazing New Tool:** Continuum Complete is one of the many excellent visual plugins from the ever-expanding Boris FX software collection. Their developers have added a tool called **Mocha Matte Assist ML** (Machine

Learning). Previously, the Mocha plugin was added to all (I think) their newer BCC+ plugins. Mocha allows one to select an object in a clip, usually by selecting many points around the object to draw a spline, track that object's movement/size, and then change the object in many ways. This could include painting it out of the clip, changing the color or changing the object itself. The Matte Assist is an amazing addition. By merely selecting an object on one frame, Matte Assist will draw a mask and track it through the clip.

First, an effect is added. Color: B&W in this case. The effect editor opens, and the Mocha Mask is selected. It opens the Mocha interface.

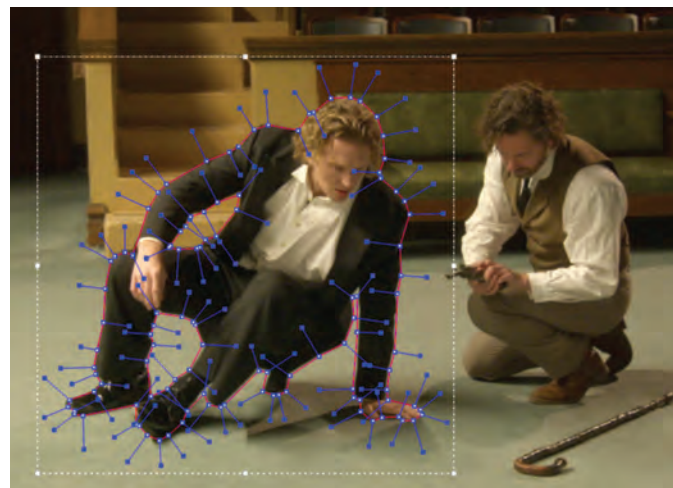


Next, the new Mask Tool, the Object Brush, is selected.

Then, you click on the object you want to mask. Mocha fills out the object, the person on the left. You paint out any areas that shouldn't be included. This happens in seconds.



The painted area is converted to a *spline*, that is drawn around the subject.






The object is then tracked throughout the clip, which is shown by the yellow bounding line.



Finally, the tracked object has the effect applied. In this case, the black-and-white man begins from laying down, sits up, then walks across the room.



This tracking isn't always perfect. But it is easily modified and improved. And it is a vast improvement over previous methods of choosing and tracking objects. I have used Mocha Pro for tracking and compositing images for many years. This new feature, Matte Assist ML, is amazingly effective and will save hours in manual tracking. It is magic! 

Oppenheimer  
Kraven the Hunter  
Migration  
Postcard from Earth/The Sphere  
Transformers One  
The Super Mario Bros. Movie  
Creed 3  
Elvis  
King Richard

Sinners  
Dune: Part Two  
Mufasa: The Lion King  
Despicable Me 4  
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Origin

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Daredevil: Born Again  
Sugar  
When They See Us  
The Underground Railroad  
The Afterparty  
Hawkeye  
Straight Outta Compton  
Mad Max: Fury Road



A man with a beard and a woman with curly hair are sitting at a dark wooden table in a dimly lit bar. They are both holding beer bottles and looking at each other. The background is dark with some warm lighting from a lamp.

Outstanding Editing  
for a Drama Series

**ROBERT FROST**

"IDENTITY THEFT"

"SO MUCH DAMN FUN"

ROLLING STONE

A close-up shot of a man with long, dark hair and a beard, wearing glasses and a dark, textured scarf. He is looking slightly to the left with a serious expression.

Outstanding Editing  
for a Drama Series

**HARRISON WALL**

"HELLO GOODBYE"

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

**SLOW  
HORSES**

NOW STREAMING



# Behind the Opening Sequence of



BY SUSAN VAILL, ACE

**T**o celebrate NBC's *Saturday Night Live* and its milestone 50th season, the documentary *Ladies & Gentlemen ... 50 Years of SNL Music* opens with an exuberant musical montage combining some of the most memorable performances from the long-running series. When the sequence debuted on Instagram in January as a teaser for the documentary co-directed by Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson and Oz Rodriguez, Thompson proclaimed, "Here is the cold open. A musical world in which everyone fits in." A musical world he credits to "the GAWD" John MacDonald.

MacDonald spent a year crafting this unique open – which features musical guests from Queen to Beyoncé to Billie Eilish – in his off-hours, while working full time with Questlove and The Roots as a music producer on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. The remainder of the two-hour documentary was cut by Rodriguez and James Lester.

MacDonald called the open a "remix" for a long time. "Initially, it was just supposed to be very – not generic but a simple kind of 'music through the years' intro to the show," he says. "And then, as we got into it we saw this opportunity to do something that hasn't been done for that kind of special. Something a little more artful. And Questlove – Ahmir – is always looking for new, interesting ways to communicate music, and he's such a fan of *SNL*. There's 50 years of music to go through, a celebration of different styles and different eras. It's a very amazing opportunity to bring them all together."

Sifting through hundreds of performances to create this tribute, MacDonald matched songs' tempos, keys and beats-per-minute to overlap them in perfect synchronization; he matched eye lines between artists who were filmed decades apart; he superimposed match cuts, rotoscopes and split screens to allow the musicians to collaborate and virtually share the stage. To watch these seven minutes is to experience the seamless rollercoaster of a perfect mixtape, the blur of a flip-book of

musical legends, and the delight in its *Hollywood Squares*-meets-*Inception* expression of editorial joy.

The cold open begins with a vintage NBC peacock logo, circa 1975 (the charming analog graphics are a gentle reminder of how TV itself has changed over the half-century). We hear murmurs of raw production audio over black, then see backstage footage of Maya Rudolph preparing to introduce the musical guest after a live commercial break in 2024. The air is heavy as a female stage manager counts down, "5, 4, 3, 2, standby..." Maya Rudolph looks into the lens and says firmly: "Ladies and gentlemen..."

But instead of Rudolph finishing her sentence, MacDonald subverts audience anticipation and begins a montage of jump cuts repeating the phrase "Ladies and Gentlemen..." over and over by host after host, making it a signature *SNL* through line all its own.

"That was the first thing we talked about," says MacDonald. "The very first thing Ahmir said. 'I want to just have: Ladies and gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen ...'" Thus in these first few cuts, musician-filmmakers Questlove and MacDonald unveil their gambit: They are writing music with the picture and sound of *SNL* itself, making a wholly original work of art. MacDonald, a former trombone player and composer, wrote and performed the rhythmic instrumental that accompanies the jump cuts from Rudolph to the hosts, and when the beat drops, the hosts multiply into split screens where each member contributes one word to the refrain of "Ladies and gentlemen."

"The nice thing about being a composer is that I can solve my own problems. I needed something underneath that bit, so I wrote that." MacDonald relates. "I wanted to establish some kind of undercurrent momentum, but not something too overt; but also do something that would shoehorn into the actual music. So I kept it in the key that would put itself in there."

At this point, the first musical guests begin to appear in between panels of hosts like Scarlett Johansson and Will Ferrell. Fittingly, Billy Preston, "the fifth Beatle," was also the first musical guest on *SNL*'s 1975 premiere. The montage blooms faster as more vocals enter the chat, building tension to a release when the music stops short on the Three Amigos: Martin Short, Steve Martin and Chevy Chase. Short's dry "Ladies and gentlemen..." concludes the first 35 seconds of this cold open. We take a breath.

MacDonald's music cue returns for next 20 seconds under a new section: a rhyming, spoken-word sonnet culled from the





talking head interviews of artists like Justin Timberlake, Dua Lipa and Mick Jagger. Phrases and words are cut together to create a single statement from many sources: “Saturday. New York. Jolt of Electricity. Iconic. Musical History. Game-changing for a network show. ‘Sorry ladies and gentlemen.’ Here we go. Excitement. Energy. Adrenaline. Live. Absolutely fuckin’ terrifying.”

Voices and images accelerate into cacophony again, with the blur of history whizzing by until Sabrina Carpenter’s viral boast halts it all “I’m on *SNL* and you’re not!”

We are one minute in.

“I’m a big believer in tension and release, ways that you can almost create this euphoric sense of arrival,” says MacDonald. “And I’m always thinking musically with that. How can I build something imperceptibly, but then pay it off, in an almost cathartic way?”

What happens in the next six minutes is an infectious, unexpected and emotional mashup of music you would never imagine could go together with such effortless flow. Cher sings “I Found Someone” full screen with her band, and then suddenly she is backed by the “MMMBop” of Hanson. And it works. Prince duets in split screen with his arch-rival Rick James, whose song “Super Freak” dovetails deliciously into Duran Duran’s “Girls on Film.”

Possibly the most astonishing section begins with Queen’s “Under Pressure,” famously sampled by Vanilla Ice. MacDonald and Questlove defy expectations again and pair the iconic bass line of “Under Pressure,” not with the notorious “Ice Ice Baby,” but with the opening saxophone/violin honks of “Ants Marching” by the Dave Matthews Band. Freddie Mercury and Dave Matthews begin to scat side by side onscreen. Vanilla Ice impatiently jumps into the split screen, and in a carefully arranged composition, Mercury seems to stare at Ice’s performance with a wary gaze. As Vanilla Ice dances to “Ice Ice Baby” and “Under Pressure,” we suddenly hear the big guitar licks of “She Drives Me Crazy” by Fine Young Cannibals and then Michael Bolton’s “Love Is a Wonderful Thing.” That’s four songs playing on top of each other.

Says Macdonald, “Initially, I wanted it to be just a straight montage the whole time. But as we were going, I realized, ‘Oh, I have an opportunity to make this almost like a suite – where you’re introducing a concept and then going away from it and letting things breathe, then circling back on itself several minutes into it. So this was the very first thing I showed them. My proof-of-concept started with the Vanilla Ice part going into Fine Young Cannibals and Michael Bolton.”

This occurs at around the three minute point. “I want[ed] this to be a turn after we’ve established other things. So I began from the middle and expanded outward. I find that, especially with music, it’s all about landing, and it’s easier to create the landing first and then work backwards from that,” he says. “So every time I finished a piece, I’d say, ‘Okay, now what tempo or what key? What style can I hand off to from this?’ ... It’s 50 years of music. There’s tons of options, but you can’t just arbitrarily throw anything in there. It’s got to feel almost inevitable.”

MacDonald employed software tools, including Logic Pro, to make click tracks and to isolate the music stems; Adobe Premiere,



to edit picture and music with the click tracks and waveforms; Adobe After Effects, to animate the split screens and subtle rotoscoping (i.e. when Morris Day and The Time dance from their frame into R.E.M.’s); MetaGrid Pro and Keyboard Maestro, to automate tasks like assigning clip colors and displaying audio meters; and MindNode, to create a searchable database of each song by date, key and beats per minute.

“I wanted to let the real songs live up to each other. And not everything goes together, so it was a lot of work. It’s fun, but also painstaking,” MacDonald says. “It was hundreds of tracks. It was a huge project.” But he had earned the director’s trust. “Questlove’s ear is crazy – he’s just an amazing amazing musician. He’s got perfect pitch. It’s so fun working with him because we’ll both look at each other like, ‘We’re thinking the same thing, aren’t we?’”

MacDonald started as an NBC page and began working for *SNL* in 2004 – the same year Andy Samberg, Kristen Wiig, Bill Hader and Colin Hanks joined the cast – and spent 12 years with the sketch series doing licensing and pre-tape elements. This overlapped for eight years with music producing on *Late Night* and *The Tonight Show*, where he worked closely with Questlove, found encouragement from Fallon and made a gangsta rapper out of NBC anchor Brian Williams, cutting clips of Williams’ news broadcasts into viral Snoop Dogg and Sugarhill Gang covers.

MacDonald cherishes his work home at 30 Rock. “I’ve worked with so many amazing editors who taught me so much, just by osmosis. I feel like I’m nothing compared to the geniuses around here,” he says, adding that the montage is his “love letter to the show. ... To be in a position to make something like this is surreal. But such a privilege.” **CE**



# The Penguin

Henk Van Eeghen, ACE,  
gives Colin Farrell's  
Gotham gangster a lighter  
and a very dark side

BY ADRIAN PENNINGTON



**H**BO show *The Penguin* picks up where 2022 movie *The Batman*, starring Robert Pattinson, ends, in Gotham City flooded on the eve of a mayoral election with The Penguin licking his lips over the wreckage. Colin Farrell's Oswald Cobb takes center stage in the eight-part DC Comics series which dives into his rise to power and deeper into the character behind the scarred, bloated and crippled exterior.

Henk Van Eeghen, ACE (*Lost*, *Fargo*, *The Morning Show*) cut the Eddie nominated pilot "After Hours," 106 and 108 working principally with showrunner Lauren LeFranc who also wrote both premiere and finale.

"When we first talked with Lauren I really liked what she was thinking, making it very grounded and real. Not like a comic book at all but much more of a dark gangster world," he says.

Van Eeghen watched some movies in the DCU catalog, notably *The Batman* directed by Matt Reeves which introduced Colin Farrell's Oz Cobb/Penguin. Reeves is an executive producer of the series, instrumental in hiring LeFranc and he supervised the writing.

"We didn't want to make Oz too much of a caricature," says Van Eeghen of working with Reeves. "Why shouldn't he also be funny and vulnerable as well as violent? Colin Farrell, of course, did a totally amazing job considering that we can really see his eyes and his mouth, because the rest of his face was a mask of make-up and prosthetics."

With director Craig Zobel, Van Eeghen developed the character in Episode 101. "Because Colin gave us such a good range we were able to take his performance in one direction which was to make the character slightly lighter and another version that was tweaked to be slightly darker."

That balance sets up a conflict for the audience because Oz does some nasty things including threats to kill teenage sidekick Victor (played by Rhenzy Feliz) and we learn about a very dark incident in his past when he murdered his own brothers.

"At the same time, we're rooting for him to succeed because the Falcones are worse in many ways," says Van Eeghen. "I loved *The Penguin* as a character but every time he kills somebody who you care for I really hurt, you know? In the finale it goes so dark I was actually upset for a couple of days working on those scenes. I always hoped that he'd change. He has so many opportunities to do the right thing and, in the end, he doesn't. That's a really interesting character to mold."

From the beginning of 101, Oz exhibits a lighter side of his personality. The editor selected takes to show him making "a little smile here, a little sweet twinkle in his eye, maybe a performance that has a little sing-song to it. Matt wanted to show Oz, at least in the first episode, as the underdog, therefore we empathize more with him than those who hold power."

The character's relationship with his mother, Francis (Deirdre O'Connell), who suffers from dementia, is important in this regard because it shows his vulnerability. "I think his mother is probably the darkest side of him. Ultimately, she encouraged the darkest side of him even though she believes she didn't. I think it helps explain why Oz makes the wrong choices."

The arc of Penguin's character is paralleled by that of Sofia Falcone (Cristin Milioti) who is equally as conflicted. We are introduced to her as a psychotic before we learn more about her backstory which alters our view of her as victim and an underdog pitted against the rest of her family. Yet she too is capable of extreme violence and is ultimately gunning for Oz's head.

"It's certainly an interesting dynamic and not one that is black or white," the editor says. "Again, you wish that she would make choice B but she goes for choice A which is like classic Greek tragedy. This is in Lauren's writing as well. The actors understood that they were playing a choice as opposed to a plot. The plot followed the lead character's choices as opposed to characters being driven by events. That's really a very strong element of her script."



Van Eeghen adds, “I think you can apply that to our own lives where we have choices to go down different paths and when we choose one we close off another which could have led to a different story.”

That’s not to say there’s a paucity of narrative in the series. Each episode is packed with the machinations of different characters usually stabbing each other in the back (sometimes literally). “Getting that narrative momentum on screen and yet balancing the characters so we have time with them was probably hardest for the pilot and the finale because they were the longest scripts. We cut away from certain scenes in the finale a little earlier than you would expect. because we just ran out of time. It just got too long and something had to go.

“That was a fun exercise, trying different endings of scenes to see what would work and what would still tell the story, and would this scene have enough breathing room to allow for the character to develop.”

There are over 3000 VFX shots in the show, mostly backgrounds and augmentation of a rundown Gotham City rather than CGI explosions.

“I like to do a lot of temp visual effects myself,” says Van Eeghen who worked with VFX supervisor Johnny Han. “I find it very relaxing to just tinker around. Johnny was often in the edit room, which I appreciated so much, because normally they are remote from the room. In this case, he came by and talked ideas and we tried stuff out. Then we’d bring in the executive producers and showrunners.”

Van Eeghen usually works out of his home suite in L.A. but he flew to New York and worked with Sobel for couple of weeks before joining LeFranc at her office back in L.A. There was a certain amount of back and forth of ideas and reviewing of cuts with fellow editors on the show Meg Reticker and Andy Keir. “They were in New York the whole time so we would do a ClearView session and collaborate that way. We did the same with Matt Reeves too. Lauren really liked being in the room with me so we could go through dailies. She’s a very patient and thoughtful showrunner, who likes to take her time and search for the best moments, and the right footage.

The series’ opening scene between Oz and Alberto Falcone, heir to the mob’s empire, is audacious in being a lengthy



(10+ minute) dialogue during most of which the characters are sitting down opposite each other.

“When I read it on the page, I felt that this is going to be a challenge. I had some prior experience when I cut an episode of *Watchmen* which was just two people in a restaurant. On *The Penguin*, this could have been a very dry scene of two people talking. I worked it and worked it until we had the right variety of shot and tone.”

Another lengthy scene in the series conclusion, “Great or Little Thing,” when Sofia has Oz and his mother tied up in a run-down nightclub had its own challenges. “Characters were moving all around the room so if you took out two lines all of a sudden they were in another place so you had to constantly figure out what the choreography was. We just worked through the whole thing and found the best performances, tried out different tones. It was a lot of fun to work on that scene.”

Van Eeghen also enjoyed his first experience working on a DCU project and particularly helping establish a version of Gotham that is dirty, grimy and full of violence.

“Gotham City is falling apart. There’s a lot of destruction and decay and we were very aware of using certain angles in scenes so that you could see the background. That’s also why it was great working with Johnny because he’d describe what was going to be in the background of shots that weren’t complete. We were aware that if we didn’t use those wider shots, you’d never understand the geography of Gotham or the state it’s in.”

The relationship between Oz and the teenager, Victor, is intriguing since on some level, Penguin is a father figure for Victor while Oz might look on Victor as a son.

“When they first meet, Oz has a sympathy for Vic because Vic has a speech impediment. He kind of relates to that and takes Vic under his wing. He also really enjoys having the kid around. I think you get a little bit of a glimpse of what Oz’s father was like or how Oz was when he was growing up. But Oz does what he does in the end because anyone close to him makes him vulnerable. And in that equation there is only going to be one outcome.”

Van Eeghen is currently working on Amazon Prime Video series *Blade Runner 2099* created by Silka Luisa starring Michelle Yeoh. [CE](#)



“

I always hoped that he’d change. He has so many opportunities to do the right thing and, in the end, he doesn’t. That’s a really interesting character to mold.”



# THE PITT



**Real life trauma bleeds into the medical drama where Mark Strand, ACE, wields the scalpel** | BY ADRIAN PENNINGTON

**A** TV medical drama set in an emergency room starring Noah Wyle created by the team behind *ER*? How could *The Pitt* not be a revival of NBC's multi-award winning primetime juggernaut from the '90s?

"Like everyone, I assumed that this was going to be a reboot but that changed when I read this script," says Mark Strand, ACE. "I said, 'I'm sure you guys aren't interested in making another *ER* – so what are we doing here?'"

Strand's initial meeting was with showrunner R. Scott Gemmill, who served as an executive producer on *ER*, and *ER* star Noah Wyle (also a producer and writer of *The Pitt*, Episode 104), and told them straight-up of his concerns.

"They shared a very specific pitch which included reference to *The Zone of Interest*. *The Pitt* depicts a place where life goes on and the camera moves through that space but we do not divide it up like other shows. We go through a trauma room, we enter into another trauma room, then we come back to the first room and see how the trauma has progressed. In other words, whether the camera is there or not the harrowing events continue."

Another notable difference between *The Pitt* and other medical drama is its format which plays out in near real-time over a 15-hour shift at Pittsburgh Trauma Medical Hospital.

He found this format helped to deliver the series' intensity. "The viewer is always trying to catch up with what's happening. That is the show's energy and I was really excited to explore that editorially."

John Wells, *ER* showrunner, executive produced *The Pitt*, directed Episode 101 and hired his long-time editing partner to cut it and five other episodes (104, 107, 110, 112 and 115). Their relationship began on *Animal Kingdom* and continued on *Shameless*, *Emperor of Ocean Park* and a pilot that became *Rescue: HI-Surf*.

"John and I have a great shorthand. There's a lot of trust there. We'd work either in the office or from home which is where I'd cut my first passes. I'd head to set if there was anything particular he wanted me to know about. He gave me headline notes about how he wanted the camera to move, how we were going to be introduced to the ER space, and then I was afforded the freedom to support that from the footage."

The viewer is immediately immersed in medical jargon and assumed knowledge between healthcare professional characters. Other shows have done something similar. HBO series *Industry*, for example, gave few concessions to the viewer's lack of understanding about investment banking but just as in that case the decision adds to the drama's verisimilitude.

"It's actually very hard to read the script because of all the specificity of procedure," Strand says. "But I trusted that [the writers] knew that the medical was accurate."

"Once we got into shooting I'd go to set to see [technical advisor and executive producer] Joe Sachs. For example, in Episode 107, there's a surgical procedure called ECMO (a machine that pumps and oxygenates a patient's blood outside the body). I wanted him to tell me what's happening so I could cut the sequence correctly. Joe explained the process and sent me YouTube links. My Wikipedia was smoking at times as I tried to work it out!"

The producers confront *ER* head on with the bold choice to open the show with a close-up of Wyle as Dr. Michael 'Robby' Robinavitch, walking into work. "I was worried that audiences would carry their history of [Wyle's *ER* character] John Carter into *The Pitt* and color their perception of the show," Strand says. "That doesn't happen thanks to the script, and Noah's performance. In fact, audience familiarity with Noah gave them an entrance into this show which has been fantastic."

Strand found set visits helpful and since the stage was just a couple of blocks from his suite at Warner Bros. it was easy to hop over. "It was helpful to see the physical geography and the choreography of all the characters," he says. "If I know the action is in this room I could also understand that I would see a person entering the room from the back, for example."

The opening shots of 101 establish the locale as Pittsburgh [not the Chicago of *ER*] before we see Wyle in scrubs walking into the patients' waiting room area. "I wasn't quite sure of what this space was or when we needed to know that we're in the heart of the emergency room. That was worked out in discussions with John and going over to set."

"From that I understood we're entering into this space so we can be close on Noah. The pressure and the sound of the waiting



room then hits him as he moves through, but we don't need to stay wide and introduce the space all at once, because we're going to stay in this contained area for 15 episodes.

"We can get the audience into the heart of the trauma ward, then start showing some of the secondary spaces, then triage. When we introduce each of the doctors is where we broaden out visually and introduce the space."

Strand and fellow editors Joey Reinisch, Lauren Pendergrass and Annie Eifrig, each had a board above their Avids listing all the characters' names and jobs. That proved essential given the huge cast and the haphazard nature in which the audience is introduced to them.

"We all shared our cuts and wanted to see how each of us was building off of the other. Because it's one continuous day, there is no week between episodes, so every character and story arc had to feel continuous between one hour and the next."

The show was shot sequentially and in lengthy takes by DP Johanna Coelho (who shot every episode) which did more than help the editors assemble the narrative.

"If they did a retake or even a pickup from halfway through a take, they would still reset back to square one because all of the extras had to be in sync," Strand explains. "As a viewer you're only moving through the space once. My job is to help direct you as to what you're thinking as you do so. It was very helpful, not only to shoot sequentially, but to go back and do full resets and move through the space in the same way. By the time I've finished cutting, I know what the space is, who the characters are, what they're doing and where I should be for each of the beats.

"Also, the way Johanna and her team moved the camera especially in transitions between characters allowed me to stay

in shots much longer than I would normally. There are a lot of lines that are not played on camera, which they would be in a traditional network show. Instead, we are with our doctors watching them piece together what it is happening in real-time. That allows me to cut for a meaningful reason rather than having to cut because someone flipped a line or because the operators messed up or for any number of reasons. It allows me to only make editorial choices based on story."

The overall approach gives the storytelling an energy and the audience a feeling that they are present in the moment. Deciding not to use a score adds to the texture of this reality. "The lack of music heightens tension rather than directing your emotions. The directive comes from the reality of the medical environment, the believability of the action and the naturalism of performance."


"Scores can be a crutch," he adds. "Sometimes you'd bring in weeping strings to heighten an actor's performance. Without a score, we are reliant on performance and the strength of the writing. This has to play beautifully without anything but a beeping machine in the background. Even though the show is designed around the caregiver and the patient, the actors playing our tertiary characters brought their A-games."

In flashbacks introduced in 101 we learn more about Dr. Robby and the scars of his experiences during COVID. "The flashbacks were very specifically scripted for Robby's story and designed around trigger points in the drama. We shuffled these around a bit depending on where we were with his story."

The throwback to COVID plays into the show's underlying commentary on the state of the healthcare system. The stresses and strains of the system are evident and the medical staff are shown as doing their very best under the pressure. Societal issues go under the microscope including drugs and gun laws. It's a state of affairs that will resonate with viewers outside North America.

"John and Scott are grounding these stories in the reality of our society in a way that can speak to what's happening in other parts of the world. Personally, I am most connected to the stories of the patients and their families who come into the Pitt and find themselves butting up against the limitations of the medical industry."

The show doesn't shy from the grisly reality of emergency surgery or wounds. The staff have to take care of victims of a mass shooting, an event which has the added benefit of forcing them to extend their shift by another three hours – and three episodes. "When I was cutting the pilot and 104, I went in and watched Joey's #102 and Lauren's 103, and then I'd watch my rough cut of #104 again in order to make sure all the story lines are tracking. I was a little concerned to be honest, at how heavy the show might feel. I was upset by 102 (when Dr. Robby has to inform a teenager's parents that their son is brain-dead) and then cut a scene where children have to say goodbye to their father. It's heartbreaking. My concern was whether people would want to watch this as an escape.

"This is a love letter to caregivers and first responders and one way we do that is to highlight how they fight to do their best job even when there are things outside their control holding them back. That's what I think this show does best." 



I said, 'I'm sure you guys aren't interested in making another *ER* – so what are we doing here?'"





# What We Do in the Shadows

How the collaborative editorial team drove a stake through the heart of the vampire mockumentary.

BY LIZA CARDINALE, ACE

**W**hat *We Do in the Shadows* is a vampire mockumentary comedy series that aired on FX and streamed on Hulu for six seasons, ending in 2024. Based on an indie film of the same name written and directed by Taika Waititi and Jemaine Clement, the cult series has earned 29 Emmy nominations (one win) and three Eddie nominations (including a 2025 win for the episode, “Sleep Hypnosis”). As an editor on the show for its final three seasons, I speak from experience when I credit its success in huge measure to the detailed care and attention put into its lengthy post-production process.

The premise of the show is that a group of vampire roommates in Staten Island allow a documentary crew to film their nightly adventures in a verité style. The residents are Nandor the Relentless (Kayvan Novak), Laszlo (Matt Berry), Laszlo’s wife Nadja (Natasia Demetriou), energy vampire Colin Robinson (Mark Proksch) and human ex-familiar Guillermo (Harvey Guillén). The audience might not think too much about the documentary crew but we in editorial always did, taking care to cut every scene as if it wasn’t staged for a camera but caught in a spontaneous moment. In the series finale, this doc crew becomes the main storyline. Mirroring reality, they are packing up and wrapping out, leaving the vampires to go about their eternal lives unobserved. Showrunner Paul Simms’ script included different homage style endings that aired in rotation. Those of us in the *Shadows* “vamily” shed a few tears watching this one come together.

I was a fan of the show before working on it, always a special thrill. During my initial interview with Yana Gorskaya, ACE, and Dane McMaster, ACE, they explained how unconventionally it

**LIZA CARDINALE, ACE**  
Editor: Seasons 4-6



was edited. There was a huge emphasis on teamwork, and a collective process that I hadn’t experienced in all my years in editorial. They would swap cuts back and forth and let each other take passes on their scenes or cut alternative versions. To thrive in this environment, you could not be ego driven or possessive as everyone works together in service of the episode’s potential greatness rather than to put your own stamp on it.

In honor of the collaborative nature of our editing environment, I invited a few people from the *Shadows* post team to contribute to this article. First up is Yana Gorskaya, who I often describe as the Queen of *WWDitS* post. Every single episode has her editorial mark on it, and even while on location in Toronto to direct, she always had an Avid at the ready to give notes on cuts or fiddle around. Over the course of six seasons, Simms recognized her value and promoted her from editor to director and executive producer but she never fully left her home in post. Yana tirelessly protected the integrity of the cutting style and tone she developed in its inception.



**YANA GORSKAYA, ACE**  
Director, Executive Producer,  
Editor: Seasons 1-6

I have been immersed in the world of real life vampires for over a decade now, after agreeing to help Taika Waititi and Jemaine Clement edit their startling mockumentary about the undead. As an editor, I had mostly worked in features, some of them large scale – and the bigger the movie, the more editors involved. I loved the collaborative process of that, just the best brains working together and sharing ideas to make something as good as possible – and I brought that model to my work in TV.



We credit at least two editors on every episode, swapping cuts and working every frame. Every member of the post team is creatively impactful to every episode. One of my favorite *Shadows* traditions is screening the editor's cut together and sharing all of our thoughts to make it better. By the time we submitted a cut to producers, we could confidently say this was the best version we as a team felt good about. It relieved a lot of anxiety and also meant our cuts were polished as heck.

"A case study in that process was the series finale, for which we sweated over absolutely every take and detail, working with dailies shot on real 16mm film, and doing lovingly crafted, as pitch perfect as we could get them, odes to four different iconic films and shows: Maysles Brothers' *Salesman* documentary, *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Usual Suspects* and the *Newhart* finale. I also had the gift of directing this episode, and the prep and production work in landing all of those elements was intensive. But not nearly as intensive as the meticulous work we did in post to capture the essence of those masterworks.



## DANE McMASTER, ACE

*Editor: Seasons 2-6*

One of my favorite aspects of editing a mockumentary is imagining the unseen documentary crew filming the events, then imposing our own creative constraints on the footage we receive. This was especially important with *What We Do in the Shadows* given the fantastical

nature of the show. The more we could ground it in reality, the funnier it would become.

When cutting a scene, we'd always picture the doc crew outside of frame. If the scene takes place in the vampires' home, it's our crew's base camp so they'd have access to capture events with multiple cameras. But when our vampires ventured into spaces in the real world, we'd impose more limitations: usually following them into a new space from behind with one camera and jump-cutting, then waiting a beat or two for our fictional crew to conceivably reposition and capture them from the front.

It often meant using only one camera angle out of the three that shot a scene, opting for the dirtier, more imperfect takes where action was partially blocked, hunting for focus blurs and camera shake, then adding even more focus blurs and camera shake in post. In many ways, it was a process that's the opposite of a traditional show where the cut becomes smoother as it's refined.

Our secret weapon in post was Yana Gorskaya. No one knew the show better and she'd give us notes on every cut as well as co-editing a number of episodes every season.



## VARUN VISWANATH, ACE

*Assistant Editor, Editor:  
Seasons 1-2*

When we started on the pilot, we had no idea what scale the show was going to get to – it was early in Taika's rise to global notoriety. I remember cutting the first versions of the "Creepy Paper" scene – Baron Afanas' (*The Shape of Water*'s Doug



Jones) coffin opening – and making 50 music and sound design alts. My web search history was completely destroyed with all the weird artwork I searched for to put in the pilot, and all the fun Photoshops Holden Ward (post-production supervisor) and I did to put our vampires' faces onto old paintings. We felt like such a tight family right from the beginning.



### ANTONIA DE BARROS

*Assistant Editor, Editor:  
Seasons 2-3*

[In fan favorite episode “On the Run,” directed by Gorskaya, Laszlo leaves Staten Island for Arizona and goes by the name “Jackie Daytona” to evade a debt he owes an old landlord (played by Mark Hamill). Over the course of the episode he

builds a new life and his disguise is simply a toothpick hanging out of his mouth.]

I remember doing an internal screening for the Jackie Daytona episode. We had gotten a note that it was confusing that no one could recognize Laszlo with the toothpick disguise. The network thought it made the other characters look stupid and that it was too easy. So together in the room, we came up with doing a talking head montage where Laszlo explains how he has always used this disguise over the years and how effective it's been. It's only 10 seconds worth of audio and two pictures of Laszlo with the toothpick but it solved the note. In future seasons, they started to record generic intros to talking heads for the characters

in case such a need arose again. There was a symbiotic relationship between production, writers and editorial.



### THOM CALDERÓN

*VFX Editor, Editor: Seasons 3-6*

*Shadows* was a joyful journey of collaborative freedom I've rarely had in my experience of over 35 years in the Editors Guild. The show grew from its scrappy start, defining its voice in a well-oiled operation under the effective leadership of our director/editor/

producer, Yana Gorskaya. Everyone in editorial had an opportunity to contribute ideas as the cuts emerged. Each episode got better when brought out to the light of a shared viewing experience. Comedy struggles in a vacuum, and *Shadows* editorial was an environment where speaking your mind honestly was encouraged and vital.

As VFX editor, I created temp effects beginning at the early stages of assemblies to help define the timing of visual gags and enhance story points. These shots then graduated to the VFX team for a final polish under VFX supervisor Stephen Pugh. The style was “documentary real” yet supernatural, a paradox that always made for more funny. The AEs and I were extended opportunities to cut. I was lucky enough to edit on three terrific episodes where I had the chance to decapitate celebrities, parody local news and satirize cop shows. With luck, another show comes along in my career that can be so rewarding. **CE**

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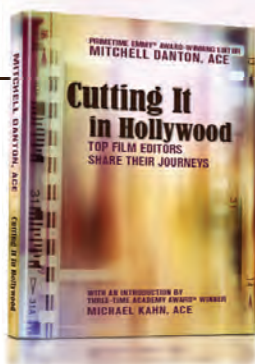
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# The Residence

The editors behind Netflix's murder mystery use flashbacks to solve a puzzle in the White House

BY MATT ALLEN



**E**xecutive producer Shonda Rhimes and writer/producer Paul William Davies scored a hit with Washington, D.C.-set thriller *Scandal* which aired on ABC from 2012-2018 and have returned with another political drama this time with added comedy and murder mystery.

*The Residence* is an eight-part miniseries produced for Netflix by Rhimes' Shondaland with the White House as its main location. There's a murderer lurking in plain sight who sleuth Cordelia Cupp (played by Uzo Aduba) – the 'best detective in the world' – must unearth from 157 suspects and 132 rooms. The series also stars Randall Park, Giancarlo Esposito, Susan Kelechi Watson, Jane Curtin, and Edwina Findley.

This skillfully made whodunnit plays out like a mix of *Bridgerton* (also produced by Shondaland) meets *Knives Out* meets *Only Murders in the Building* but with a chemistry all of its own. It was crafted by the four-person editing team of Heather Capps (*Portlandia*), John Daigle (*Hacks*), Ali Greer, ACE (*Barry*) and Roger Nygard, ACE (whose credits include HBO's Watergate satire *White House Plumbers*).

Showrunner William Davies based his creation on the non-fiction book, *The Residence: Inside the Private World of the White House* by Kate Andersen Brower, which detailed the lives and inner workings of the White House staff.

"Paul's idea was to add the murder mystery to give it a plot thrust," notes Nygard, who joined with Daigle to talk with *CinemaEditor*. "He loves murder mysteries and Agatha Christie in particular. There are tons of homages throughout where Paul is having fun with referencing what came before."

For instance, all the episode titles are named after famous murder mystery novels, movies or short stories such as *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Third Man* and *Dial M for Murder*.

Daigle notes, "The scripts were the essence of the show, and the tone was so specific on the page that it really became about serving that. Our directors, Liza Johnson (*The Last of Us*) and Jaffar Mahmood (*The Great*), did a phenomenal job."

Greer cut Episodes 1 and 3, Capps cut 2 and 4 with Nygard and Daigle cutting the second block. "When I came on, there were existing cuts for the first four episodes which Ali and Heather had done a phenomenal job on of laying the groundwork for that tone that continued to develop throughout the process guided by Paul."

As Nygard points out, "This show is not a single camera, 'look at me, I can do everything in one shot' kind of show. No, there are thousands of cuts, thousands of edits. This show is built in the editing room."

Notably that includes copious use of flashbacks which the editor says were not part of the original script. "All the flashbacks were added later," Nygard explains. "Paul thought we should start adding a few flashbacks in some scenes to remind the audience of clues we had laid down earlier that maybe had been overwhelmed by other information. Once we started adding some flashbacks in, we began to layer in more and it seemed like there was no upward limit to how many we could add that worked. We were continually injecting more. It shows how Paul is thinking editorially as a showrunner and suggesting editorial ideas and letting us run with it."

One of the biggest editorial challenges was the opening of the final episode "The Mystery of the Yellow Room" (which both Daigle and Nygard edited) that featured the use of split screen.

"Paul had always intended to open the finale with A.B. Wynter [played by Esposito]," Daigle says. "He is the Chief Usher whose murder during a State Dinner has driven the whole mystery of the show. And to this point in the show, we've only seen him through the perspective of other characters. We've never followed him on his own. So, the intention for the opening part of Episode 108 was to finally follow this character and view the night of the murder through his eyes, and of his experience as all the chaos then ensues."

"The first cut of the episode was well over a hundred minutes. It needed to be under 85 minutes and that opening



was on the chopping block, but Paul really didn't want to lose it. While Paul and Roger worked on the rest of the episode, Roger asked me to take a swing at the opening and turn it into something more brisk and stylized. He suggested using split screens so I went from there.

"It was very tricky and intricate because I'm building that sequence with footage that's not intended for it," Daigle continues. "You're showing specific moments from multiple angles at once, so you've got to get all those angles to perfectly match simultaneously in separate boxes on-screen. I'm combining various takes and shots using tricks like speed ramps to get them to move and sync with each other. Ultimately, there was such a wealth of material from the whole season plus footage that they shot specifically for this sequence that we were able to build it and it turned out great."

Just like co-editing the finale, both editors noted how incredibly collaborative the process was. "Paul took time to have meetings with and chat with all the editors not just individually but together. We all had coffee on the lot at Raleigh Studios in Hollywood," recalls Nygard. "I've never known any of my showrunners to sit down and just have a chat with all the show editors before probably because they've just been too busy. But Paul made the time because editing in this show is so important to him."


Daigle agrees, "Paul was always inviting collaboration. All of us would be invited to give notes on each other's episodes before the cuts went out to producers or to Netflix. Each of us was asked to weigh in and offer thoughts. We would sit and talk about the episodes, but there was always a last step before it went out the door: What do all the editors think? What are our notes? What can we contribute?"



"Maybe other showrunners have done that, but I haven't seen it where the showrunner sends each cut to all the editors and insists that they critique it," Nygard notes.

The entire post team is complemented on bringing this editorially complicated show together. "We had a really wonderful music team," says Daigle. "Mark Mothersbaugh scored the show and did an extraordinary job because music is obviously such a big part of tone. Ali and Heather had done a wonderful job laying in temp music by the time we got there. They had really dug in with Sean Spuehler, our music editor, and built a sort of tapestry of temp music for the show. It was very jazz based with a lot of off-key pianos for the mysterious stuff. They toyed around with a lot of things."

This included using music from 1957 noir *Sweet Smell of Success* for flashbacks to the State Dinner in chaos. "We ended up licensing that piece for the final episode. Roger and I worked off of that and continued to develop that as well in our episodes. Our assistants, J.T. Bowers and Kevin Fitzpatrick were very involved in that as well."

For editors who aspire to cut shows like *The Residence*, Nygard had this parting advice taken from his book on editing called *Cut to the Monkey*. "The theme of the book was 'don't be an editor who cuts films, be a filmmaker who edits. What does that mean? That means learn everything around editing. Make a short film that you write, direct, do craft services and even grip because in a short film you probably have to do a lot of the roles because you can't afford to hire anybody. The more you learn of all the jobs in filmmaking, the better you'll become at the one you want to focus on. That will take you to the next level.'" 



# 75th ACE Eddie Awards



American Cinema Editors celebrated its 75th annual Eddie Awards with winners including *Wicked* editor Myron Kerstein, ACE, and *Emilia Pérez* editor Juliette Welfling, who collected top honors in the categories for a comedic theatrical feature and a dramatic theatrical feature, respectively.

The awards were presented March 14 during a ceremony at UCLA's Royce Hall. The event was originally slated to be held on Jan. 18, but due to the L.A. fires, ACE pivoted by moving the date and changing the event from a black-tie affair to a "come as you are" fundraising event, for which a portion of the proceeds went to members affected by the tragedy. Several first responders participated in the evening as honored guests.

"We are the City of Angels and I know we will persevere," said ACE president Sabrina Plisco, ACE, who opened the show. "In times of tragedy, we especially need to come together and hold each other up. Many of our colleagues and friends have suffered incredible losses due to the fires and I know some of you are here with us today. We want you to know the ACE community cares and we are here for you."

*Wicked* director Jon M. Chu received the ACE Golden Eddie Filmmaker of the Year Award. "I'm so excited to be here, because I get to praise and honor the artists that I look up to the most, you, the wizards of our business," he said. "Editing is literally magic in alchemy of what seems like flashing lights on the screen, cut into patterns that pass through the dark to an audience that provokes an emotional response or communicates a point of view that goes straight to the heart, as if they

experienced it themselves in person. ... It's spiritual, what you're able to harness, and you are connected to this language – the great interpreters able to deliver feelings through pictures that can change lives and change culture, coding empathy. No other medium in the world can do in a weekend what your work in a movie theater can."

He continued, "When it all comes together, it's like it was always supposed to be there. So much so people forget that it was even editing. The public thinks this is the way it always was. But you know, the director knows, sometimes a studio knows." Getting a laugh, he added, "The actors definitely don't know." Chu received applause, when he continued, "I consider you all co-authors."

He thanked Kerstein and the editing team on *Wicked*. Accepting his Eddie, Kerstein told the crew that they are "the reason I'm standing here," before telling Chu, "You've changed my life for the better and restored my hope for both the world and for cinema."

Kerstein, a resident of Altadena, also thanked the ACE community for its response to the fires. "So many of you in this room have personally supported me, and I'll be forever grateful for your kindness and generosity."

Additional winners with messages about the ACE community amid the fires were Mary Blee, editor of *The Wild Robot* (best edited animated feature). Blee said she is grateful to be part of the community, which has included 30 years in editorial, 20 of which at DreamWorks Animation. "*The Wild Robot* is a celebration



of community. As we have seen in L.A. the last few months, having community is a really important thing.”

Veteran ACE members Maysie Hoy, ACE and Paul Hirsch, ACE, accepted Career Achievement Awards during the ceremony, which was hosted by Dave Holmes.

“I’m profoundly grateful for this exceptional tribute tonight,” said Hirsch. “I thank our organization, the American Cinema Editors, which has worked hard for 75 years to advance the prestige and dignity of the editing profession, promoting respect for what we do and who we are.

“We are artists,” he continued. “We don’t start with a blank page or canvas, but we are artists like actors, musicians or dancers, putting our own individual spin on the task at hand. We make choices about what angle is best, which take is



best, when to cut in, when to cut out, what the best order is – all to bring laughs, chills or tears out of the audience.” Noting that there are no rules in editing, he said, “We rely solely on our intuition. Our careers are built on our inventiveness, our imagination and our gut.”

Hoy (whose longtime collaboration with Robert Altman included *McCabe & Mrs. Miller*) offered sage advice: “Embrace the unknown. Be kind to each other. One act of kindness can change your life forever.”

She expressed her gratitude to Altman and thanked her editorial teams “for having my back and telling me honestly what you think of a scene.”

She shared the story of her arrival in the U.S. with her family including brother William Hoy, ACE (who presented the award, alongside recently-retired Editors Guild executive



director Cathy Repola) and how she started her career in editing. “I am a proud daughter of immigrants,” she said. “Their resilience and bravery paved the way for me and Bill to be here tonight. I humbly accept this extraordinary award on behalf of all the dreamers out there.”

In documentaries, Eddies were presented to Monique Zavistovski, ACE for *Will & Harper* (documentary feature) and Evan Wise, ACE, Charles Divak, ACE, Adrienne Gits, ACE, Doug Abel, ACE, for the “Gone Ape” episode (102) of *Chimp Crazy* (documentary series). Doc Crotzer, ACE, accepted the best edited non-theatrical feature award for *Road House*.

In series work, Maria Gonzales, ACE, and Aika Miyake were recognized for *Shōgun* (Episode 110 “A Dream Is a Dream”) in the one-hour drama category; and Peter H. Oliver and Benjamin Gerstein were honored for *Baby Reindeer* (Episode 4) in the limited series competition.



The work of Liza Cardinale, ACE, and Dane McMaster, ACE, on *What We Do in the Shadows* (Episode 603, “Sleep Hypnosis”) received single camera comedy series recognition while the work of Russell Griffin, ACE, on *Frasier* (Episode 207, “My Brilliant Sister”) took the prize for multi-camera comedy series. Michelle McMillan claimed the prize for an animated series, for her work on *X-Men '97* (105, “Remember It”).

Awards were also presented to Tim Wilsbach, ACE, Steve Welch, ACE, Michael Brown, Michael Oliver, Tim Roche, Matt Wafaie and Jenny Krochmal for *Welcome to Wrexham* (Episode 305), for best edited non-scripted series; and Anthony Miale, ACE, for *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (1103 - Boeing), for best edited variety, talk, sketch show or special.

This year’s Anne V. Coates Award for Student Editing was bestowed on Hannah Hallock of Brooklyn College.

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# 2025 ACE EDDIE AWARD WINNERS



**Golden Eddie Honoree Jon M. Chu**  
with presenter Ken Jeong



**Career Achievement Honoree Maysie Hoy, ACE**  
with presenters Cathy Repola and William Hoy, ACE



**Career Achievement Honoree Paul Hirsch, ACE**  
with Taylor Hackford



**Best Edited Comedy Feature**  
Winner Myron Kerstein, ACE,  
with presenters Harry Yoon, ACE, and Ryan Destiny



**Best Edited Animated Feature**  
Winner Mary Blee with presenters Phil Lord  
and Michael Andrews, ACE



**Best Edited Documentary Feature**  
Winner Monique Zavistovski, ACE,  
with presenters Cooper and Payton Koch



**Best Edited Documentary Series**  
Winners Doug Abel, ACE; Charles Divak, ACE; Adrienne Gits, ACE;  
Evan Wise, ACE, with presenters Cooper and Payton Koch



**Best Edited Multi-Camera Comedy Series**  
Winner Russell Griffin, ACE,  
with presenters Asif Ali and Varun Viswanath, ACE



**Best Edited Single Camera Comedy Series**  
Winners Liza Cardinale, ACE, and Dane McMaster, ACE,  
with presenters Asif Ali and Varun Viswanath, ACE



**Best Edited Drama Series**  
Winners Aika Miyake and Maria Gonzales, ACE, with  
presenters Isabela Merced and Timothy Good, ACE



**Best Edited Non-Theatrical Motion Picture**  
Winner Doc Crotzer, ACE, with presenters Amelia Allwarden, ACE,  
Benito Skinner and Todd Downing, ACE



**Best Edited Limited Series**  
Winners Benjamin Gerstein and Peter H. Oliver with  
presenters Isabela Merced and Timothy Good, ACE



**Best Edited Non-Scripted Series**  
Winners Mohamed el Manasterly, Jenny Krochmal, Matt Wafaie,  
Michael Oliver, Tim Roche, Michael Brown, Tim Wilsbach, ACE  
with presenters LAFD Captain Erik Scott and Chris Perfetti



**Best Edited Animated Series**  
Winner Michelle McMillan with presenters Amelia Allwarden, ACE,  
Benito Skinner and Todd Downing, ACE



**Anne V. Coates Award for Student Editing**  
Winner Hannah Hallock with presenter/ACE Vice-President  
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## IAVA: 25 Years Celebrating Oscar Editing Nominees

Academy Award nominees participated in the seminar, exploring the art of editing while raising funds for victims of L.A. wildfires.

BY MATT ALLEN

The day before the Oscars is always a special occasion within awards season for the post-production community and this year more special than most. On March 1, the community gathered at the Regal LA Live for the 25th annual Invisible Art/Visible Artists presented by ACE to celebrate the editors nominated for the Academy Award for Best Editing.

“As you can see from our panelists and Oscar nominated editors this year, the world is getting smaller with editors being nominated from all over the world,” said ACE President Sabrina Plisco, ACE, who moderated the event. “It’s wonderful that we can support each other because we don’t often get to hang out together like this and talk about editing. Everybody has a unique story about how they got into the industry and into the editing chair. What they share in common is a passion for what they wanted to achieve. That’s why IAVA is special.”

Even though each editor’s journey is different, they all displayed an early appreciation for the filmmaking craft and the power of editing. Myron Kerstein, ACE, who was nominated for *Wicked: Part 1*, noted, “I loved making collages in art school and I found that picking up pieces of random things and making art really appealed to me. Because I did photography in college I thought I wanted to be a cinematographer.”

He changed his mind when he moved to New York. He explained, “I was a production assistant and one time I was in Times Square in middle of winter trying to lock a show off and I thought this was horrible. I froze my butt off. But when I took the tapes to the office I saw editors at work on a show called *TV Nation*. They were these incredible alchemists making the coolest documentaries and it inspired me. I think the craft of editing relates to what it’s like to just pick up things and make something new out of it.”

Kerstein explains how, after a stint as a post PA and assistant editor, he began to get hired and how he learned every step of

the way. “I worked with my mentor, James Lyons, who cut Todd Haynes’ movies for many years. I learned from the best.”

Nick Emerson, who was born in Northern Ireland, took a very different career path that culminated, to date, in his Oscar nomination for *Conclave*. “I started off in television news and then wanted to be a cinematographer so I ended up as a runner on a short film,” he remembered. “At the end of the shoot, I asked if there was something else I could do and they said, ‘Why don’t you go sit in on the edit?’ When I got there, I noticed how nice and warm it was! And I appreciated the delicacy of it. I got into news editing and it was about the time when the peace protests were happening in Northern Ireland, so there was a lot of news to be cut. Being there in my early 20s able to witness history was amazing. I eventually transitioned into documentaries and from there to short narrative films.”

This year’s editing category included four first-time nominees including three editors from outside the U.S. *The Brutalist* editor David Jancso, who is originally from Hungary, commented that the power of editing comes from what you don’t see as an audience.

“The main problem is nobody actually knows what we do. Even the title ‘editor’ is incorrect. The types of clips [shown today] are the ones where you can see what an editor does because it is so in your face. But it’s so little of what our actual job is. Nobody knows what we do. We are second row, first seat out of the limelight. The actors and directors take the blame. Fine by us. Let us play with the film. Let us be the film. That’s what editing is.”

Juliette Welfling, the editor of French-produced, Mexico set, Spanish language drama *Emilia Pérez*, joined the editing panel virtually in a pre-recorded interview and echoed this sentiment. “To me, a good cut is the cut you don’t see,” she said. “I like it when you don’t see the editing. That’s what I



try to do.” She relies heavily on instincts to make this happen. “I don’t know the rules because I haven’t been to film school and I don’t really want to know the rules. I know there are some, but I don’t want to apply them. I want to just let my feelings do what they want. My decisions are principally based on my emotions and feelings.”

While much of the box office attention went to Universal Studios’ *Wicked: Part 1* which passed \$700 million worldwide, *Conclave*, an independent British movie produced by Film-Nation Entertainment, grossed over \$100 million globally. This film marked the first time Emerson had worked with director Edward Berger.

Emerson explained, “Edward is so interested in detail. Sometimes when you start a pass or a cut of the film, you watch the assembly and start working but he didn’t watch the assembly. Instead, we started to fine cut from the start. The brilliant thing about that was that you are so focused on the detail that when it came to watching a pass of the film, you could set aside the part of your brain that’s thinking about the overall story. It was really fresh and a great learning process for me.”


The fifth nominee was filmmaker Sean Baker, who wasn’t in attendance. He went on to win the Academy Award for editing *Anora*, and three others, including Oscars for Best Director, Best Original Screenplay and Best Picture. Accepting the editing Oscar, he enthusiastically encouraged audiences to continue seeing movies on the big screen.

As the event came to a close each editor gave advice to future aspiring editors. Kerstein encouraged the audience:



“I know a lot of people aren’t working right now, but no one said that it was easy for artists to make a living. I’ve gone eight months to a year of not working. I’ve been fired many times. I’ve been brought onto the films when other people have been fired. I was fired the last time I worked for Universal. I thought I would never work for Universal again. ...Those moments are tough because you take it so personally and then you realize it’s a business. It’s not about you because editing is really subjective. So somebody can’t just say that they didn’t do a good job. There were just other priorities on that job. What I’m saying is, stick with it. But you’ve got to love it.”

This year was also a fundraising event for the communities affected by the wildfires and was produced by Erin Flannery, the ACE seminar committee, and many wonderful volunteers. As ACE Vice President Kevin Tent, ACE, explained, “IAVA was founded in 2001 by editor Allan Holzman [ACE] to turn a spotlight on each year’s Oscar nominated films and their editors. Allan’s vision brought together a dedicated group of staff, board members and volunteers to host the inaugural IAVA event at the Egyptian Theatre. It was an instant success and it’s been going strong now for 25 years. Several of those early panels have been now recut by Allan and posted on the ACE website.”

ACE would like to thank Platinum Sponsor Blackmagic Design, Gold Sponsors LucidLink and Motion Picture Editors Guild, as well as Silver Sponsor Regal Cinemas, Bronze Sponsor PostScript Media and all our additional sponsors who helped make this event possible. 



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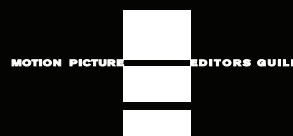
AMERICAN CINEMA EDITORS

# INVISIBLE ART VISIBLE ARTISTS 2025

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**John Forbes Burnett, ACE**  
**1934 - 2024**

**V**eteran filmmaker John F. Burnett, ACE, who edited for directors George Cukor and Blake Edwards, and who worked to achieve greater recognition for all editors, has passed aged 90.

Burnett was born on March 5, 1934, in Kansas City. While young, his family moved to Burbank where Burnett went to school. After serving in the U.S. Army during the Korean War between 1952-54 he was hired at Warner Bros. first as apprentice then assistant editor to Arthur P. Schmidt on Billy Wilder's *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957), to Philip W. Anderson on Mervyn LeRoy's *Gypsy* (1962) and to Sam O'Steen on Mike Nichols' *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966).

He assisted editor Bill Ziegler on George Cukor's *My Fair Lady* (1964), later editing Cukor's films *Love Among the Ruins* (1975) starring Katharine Hepburn and Laurence Olivier and *Rich and Famous* (1981).

Burnett's first editor credit was Robert Ellis Miller's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (1968), going on to cut Miller's *The Girl from Petrovka* (1974) and *Bed & Breakfast* (1991). With director Herbert Ross he made *The Owl and the Pussycat* (1970) starring Barbra Streisand and George Segal, *The Sunshine Boys* (1975) starring Walter Matthau and George Burns and *The Goodbye Girl* (1977) for which Richard Dreyfuss won the Best Actor Oscar. The next year he edited musical smash *Grease*, and in 1982, its sequel, both for Randal Kleiser.

For Blake Edwards he cut *Wild Rovers* (1971) and *A Fine Mess* (1986). Other credits include Sydney Pollack's *The Way We Were* (1973); Norman Jewison's *And Justice for All* (1979) and Robert Moore's *Murder by Death* (1976).

He also edited two ABC miniseries: *The Winds of War* (1983) and *War and Remembrance* (1990) winning an Emmy (shared with Peter Zinner, ACE) and ACE Eddie for the latter. He was an editor and producer on *Baywatch Nights* (1995-97) and a producer on *Pointman* (1995).

Burnett was highly influential outside the edit suite too. As president of the Motion Picture Editors Guild (1975-76) he helped secure substantial increases in pay and established the editor credit in opening film titles as an industry standard.

"We want a card up-front to match the cameramen," Burnett told *CineMontage*, recalling his conversation with MCA Universal's bosses during the contract negotiations. "We don't want to be in the technical credits."

Between 1975-1985 Burnett was a board member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; later its executive secretary (1983-1984). For 43 years he was a reserve commander with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

He also created and taught a film editing course at AFI. In 2003, Burnett was honored with the ACE Career Achievement Award.

In 2000, Burnett retired to enjoy his ranch in Lincoln, Calif. Survivors include sons Stephen and John and his brother, David. He was predeceased by wives Rosemarie in 1998 and Margie in 2018. **CE**





**George Joseph Folsey, ACE**  
**1939 - 2024**

**G**eorge Folsey Jr., ACE, the prolific film editor and producer who frequently collaborated with director John Landis including on *The Blues Brothers* and Michael Jackson's *Thriller* video, died on Dec. 29. He was 85.


Born in Los Angeles, Folsey began his career at KABC-TV cutting news and documentaries. He cut an episode of NBC's *The Monkees* in 1967 and served as editor, camera operator, producer and cinematographer (alongside his father) on Columbia Pictures romantic drama *Glass Houses* (1972). He also cut a number of Blaxploitation features for Larry Cohen including *Black Caesar* (1973).

Two years previously, Folsey edited writer-director Landis' feature debut, the sci-fi horror comedy *Schlock* (released 1973). It was the start of a partnership that would span all of Landis' projects. This included *The Kentucky Fried Movie* (1977), *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), *The Blues Brothers* (1980) and *Coming to America* (1988) all of which he edited.

Folsey produced 11 films directed or co-directed by Landis including *An American Werewolf in London* (1981) which led to Michael Jackson's invitation to create the iconic video to *Thriller* which Folsey produced and edited (with Malcolm Campbell, ACE). He was also producer and second-unit director on *Trading Places* (1983); *Into the Night* (1985) and *Three Amigos* (1986).

Outside of work with Landis, Folsey was a producer on Jonathan Lynn's *Clue* (1985), Peter Bogdanovich's *The Thing Called Love* (1993), Howard Deutch's *Grumpier Old Men* (1995) and Scott Spiegel's *Hostel: Part III* (2011). He also edited John McTiernan's *Basic* (2003), *Cheaper by the Dozen* (2003), *Hostel* (2005), *The Pink Panther* (2006), and *Hot Tub Time Machine* (2010).

His father was the multi-Oscar nominated cinematographer George J. Folsey, ASC, who shot *Animal Crackers* (1930), *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954).

Folsey Jr.'s son is ACE film editor Ryan Folsey, ACE (*Cabin Fever*, *Renfield*). Aside from Ryan, he is survived by his wife, Belinda; daughter Erin; son-in-law Doug; daughter-in-law Erica; and granddaughters Lucia, Chloe and Hazel. 





**Michael J. Sheridan, ACE**  
**1939 - 2025**

**V**eteran ACE member Michael J. Sheridan, ACE, esteemed editor and director, passed away on February 9 at the Motion Picture Home in Calabasas. He was born in Pennsylvania, but after seeing James Dean's performance in *East of Eden* he knew he wanted to be part of the film industry. In 1956 he hitchhiked to Indiana for the first memorial service for Dean. A year later he hitchhiked to Los Angeles to find work in the film industry. He was able to get a job in the lab at Consolidated Film Industries. His moving to California led his brothers Kevin, Jim and Steve to follow and find jobs in the industry too.

Working in the lab Michael became a negative cutter and eventually specialized in large format films. He moved to the MGM labs and cut the negative on *Doctor Zhivago* among many other big films. What Michael really wanted was to be a film editor. He was able to edit some trailers for the studio and cut an episode of the television series, *Logan's Run*

(1977). That same year he was assistant editor on Martin Scorsese's musical film *New York, New York*.

When Franco Zeffirelli came to the studio to make the remake of *The Champ* (1979) Michael was assigned to show him things. The director was impressed and told the studio that he wanted Michael as his editor. The studio wanted a more seasoned editor, but Zeffirelli insisted on Sheridan. Michael went on to edit Zeffirelli's romantic drama *Endless Love* (1981), war film *Inchon* (1981) for Terence Young and comedy *Born in East L.A.* (1987).

He worked on a trio of compilation films from the MGM archive titled *That's Entertainment!* graduating from apprentice in 1974 to assistant in 1976 then as editor to director on *That's Entertainment! III*.

Over many years he collected material from James Dean's television career. Dean made over 40 TV appearances, some as minor characters, others substantial parts. Finding shows from the '50s was not easy. Many were stored on videotape and had been erased. It took several years to get Warner Bros. to back *James Dean: Forever Young*, even though the three classic films he starred in were considered evergreens because of their ongoing viability. When they agreed, Sheridan tracked down original material to use and interviewed people who had known Dean. The documentary he directed premiered at Cannes in 2005 to a sold out crowd.

Michael was also involved in MGM's laser disc distribution and made a laser disc sampler for the studio. He continued cutting features and Movies of the Week such as *Class Cruise* (1989), *White Hot: The Mysterious Murder of Thelma Todd* (1991), *Diplomatic Immunity* (1991) and *Voices from Within* (1994).

He was a gifted film editor and generous to his co-workers and the assistants that he trained. He continued to work up until 1998. His last job was on the television series *Frontline*.

Michael was always a friend to his co-workers and ever willing to help out. He will be sorely missed by all that knew him. He leaves behind a son and a daughter as well as his many friends and colleagues. Another sparrow fell. ☞ — JACK TUCKER, ACE





**William Steinkamp, ACE**  
**1953 - 2025**

**W**illiam “Bill” Steinkamp, ACE, who enjoyed a longtime collaboration with director Sydney Pollack, working on films including *Tootsie* and *Out of Africa*, died on March 25. He was 71.


He was the son of film editor Fredric Steinkamp, ACE, from whom he learned his craft and with whom he often shared editing credits. He began working with his father as an assistant on Pollack’s 1977 romantic drama *Bobby Deerfield*.

Together they were Oscar-nominated for Pollack’s *Out of Africa* starring Robert Redford and Meryl Streep (alongside editors Pembroke J. Herring and Sheldon Kahn, ACE), which won seven Academy Awards including best picture; and Pollack’s 1982 best picture-nominated comedy *Tootsie* starring Dustin Hoffman. Bill Steinkamp earned a third nomination for 1989’s *The Fabulous Baker Boys*, starring Michelle Pfeiffer, Jeff Bridges and Beau Bridges.

He also earned three ACE Eddie nominations, for *Out of Africa*, *Tootsie* and *Scent of a Woman*, which he edited with Michael Tronick, ACE, and Harvey Rosenstock. Additional credits include *The Firm*, *Against All Odds*, *White Nights*, *Kiss the Girls*, *Havana*, *Casino Jack* and *A Time to Kill*.

Bill was known to his associates as a kind, loving man who was always creative and entertaining. He was a storyteller who left a lasting impression on anyone fortunate enough to hear his tales or watch his films.

Besides being a successful film editor, Steinkamp was an avid golfer and participated in several industry tournaments. He was a natural for editing as he loved storytelling, which is the essence of the craft. He was a loving and creative artist devoted to his family.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years (together for 52), Terri; sisters Shari Joseph and Laura Daily; children Jennifer Neumayer, and her husband Elliott, and Jeff Steinkamp, and his wife Samatha; and grandchildren Collin, Rylie, William and Elizabeth. 

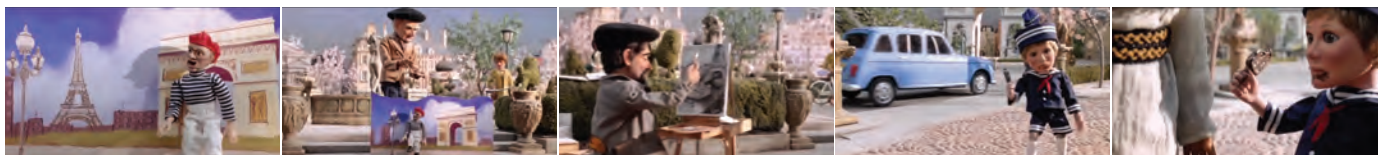
– JACK TUCKER, ACE



**CUTS WE LOVE**  
BY ADRIAN PENNINGTON

# ★ TEAM AMERICA ★ WORLD POLICE

2004 / Director Trey Parker / Editor Thomas M. Vogt



The opening shot of *Team America: World Police* is a rug-pull for an audience expecting a 2D cartoon from the creators of *South Park* – and for production execs at Paramount too, according to editor Tom Vogt.



“Paramount [wasn’t] sure what they were getting into at the outset,” says Vogt, who by the start of production in 2003 had cut dozens of episodes of *South Park* and was first assistant editor on feature *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* for writer-directors Trey Parker and Matt Stone. “They were maybe expecting another cartoon. So, when they saw [early cuts of *Team America*] there was some hesitancy and uneasiness about how it was going to be received.”



Accordingly, the whole opening scene was designed as “the litmus test” for the film. “To play on Paramount’s fears, we start with a rudimentary piece of puppeteering. Then we pull out and reveal the majesty of Paris, everything from the cobblestones to the Eiffel Tower to the fountains. We see the child walking down the street singing “Frère Jacques” and then we see the Bin Laden-ish character. You’re intended to feel off balance.



“There are a lot of misdirects. Because you’re walking into a puppet movie, a genre which hadn’t been seen since the 1960s [heyday of *Thunderbirds*], you’re not sure how this is going to last for 90 minutes. We want you to understand what you’re getting into in the first five minutes or so. We’ve got to win you over. We have to make you laugh and you have to understand that the point of the film is strong satire.”







The opening scene establishes the analog style of animation. “Trey leaned into the spirit of guerrilla filmmaking. He packed the crew with experts in pre-CGI crafts. They included production designer Jim Dultz (*Muppets Tonight*) and cinematographer Bill Pope, ASC, who wanted to shoot everything in camera including remote control cars and pyrotechnics. I added every single gun flare on the machine guns which was about the extent of the VFX.”



There was some rig removal too but the makers retained many of the puppet’s wires, including incidents where they dangle detached.



“Basically, we were treating it like a regular live action film in the mode of Jerry Bruckheimer, scaling everything down but getting our hands dirty on old-school techniques. It was our sandbox. We felt we were bringing back the touch and sensitivity to the guts of what filmmaking was about.”



Parker, Stone and Vogt blocked each scene with model G.I. Joes and Barbies before Vogt created animatics. “We had to use a quicker pace in editing which was easier than *South Park* since I had a lot more cameras to choose.



“I’d be going from video village to video village at Culver City and the dailies were coming in as we were shooting. I had to be up to camera with scene assembly.”



*Team America* was fearless in the way that it punctured jingoism. It hits the spot just as much now as it did in the middle of the Gulf War.



“The concept was that this crack team of commandos was going to be like American foreign policy where we had good intentions, but we kind of screwed things up, or we weren’t fully educated about the ramifications of what was going to happen based on our actions.” **CE**





# CINEMAEDITOR

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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:

[www.EditorsPetition.com](http://www.EditorsPetition.com)

Now endorsed by the Motion Picture Sound Editors, Art Directors Guild, Cinema Audio Society, American Society of Cinematographers, Canadian Cinema Editors, and Guild of British Film and Television Editors

Committee for Creative Recognition

