

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

CINEMAEDITOR

THE TELEVISION ISSUE

In this issue

Widow's Bay



Plus

**Backrooms
Spider-Noir
Disclosure Day
Euphoria
The Diplomat
Minions &
Monsters**

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Keeping Pace with Vertical Microdramas

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As vertical microdramas
continue to entice audiences
as a result of their fast paced
storylines and sensational
cliffhangers, creators must
rely on dependable tools
to meet demanding
production schedules.

Typically one to three minutes long and designed for mobile viewing, microdramas have become especially popular in Latin America as they mix the drama of traditional telenovelas with the speed of social media.

Based in Bogotá, Stargate Studios Colombia relies on DaVinci Resolve Studio for its editing pipeline, along with color grading and VFX, delivering efficient post production for up to eight microdramas simultaneously.

“DaVinci Resolve Studio has long been the backbone of many of our projects, giving us the flexibility and tools we need to deliver with quality and precision,” said Andrés Valencia, CEO at Stargate Studios Colombia. Recent projects include the Colombian produced microdramas “Verdadera heredera vs Falsa millonaria,” “Sustituta Accidental para Alfa,” “Destinada a mi Alfa Prohibido,” and more.

Since one series can include up to 85 episodes, efficiency is essential. To keep pace with the demanding delivery timeframe, post production for each series needs to be finished in about six weeks, so productivity and organization are paramount.

According to Valencia, DaVinci Resolve Studio is a powerful all in one tool that is still easy to use, which allows the team to work faster because

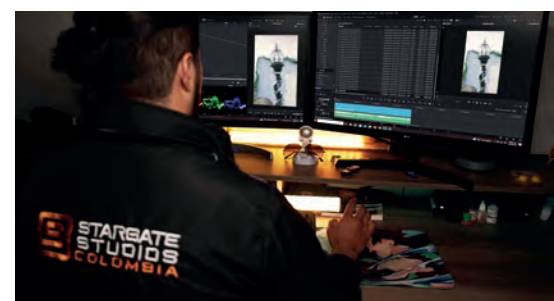


“DAVINCI RESOLVE IMPROVES VERTICAL CONTENT WORKFLOWS WITH AN ADAPTABLE INTERFACE, MAKING TRANSITIONS BETWEEN HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL FORMATS SMOOTH, EFFICIENT AND INTUITIVE.”

they don't have to switch between platforms for different tasks. "Due to the large volume of material and the tight delivery schedule, we needed the entire team of six editors, two colorists and one subtitler to work within the same platform, which is why we chose DaVinci Resolve Studio," he added. Post Production Coordinator Sebastián Bolívar noted that each series begins with dailies created using DaVinci Resolve Studio's automatic synchronization tools, with an editor then organizing the scenes by day in smart bins to begin the editing process, while another team member performs color grading tests within the same project. "Smart bins are a time saver as they automatically sort footage, and also the markers and filters allow us to manage versions and track cuts. Organization is key and starts us off strong," he said. "More than just the tools, however, DaVinci Resolve improves vertical content workflows with an adaptable interface, making transitions between horizontal and vertical formats smooth, efficient and intuitive as we tackle post."

From there, Stargate Studios Colombia shares the cuts of each episode with the client for approval so they can move on to color correction. With so many moving pieces, everything takes place within DaVinci Resolve Studio. "DaVinci Resolve Studio allows us to optimize processes, reduce delivery times, and work collaboratively in a single environment. This is essential when managing multiple microdramas and episodes simultaneously," Bolivar said.

Beyond editing and color grading, Stargate Studios Colombia also uses DaVinci Resolve Studio's rotoscoping toolset to generate mattes that are then integrated into their VFX workflows. The compositing team works fast, and within DaVinci Resolve Studio's Fusion page, they also create CGI shots with animation in around two weeks, something they consider record timing. With vertical microdramas only continuing to grow in popularity and a busy schedule ahead, Stargate Studios Colombia is ready to keep pace with DaVinci Resolve Studio.



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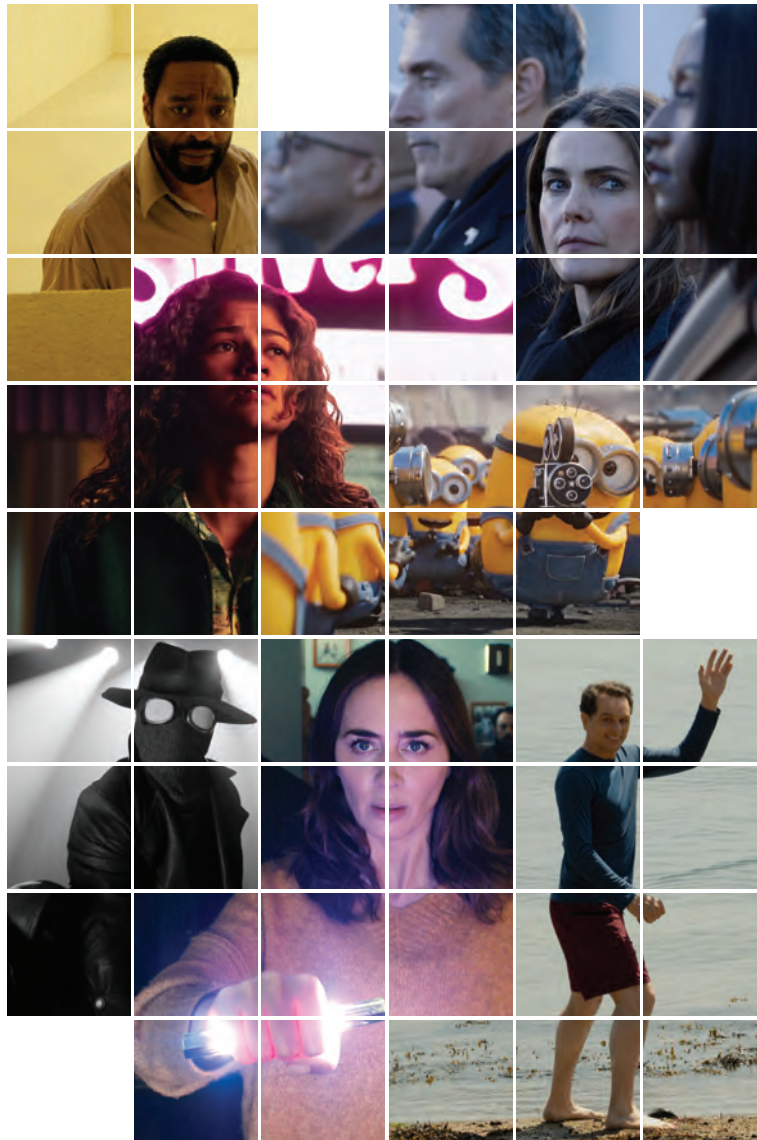
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PITT

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Tamara Luciano, Editor

"9:00 P.M."

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euphoria

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



Hello, fellow editors and editing fans around the globe, and welcome to another hot issue of *CinemaEditor*. As much as we're all trying to keep our cool amid the sweltering summer temperatures, here in California we're also fighting for the survival of our post-production industry. At this writing, California post-production is at a critical crossroads – and it needs all the support we can give it.

ACE proudly stands alongside Local 700 and CAPA (California Post Alliance), co-sponsors of AB 2319, a bill aimed at bringing post-production jobs back to California.

Getting this bill across the finish line will take both funding and a strong show of support from our industry – and that's where CAPA membership comes in. Your dues help fund their advocacy work in Sacramento, and simply adding your name helps strengthen the campaign.

This is one of those moments when we all need to step up. Please consider joining CAPA today and help us make the case to Governor Newsom. To learn more – and hopefully add your name to the cause – visit <https://californiapostalliance.org/>

In other news, we're just a few short weeks away from ACE's EditFest LA! On August 22, we'll be heading back to Disney's Grand Central Air Terminal in Glendale for another full day of great conversations, informative panels, and, of course, plenty of time to connect and network with fellow editors and members of our community.

We have a great lineup of panels this year, covering a wide variety of topics. We'll kick things off with "Wearing Every Hat: What It Really Means to Cut an Indie," moderated by my talented and fab friend Maura Corey, ACE. From there, we'll dive into another very current hot topic: "Editing the Unknown: Cutting a Doc About AI, While AI Is Changing Everything." The conversation will be moderated by the brilliant Carolyn

Giardina, who also happens to be the editor of this beautiful industry magazine you're reading right now!

Avid's Michael Krulik will also lead a conversation offering an inside look at the workflows and editing timelines behind some of this year's biggest movies and streaming shows. And because the horror genre continues to make headlines, we'll take a look at "Cut to the Scare: Horror Is Built in the Cutting Room." This panel is bound to be a lot of fun as editors break down some unforgettable horror moments and explore how the scares are really built in the edit.

I'm sure you won't want to miss this stellar lineup, so please join us for ACE's annual EditFest LA!

Meanwhile, this issue of *CinemaEditor* is once again packed with news, stories, and plenty of great editorial insight. We talk with the editors behind some of today's most talked-about series, including *The Diplomat*, *Euphoria*, *Spider-Noir*, and *Widow's Bay*, as well as the films *Disclosure* and *Minions & Monsters*.

We're also introducing a new column, Suite Spot, which will take us inside editorial workspaces – from facility cutting rooms to our members' home offices. We kick off this new feature with a visit to A Frame Post in Glendale, Calif., co-owned by Andrew Seklir, ACE, and Harry Jierjian, ACE.

And I want to give a very special shout-out and thank-you to Martin Scorsese for sharing a personal tribute to the late Marcia Lucas, which is included as part of our remembrance of her in this issue. We are incredibly honored to include his words as we celebrate Marcia's extraordinary life and legacy.

And I'll wrap up by reminding us to continue to share stories. Share knowledge. Be kind. Be respectful. And cut, cut, cut! 

– SABRINA PLISCO, ACE,
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Walter Fernandez Jr. was the Editor in Chief of *Cinema-Editor* magazine from August 2010 until June 2013. He has worked in marketing and distribution at IMAX and the MPAA. He has written for *CinemaEditor* since 2003.

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

Bobbie O'Steen is a film historian and author of *Cut to the Chase*, based on interviews with her late husband, editor Sam O'Steen; *The Invisible Cut*, which deconstructs the editing process; and *Making the Cut at Pixar: The Art of Editing Animation*, with Bill Kinder, an authoritative media rich book about the editor's

pioneering role in animation. Bobbie hosts an ongoing event series, "Inside the Cutting Room," honoring master editors and has taught at AFI and NYU. More info at bobbieosteen.com

Molly O'Steen is an accomplished New York City-based film and theater historian and educator who brings an entrepreneurial approach to the arts. She specializes in event curation and moderation, providing insightful historical context for films at venues like the Metrograph, in collaboration with ACE. She serves on the Uptown Film Center's Leadership Committee as an Education Consultant, developing and implementing film education curricula. Molly is the Founder & CEO of Fair Playhouse NYC – a unique arts education program focused on creation and collaboration.

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

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WHAT'S NEW!

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONNECT COMMITTEE LUNCHEON



(L-R) : Colleen Halsey, ACE; Johnny Bishop, ACE; Mark Strand, ACE; Deb Shibuyama Simone, ACE; Michael Yanovich, ACE; Richard Halsey, ACE.

An ACE Connect Committee luncheon with Richard Halsey, ACE, and Colleen Halsey, ACE, was held May 17 at Marino Ristorante in Los Angeles. They were joined by Aurora De Lucia; Michael Yanovich, ACE; Deb Shibuyama Simone, ACE; Mark Strand, ACE, and Johnny Bishop, ACE.

The couple's shared editing credits include *Edward Scissorhands*, *Sister Act* and *So I Married an Axe Murderer*. Richard Halsey is best known for his Oscar winning work on 1976's *Rocky*, which he shared with editor Scott Conrad. During lunch, he emphasized the importance of having a good script, saying how he knew from the second he read *Rocky* that it'd be a hit. Richard and Colleen also shared stories of working with the likes of *Rocky*'s Sylvester Stallone, as well as Mike Myers and Tim Burton.

The Halseys discussed topics including the switch from film to digital, and how at the end of the day, it was all still storytelling. They also talked about the joy of raising kids on set. Today their children work in the business, with Caitlin serving as head of story at Universal and Morgan now an editor herself. At this stage of their careers, Colleen and Richard love sharing valuable advice and shepherding new talent. [CE](#)

LUNCHEON WITH DIANA FRIEDBERG, ACE



(L-R) : Mengyao Mia Zhang, Aimee Jennings, Diana Friedberg, ACE, Asim Matin.

Diana Friedberg, ACE, was the featured guest at an April 20 Connect Committee luncheon at Marino Ristorante in Los Angeles. Attendees included Jessie Sock, ACE; Asim Matin; Mengyao Mia Zhang, and Aimee Jennings.

Friedberg – a filmmaker, author, and photographer who received the ACE Heritage Award in 2017 – told the story of her career, which began in her native South Africa when she accepted a temporary job as a receptionist at a film company and was then hired to stay on as an assistant, sparking her interest in storytelling. She also worked in the UK before moving to the United States.

One of the lessons that she shared was that this is a small industry and one should respect everyone you meet, because you never know when or where you will meet them again.

Friedberg's latest project is a documentary called *Music of Murder*, the story of the composers who created music for Alfred Hitchcock. [CE](#)

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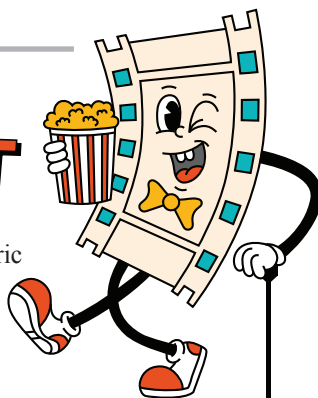
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WHAT'S NEW!

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACE ANNUAL MEETING

ACE held its annual membership meeting on June 6 at The Garland in North Hollywood. The meeting included mingling and brunch, along with a presentation of committee updates and a year in review, led by ACE President Sabrina Plisco, ACE. She reported that the year had seen 93 new active and affiliate members join ACE, in addition to a trio of new participants in the International Partnership Program. Plaques were handed out to new members in attendance. Plisco also summarized the past year's events and committee initiatives, including the launch of the Connect-Support Committee to aid one another, and an initiative to raise funds for a permanent ACE "clubhouse." Aahir Ghosh, a recent ACE intern, was on hand to speak about the program and thank members for their mentorship, while A.J. Catoline, ACE, joined Plisco to urge California-based members to support post-production tax credit bill AB 2319, which at press time was in the State Senate. ACE thanks Adobe for its generous meeting sponsorship. Adobe's Head of Film & Television Darren Frankel welcomed members to the meeting, saying, "Adobe has your back." **CE**



WHAT'S NEW!

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

A DAY AT THE RANCH

The ACE Connect-Support Committee hosted a June 14 visit to Hilarie Roope's Ranch in Malibu Canyon. The one-day retreat included meditation, yoga, group coaching, and time with animals including donkeys, goats, and horses. **CE**



THESE GO TO ELEVEN



Charles Little II, ACE, hosted a May 9 screening of *This Is Spinal Tap* on behalf of the ACE Social Committee. A conversation with special guest Kent Beyda, ACE, and Sabrina Plisco, ACE, followed the screening. **CE**

TRIBECA FESTIVAL



(L-R) : Meg Reticker, ACE (co-producer), Raul Hernandez (co-producer), Michael Taylor, ACE, Derek McCants, ACE (co-producer), Joshua Z. Weinstein, Shannon C. Griffin, Ian Holden, ACE, Lee Haxall, ACE

For the third consecutive year, ACE hosted a talk during the Tribeca Festival. Titled "Cutting to the Truth: Storytelling and the Art of Editing," the sold-out event was organized with support from Raul Hernandez of Blue Collar Post Collective and Meg Reticker, ACE, was instrumental in its preparation and execution.

The ACE panel featured a diverse group of editors, all with films screening at this year's festival: Shannon C. Griffin (*One Woman One Bra*); Ian Holden, ACE (*Take Me Home*); Lee Haxall, ACE (*In Memoriam*), and Joshua Z. Weinstein (*Here I'm Alive*). Michael Taylor, ACE, moderated the discussion.

Topics included editing improvised scenes, pacing, and the advantages and disadvantages of working on set. The panelists encouraged directors to trust their shot lists while remaining open to discoveries that emerge during production and in the edit room.

Following the discussion, ACE hosted a happy hour at Clinton Hall. Through the efforts of Charles Divak, ACE, and Jeremy Stulberg, ACE, the event was sponsored by ACE and Audio Network, a music library and production music company serving film, TV, advertising, and digital media creators. **CE**

– DEREK MCCANTS, ACE



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(L-R) : Max Yang; Olivier Bugge Coutté; Jennifer Lame, ACE; Yorgos Mavropsaridis, ACE; Alejo Santos, SAE (President of SAE and board member of TEMPO); Kevin Tent, ACE; and Zhou Xinxia, CCEA

ACE at the Shanghai Film Festival

Kevin Tent, ACE, reports from the Festival's first International Cinema Editors Conference



On behalf of ACE, Kevin Tent, ACE (center), presented Zhou Xinxia, CCEA (left) and CCEA Secretary Haiyan Xu with a recognition of the fellowship between ACE and CCEA



(L-R) : Liyun Zhu, Executive Director for CCEA; Dianshi Li, Executive Director for CCEA; Jennifer Lame, ACE; Yiming Wang (translator)



(L-R) : Professor, Editor, CCEA President Zhou Xinxia; Yuexi Emma Li (translator); Kevin Tent, ACE

It was an honor and a pleasure to have been invited to the first ever International Editors Panel at the Shanghai International Film Festival, which was co-organized with the China Cinema Editors Association (CCEA). They hope to make this an annual event.

I participated in the June 20 panel alongside Jennifer Lame, ACE; Yorgos Mavropsaridis, ACE, who is also chapter principal of the European Film Academy Editors; Alejo Santos, SAE, who is president of SAE and a TEMPO board member; editor, and producer Olivier Bugge Coutté, ACE; and the grande dame of the Chinese editing world, Zhou Xinxia, CCEA, an editor, educator, and president of CCEA. What a collection of rock star editors!

Our host and moderator, the festival's Max Yang, was film-savvy and our conversation covered a lot of territory from how we got our breaks, who our biggest influences were, and what we do to unplug from the work. Who would have thought Olivier is an amateur arborist who climbs trees with his own chainsaw!

We also talked about the transition from film to digital (surprisingly, four of the six of us started on film) and what our business might look like involving emerging AI tools. No matter what language we speak or what country we're from, every editor is talking about AI.

One of the more interesting questions on the panel was asked by Zhou Xinxia. She was very curious if we felt "art films" in the U.S. were cut differently than "art films" in China, a question brought up at later discussions as well. Her view was that Chinese art films were generally paced intentionally slower by the editor and the director and that audiences expected it. I didn't have a clear answer – sometimes yes, sometimes no – depending on the film. I had trouble even quantifying what an "art film" is, especially in the U.S.

Overall it was a treat to spend time with this great group of editors. It's really quite remarkable that editors, no matter where they are in the world, are experiencing the exact same things. The trials, the tribulations, the ups and downs but also – the most important thing – they all love what they do! **CE**

Suite Spot



In this new column, each issue of CinemaEditor will profile editorial working environments ranging from facility suites to members' home offices.



Building Exterior

Andrew Seklir, ACE, and Harry Jierjian, ACE, are the co-owners of A Frame Post in Glendale, Calif., a boutique editorial facility they opened in 2022.

“Our goal was simple: to create the kind of workspace we always wanted to work in,” says Seklir, who also authored the ACE Best Practices For Post-Production, first published in 2019. “After years of editing in facilities and studio cutting rooms with less-than-ideal conditions, I was inspired to write ACE’s Best Practices guide. So when Harry and I decided to build A Frame Post, we used many of those recommendations as a blueprint. It’s been great being able to work on our own projects in our own space and to share it with our fellow editors as well. Seeing editors enjoy the environment we’ve created has been really gratifying. At the end of the day, I believe comfortable and inspiring workspaces help editors do their best creative work.”

The fully renovated facility reflects that philosophy. The warm, inviting environment features editing suites with windows that bring in natural light and fresh air, secure private parking with EV charging, an outdoor patio, and two kitchen areas. Located near Atwater Village, the facility is within walking distance of restaurants and amenities and accessible to Silver Lake, Los Feliz, Eagle Rock, and the 5 and 2 freeways

Seklir continues, “We realized that many of our editor and producer friends live on the Eastside, yet there are relatively few dedicated editorial facilities in the area.” Says Seklir, “When we found this location, we felt it could fill an important need for the editorial community.”

The suites can be customized to each editor’s preferred workflow, whether using Avid Media Composer or Adobe Premiere Pro. The facility also offers high-speed connectivity (up to 12 Gbps) and a secure, firewall-protected data center capable

of hosting fully remote editing systems and remote workflows like Jump and on-site tech support.

For Jierjian, security and comfort were equally important priorities. “We wanted to build a facility that was both welcoming and capable of meeting the demands of the studio projects we work on,” he says. “That meant creating a fast and secure IT environment with enterprise-level firewalls, segregated guest networks, key card access, and security monitoring. At the same time, we paid close attention to factors that directly affect the editing experience, including lighting, acoustics, ergonomics, and climate control. We want editors to feel at home – we’re proud to be a facility built by editors, for editors.”

“Surveying editors for the Best Practices guide was invaluable when it came time to prioritizing what mattered most,” Seklir says. “I would encourage anyone designing an editorial workspace to review those recommendations. And of course, I’m happy to share what I learned through this process.”



Courtyard



Edit Suite

You can download the ACE Best Practices guide here: <https://americancinemaeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ACE-Best-Practices-2023.pdf>

Recent A Frame projects and clients include *Sirens* (Netflix), *M.I.A.* (Peacock), *The Body* (Netflix), *Fly Me to the Moon* (Apple), *Eleanor the Great* (TriStar/These Pictures), and *Euphoria* (HBO). More can be found at www.aframepost.com.

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 Bonnie Koehler, ACE.

When I moved to Los Angeles in the 1980s, after beginning my film editing career in the Bay Area, I was lucky to land on the first season of the television series *L.A. Law*. The showrunner admired a Hallmark MOW I had cut and wanted me to bring “that same warmth and humanity” to his new lawyer episodic. I worked with a fresh array of innovative directors including Donald Petrie, for whom I cut the infamous “Venus Butterfly” episode (the client with nine wives), securing Emmy nominations for us both. Donald went on to have a brilliant comedy career in features and I followed him.

Features, as I had learned working with sound gurus Ben Burt and Walter Murch, ACE, gave editors time to play with music and sound environments, creating a sensual experience for both eyes and ears. So that was how I found myself late one night in the winter of 1992 in a sub-zero blizzard on the top floor of a swaying high rise in Minneapolis. I was cutting *Grumpy Old Men* for Donald Petrie, huddled by my KEM in a wool ski hat and fur-lined Uggs, pondering the pace of our frozen actors’ deliveries in the exterior scenes. I needed a way to boost their energy without tripping up the natural rhythms of our veteran comedic cast.

I took a break to flip through *Frommer’s Travel Guide to the Twin Cities* looking for a restaurant that delivered in a storm. Instead, I happened on a reference to a Scandinavian bistro that featured local polka bands. *Polka music!* Of course! Polka music has a compelling beat, uses silly instruments and makes people laugh! Polka music would be perfect for our funny but deadpan ice fishing scenes. My loyal AE, Steve Schoenberg, ran six

blocks through the maze of heated skyways connecting the downtown buildings to the only music store still open (Cheapo Records) and bought every polka CD they had. We stayed up all night playing with polka against picture. The next day, Donald loved the added pizzazz, character depth, and old world ethnicity the music brought to the frozen lake sequences. We optioned six traditional polka songs for the final track.

I let music inspire me in another sequence on *Grumpy* as well. When Walter Matthau’s character realizes that his rival, played by Jack Lemmon, has won the girl (Ann-Margret) and spent the night with her, Matthau pumps his fists in anger with such force that I heard the opening drum riff of Otis Redding’s “(I’m a) Love Man” in my head every time I looked at the take. I dropped the song in. The drums and Walter’s arms were in perfect sync.

The next shot, when Jack comes down his stairs and does a celebratory floor slide *a la* Tom Cruise (*Risky Business*), also worked perfectly with Otis. But now I wanted the scene to continue – for the action to take us through the chorus of the song. I wanted Jack Lemmon to slide into the kitchen in his boxers and cook breakfast while dancing to “Love Man.” But as written and shot, we were supposed to slam abruptly to a dejected, freezing Walter fishing through a hole in the ice. Now with the song, the director and I both wanted to stay with Jack and let him celebrate. It was decided that if the studio agreed after seeing the Director’s Cut and we could get Jack ... we could shoot the additional pieces. Six months later Donald shot Jack dancing in the kitchen with “snow” blowing outside the window on a soundstage on the old Hollywood Goldwyn Lot. The scene, cut to the beat of Otis Redding, became a film favorite.

I pulled off a similar music inspired scene-stretcher a couple of years later on Donald’s Whoopi Goldberg film *The Associate in New York*. Drums again. This time Gene Krupa’s “Sing, Sing, Sing” that I used to temp a chase scene with Whoopi disguised as a male hedge fund CEO slipping into the Men’s Room at the Plaza Hotel to hide. Again, the scene as written ended too quickly. I wanted to follow the beat of the drums. There was still comedy gold to be mined! I had the idea that Whoopi, to sell her charade when confronted by her male rival, could fake using a urinal by grabbing the mouthwash bottle off the counter and pouring it while turning her back. (The director wisely nixed my idea of using blue mouthwash.) After the Director’s Cut, the sets were shipped to L.A., the elements shot. The added action worked beautifully. The “funniest scene in the film” according to the *New York Times*.

When mentoring young film editors I love to talk about listening to the rhythm of their film and letting the music lead them. **CE**

Editing a Documentary with Premiere Pro

BY HARRY B. MILLER III, ACE

Gwildor:

“How does this thing work?”

Lubic:

“Just push this button right here”

— *Masters of the Universe*, 1987



Tech Corner presents the personal views and opinions of its author.

I received a call a few weeks ago from a producer I’ve worked with in the past. “Are you interested in cutting a large format film?” “Absolutely,” I responded. As with everyone else in Hollywood, work has been hard to come by. The pay isn’t great, it is non-union, but it is gainful employment.

“And we want to edit on Premiere Pro.” Uh oh. Premiere Pro (PP) hasn’t been on my radar for a long time, since ... my last large format film. Not one to let technology be a stumbling block, I agreed.

The finished project will be a 40-minute, 3D documentary. All large format (LF) releases are the same 40 minute length. That was always the maximum the film projector platters could hold. The tradition apparently has held, although we are rarely projecting film.

Documentary is an amorphous term. It qualifies as a documentary as we are drawing footage from several completed films that could best be described as ‘experiential’ movies. These are films that visually explore some of the vast variety of landscapes, locations, and environments in the United States. Places such as the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, the Great Salt Lake.

There will also be some original shooting, in 3D with the Sony Venice 2 camera, at 24 fps. This is only the third show I’ve ever worked on that shot in true 24 fps. The Venice 2 will shoot at 8.6K, which is very helpful when shooting for very large screens.

I was the third post person brought on, alongside one assistant and another editor. Most of the source media of about 10 LF films was already brought into the system as proxy files.

As I know from past experience, Premiere is very flexible in what kind of media it will ingest. But can get cranky when the media is high resolution or the project gets too full. A year ago a friend took over a PP feature film, and all the media was at 4/6K. No proxies. And it was a performance nightmare. Our proxies are H.264, 1920x1080, all stored on a media drive at our post house, RAWR Productions in North Hollywood.

Which brings up the first wrinkle in the show: No one but the producers are in Los Angeles, where the media and editing systems reside. I am in Sparks, NV. The assistant is in Toronto. And the other editor is in the UK. Which makes scheduling a meeting rather complicated. Toronto is 3 hours later than Sparks. The UK is 8 hours later. Needless to say, we work on scattered schedules. And all of us remote into RAWR editing systems. We remote in using Jump Desktop. Jump works extremely well, with no apparent lag in performance. It helps that my home has brand new fiber optic internet through AT&T.

The next wrinkle for me is ... I don’t know how to use PP. And what I *did* know, I’ve forgotten since my last experience in 2019. I would have chosen Media Composer (MC), but the choice had been made long before I came on. So, learn it or don’t do the job.

It is all about learning the buttons....

In writing this review it is important to reveal my biases. I’ve used most every NLE in the last 28 years: CMX 600, Montage, EditDroid, Final Cut Pro 7, Premiere, DaVinci Resolve, and Avid Media Composer. There are reasons Avid Media Composer dominates the motion picture and television industry. Being so familiar with MC perhaps makes it harder for me to adapt to something like Premiere Pro.

Fortunately, there are an endless number of tutorials online. The best tutorials are from Adobe itself, by Karl Soule, the ever-present PP expert. These tutorials and some reading got me going enough to get started with some confidence. Plus, it is easy to understand the basics. They are pretty much the same for all the major picture NLEs. Yet I found Premiere works in some weird ways. Yes, my bias is showing...

When I’d last worked on PP, it had no ability to work in a shared environment as I’m used to with Media Composer (MC). But in 2020, PP added a feature called Productions. Now, instead of every element of an edit being in one project, each element is separated into its own. My edit sequence is its own project. The feature media is in another. SFX, MX, and other audio is in another. A Production is a master

project or container that holds all the component projects. When I open our Production, I can see projects for Harry Edits, Full Films (source media), Archival, Dailies, and Assets (SFX, MX, VO, etc.).

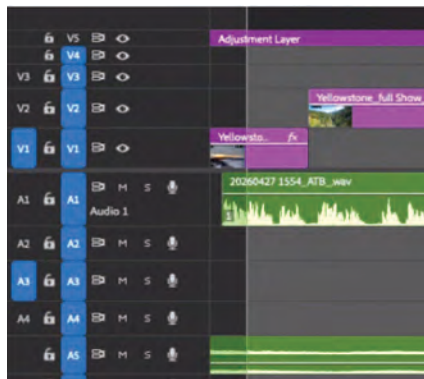
So far, all has worked well. When another editor has a project open, I can see who it is and there is a red lock icon display. I can open that project, draw material from it, but I can't save any changes to that project.

But to me, there is a downside to how Productions work. If you simply Quit PP, you'll be prompted to save all projects, and they will all close. When you open the Production again, nothing is left in the state it was when you last closed. All projects have to be reopened. Even the Production window doesn't retain its size or position, unless you save and close

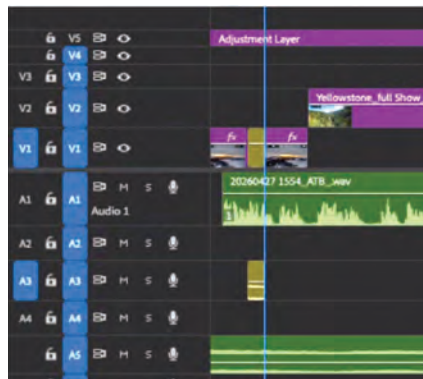
that edit. Ah, but no. PP has its own idea. It overwrites only those tracks in the timeline based on what *source* tracks are active.

In the image sequence below (Examples 1A, 1B, and 1C), V1 and A3 are active. All record side-tracks are active. I would expect an overwrite command would cut in V1/A3 and cut a hole in A1 and A5. Nope. Only the active source-side tracks will overwrite. To me, this is completely counterintuitive.

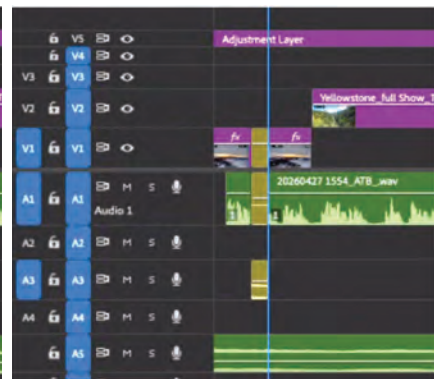
With Media Composer I'm always looking at the source timeline to see what is there, see what I want to cut into the record side. Normally I'd have to switch the timeline view from record to source. PP has a different paradigm. Rather than switch the view, you can choose to open a sequence in the source monitor. This actually makes a viewable timeline. The image below (Example 2) is a view of three open timelines, one record, two source.



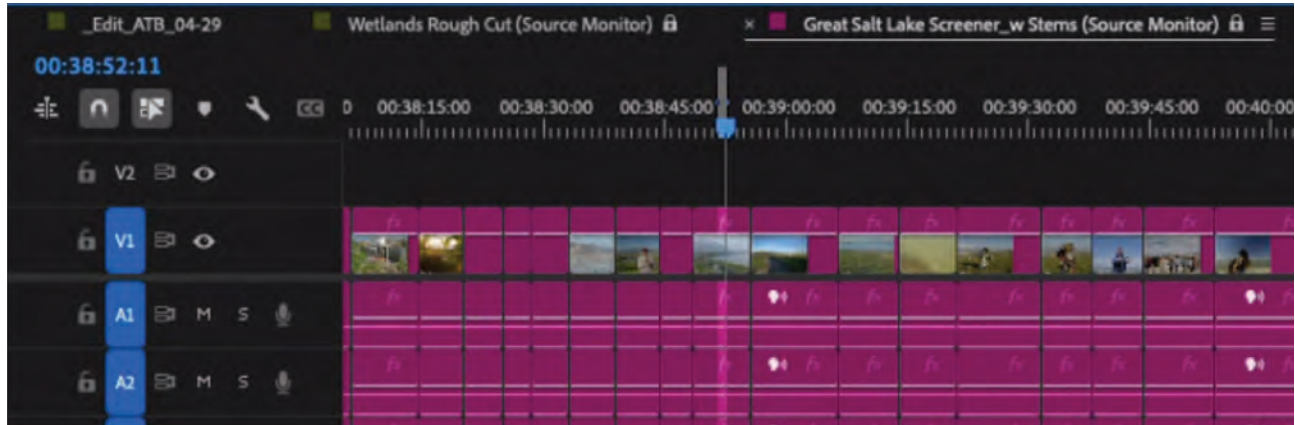
Example 1A



Example 1B



Example 1C



Example 2

the Production first. But every project will be closed when you reopen. That is the equivalent of every bin and timeline closing every time you open Media Composer. MC not only retains the state of the project when you close, it can save any arrangement of open bins as a preset.

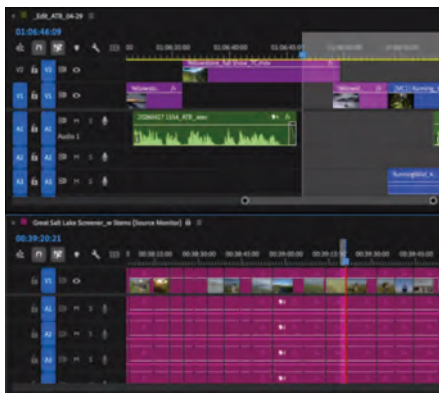
In terms of editing, the basic concepts are the same in any NLE (except for Final Cut X. Don't get me started...). Put a clip in the source monitor, select the section you want with in/out markers, and insert/overwrite into a timeline. Where it gets weird for an MC editor is active tracks.

When overwriting a new clip into a timeline, my expectation is that if all record tracks are active, all will be overwritten by

I can mark an in/out in the picture timeline and insert/paste it into the _Edit timeline. Then there is what's called a 'pancake' view (See next page Example 3).

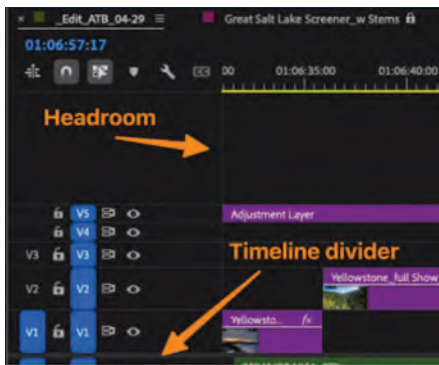
This looks more useful than it is. Yes, you can see source and record, and see it inserted/overwritten, but one's view of the full height of the timeline is constricted. Which brings up a constant battle I have with PP. The timeline tracks can be adjusted in many ways. But finding an arrangement that shows the most information can be challenging.

For example, the top line that shows timecode isn't always where the topmost track is next to. The center divide between video and audio is a line that isn't restricted by the size of the



Example 3

timeline window. Below (Example 4) is a view where the timeline shows a great deal of wasted space at the top of the window.



Example 4

Conversely, the timeline divider can be moved up and obscure most of the tracks. It is a design feature I don't at all understand.

Fortunately, you can save as many timeline views as you'd like, which save the track height, position, etc.

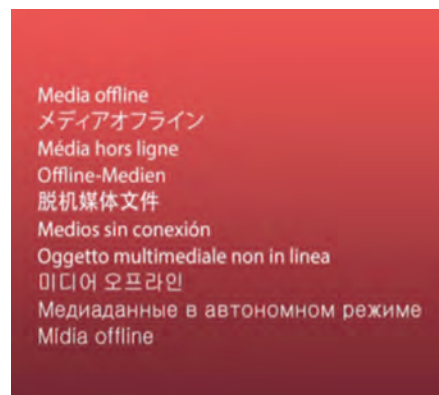
Also, I am used to adding a marker to a timeline, and when I delete a section before that marker, the marker stays in sync with the picture, i.e. advances as much as the deletion. But that isn't the way PP normally works. One has to turn on "Ripple Sequence Markers." I realized that after adding markers for every section of the movie. Now they're all out of sync, and editing markers isn't that easy. You have to double click each to open a window to edit and change color.

Another great feature available in PP is the extension Jumper (*Tech Corner*; CE Q4 2025). Jumper is a visual search add-on. Point it to the media you are using, have it analyzed, then submit a text phrase of what you're looking for –

say 'bison in snow.' Jumper very quickly shows a page full of visuals that match the text. It is quite brilliant. And for a doc with lots of footage, extremely helpful. They have added the ability to search for dialogue and faces. An essential plugin.

Premiere Pro is fast, stable (it *never* crashes – take *that* Avid), and very flexible in many ways. Personally, I hate the design where every panel (source/rec monitors, timeline, audio mixer) is tied together by default, and any resize to one, resizes all. Which is why I free every window in Media Composer. One can save many workspaces, timeline views, etc. to recall while editing, or to take to another system. If I was going to work on PP for an extended time, maybe I would.

The biggest issue with Premiere by far is media management. Media is stored in any folder on your hard drive(s). Once brought into PP, the program expects it to always be in the same place. But if your assistant decides to tidy up the media organization (NOOOO!!!), the link is broken, and it's a real pain to relink your media. My assistant on this project decided to 'organize' the voice-overs into separate folders by performer. Without knowing about this, I opened my production/project and found all the VO offline (Example 5).



Example 5

Agggg!!!! And, of course, as soon as you're showing something to producers, somehow nothing is online. And PP won't let you continue working until you locate the missing media, even if it is no longer in the open timeline.

My second big issue with Premiere is it can be easy to delete parts of your

timeline without realizing it. When you make any deletion in a MC timeline, the timeline displays exactly where that deletion occurred. But with PP, you can accidentally delete a marked section of timeline and since the view isn't adjusted to show that deletion, you can wipe out a lot of work and not realize it. Fortunately (I found this out the hard and stressful way), PP stores a backup version every few minutes, with frequency of backup adjustable in Settings. Very handy when not realizing for a long time you've accidentally deleted the first 25 minutes of your show...

I also find PP is rather slow showing the linked media when first starting. This isn't the end of the world but I find it annoying.

What does it cost? An individual subscription is \$35/month and can be cheaper if subscribing for a full year – there isn't a purchase option. Stop your subscription and that's it for editing. That compares with Media Composer at \$40/month, or \$50/month for the Ultimate plan. Stop this subscription and MC continues to work but won't upgrade to newer versions. Meanwhile, DaVinci's Resolve is free. Or, \$300 for a one-time perpetual license fee.

Fortunately, my employer usually pays the cost. But the Resolve deal is too good to pass up.

Another PP disadvantage is once you update to a new version, you can't open your old projects without them updating. You can't, for example, send a project to another editor if they don't have the same version of PP. MC, meanwhile, prides itself on being backward compatible in the extreme.

Overall, the experience with Premiere Pro, and collaborating with two other editors, has gone smoothly. It's just that every day I need to do more research into what all these buttons do...

The movie we are making is titled *America the Beautiful: Our Natural Wonders* and will premiere in IMAX® and Giant Screen theaters on Nov. 11. The film is being produced by Mission Partners Entertainment Group, Dorsey Pictures, and the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, in association with the America the Beautiful Foundation.



Widow's Bay

Shape shifting from deadpan comedy to creature feature to psychological thriller – sometimes within a single scene

BY ADRIAN PENNINGTON

The most remarkable feat of horror-comedy *Widow's Bay* is not just that it blends silly with scary but that audiences end the 10-part series caring for its characters.

Created by Katie Dippold (*Parks & Recreation*) with Hiro Murai (*The Bear*) directing and executive-producing, the show has been reordered by Apple TV for a second run.

Set on a fictional New England island, *Widow's Bay* is inhabited by an eccentric collection of characters led by hapless Mayor Loftis (Matthew Rhys), his shy assistant Patricia (Kate O'Flynn), and curmudgeonly Wyck (Stephen Root) as well as (possibly) a host of seahags, ghouls, zombies, and serial killers.

"We don't often read things that have so much comedy for the shows we're working on with Hiro," says editor Jen Bryson (*Sirens*). "Katie and her team wrote such funny scripts and I was having so much fun reading them, but obviously that balance of tone with horror and comedy was something I was excited to see how everybody pulled off."

For Bryson, Emmy and Eddie-nominated editor Isaac Hagy, ACE, (*Atlanta*) and Emmy nominee and Eddie winner Kyle Reiter, ACE, (*Barry*) this new collaboration was an extension of a creative partnership that has spanned more than a decade.

Reiter joined Murai on *Atlanta* 10 years ago; Bryson was his assistant for years before stepping up to editor; and Hagy goes back even further, to college dorm rooms and early music videos with Murai. "We've worked on four seasons of *Atlanta*, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, *Station Eleven*, and now *Widow's Bay*," Hagy says. "We've kind of become a very tight family at this point."

Finding the Tone

Reiter cut the pilot, which he describes as the most tonally volatile of the season. "It became pretty apparent that [episode 1] was a lot funnier – and for lack of a better word, maybe sillier – than the other ones," he says. The script had been written by Dippold nearly 20 years earlier as a spec pilot. "Some lines and reactions felt a little bigger than we wanted it to be. As we started seeing episodes 2 and 3, we started to temper things."

The key, he says, was the cast. "Dramatic actors doing comedic stuff tend to overplay, and I think Matthew, Kate, and Stephen's instincts are so good that they knew never to wink at the camera. They played it very real. That was the equation we needed to make all this work."

Hagy agrees, "If you point the needle a little bit the wrong way, this thing could go way out of control. But the characters are so grounded that even the broadest moments feel rooted in something real."

Murai shared a lookbook of 1970s and '80s horror film imagery, with *Jaws* as a major touchstone. Hagy says, "Hiro pitched it as 'what if the mayor in *Jaws* is the guy saying 'everything's fine, get back in the water'?' That opens up new motivations like 'why is he lying to himself?' The show swings between comedy and horror, but both are rooted in mundane, relatable emotions like social anxiety, feeling unheard, and being an outsider."

Mini-movies and genre play

One of the show's pleasures is how each episode feels like its own self-contained film, riffing on a different horror genre while feeding the overarching mystery. There are references to John Carpenter's *The Fog*, Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and Pennywise from *It* among others. Episode 2, "Lodging," is set in the island's haunted hotel which sets the stage for a *Shining*-esque descent into paranoia. "You can typically tell right away what we're paying homage to," Bryson says. "But we always wanted to avoid just being a copycat."

Episodes 1 through 3, she explains, act almost like "monster of the week" stories, easing viewers into the show's tonal blend. "Then, 104 is when things really start to turn into a storyline. What's fun is that audiences get the scares and fall in love with the characters. The scariest thing becomes losing them. We dip our toes into different tropes, but it's always ultimately about the characters and the plot."

The show shape shifts from deadpan comedy to creature feature to psychological thriller – sometimes within a single scene. "Balancing scares and laughs is notoriously difficult," says Hagy. "If you think of comedy and horror as two poles, when they're too far apart neither one works. It was a matter of constantly adjusting and asking, 'Is this joke too broad? Is this scare set up properly?'"

Bryson adds that the key was always character truth. "We didn't approach a scene thinking, 'We need to cut this really funny,' or, 'We need to cut this really scary.' As long as you're cutting to be truthful to how your characters would react, the comedy or the horror feels organic."

She points to the boogeyman chasing Patricia in episode 8. “Her reaction is hilarious, but not because she’s putting shtick on it. She gives such a funny and weird performance. She’s yelling out these weird yelps which is so authentic to the character.”

Not everything worked on the first pass. “There were a few times where the characters were being a little too slapstick,” Hagy says. “There was one moment where Wyck did a 360 karate chop spin. It was funny in a different show, but it broke the pact you make with the audience.”

Building *Widow’s Bay*

Hagy was struck by how seamlessly the production blended real locations in Gloucester, Massachusetts, with drone footage from Maine, VFX, and stage builds. “I remember looking at Ruth’s house in the finale and having trouble believing it was a set,” he says. “Every detail was so specific.”

The town’s isolation is both geographic and technological. There are frequent electrical blackouts and the internet might as well not exist. “It allows the show to inhabit this liminal space that is both contemporary and somewhat foreign,” Hagy says. “If this was a world with cell phones, we wouldn’t be getting so much written communication in the show. It also makes jokes land in the details – like the card games in 102.”

Bryson, who grew up in a beach town, felt an immediate connection. “Pop culture just doesn’t make it all the way to places like that, or it takes forever,” she says. “On an island, you can put in the strangest characters imaginable because they only have each other to bounce off.”

Guest Directors

While Murai directed five episodes, *Widow’s Bay* also brought in guest directors including Ti West, Sam Donovan and Andy DeYoung. “Ti’s extremely good at suspense and characters in stressful situations but my editor’s cut was maybe a little too funny for him,” Hagy says of the director behind distinctive horror features *MaXXXine* and *Pearl*. He got in the room and said, ‘No one will take the horror seriously if we have all these jokes.’ So we removed them. Then the producers added some back. [Episode 106] was tricky because it is all set in the 18th century and didn’t have the show’s regular characters as tonal anchors, so we calibrated a lot in the edit.”



Bryson praises Donovan’s “meticulous preparation” on 104 which depicts Patricia’s attempts to give everyone a good time at a sunset cocktail party only for it to backfire. “He turned an episode about reading into a standout of the season,” she says.

DeYoung, meanwhile, brought “the zaniest ideas,” to 105 in which Loftis accidentally takes hallucinogens. The episode employs a series of jump cuts to depict the mayor’s waking nightmares. “Stuff that I thought was insane, but then we put it together and it’s incredible,” she says.

Shaping the Season in the Edit

Editors are generally never fully confident about how a show will land with an audience. In the edit room they are each other’s first line of defense.

“We screen Editor’s Cuts for the whole office to see where the laughs land,” Bryson says. “As footage came in, we were amazed how fully formed the characters were.”

Halfway through shooting, Dippold set up a Zoom with them and asked what was missing. “We all threw pitches at her,” Hagy says. “One suggestion that made it in was having Sarah Warren (one of the island’s ancestors) discover an antiquated version of the secret stone room and chair in 106. We felt this would help tie the island’s sacrificial history together. That was entirely an edit room pitch.”

Bryson says Dippold’s instincts were invaluable. “There were moments where we said, ‘We’re going to lose people here,’ and she stuck to her guns. Then you watch it on TV and see people are obsessed with something you thought we should cut.”

Assistants and Collaboration

Hayes’ assistant Cameron Ross earned his co-editor credit on 109 “and did a great job.” Myles Elrington and Jing Han – Reiter’s and Bryson’s assistants – also helped on Hayes’ episodes.

Han co-edited episode 108 with Bryson “and did a huge amount of heavy lifting. She’s a fantastic editor.”

Reiter says of Elrington, “He is incredibly creative and a calming presence. Myles was our PA on *Atlanta* and always brings ideas I wouldn’t think of.”

He adds, “Jen was a PA too before becoming an assistant and now a full editor. We really value promoting from within. It’s a real family.” 

Spider-Noir



ACE editors team to merge the language of classic film noir with contemporary superhero storytelling while simultaneously creating both monochrome and color versions

BY ADRIAN PENNINGTON

Marvel's Spider-Verse as conceived for the screen by Phil Lord and Christopher Miller proves its versatility in an episodic TV version they produced for Amazon MGM Studios. *Spider-Noir*, based on the Marvel Comics character and first introduced as an animated character in 2018's *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* voiced by Nicolas Cage, is a mash-up of classic film noir and superhero genres, with a dash of screwball comedy.

Cage reprises the role albeit in a live action 1930s setting and as Ben Reilly, a former soldier who gained superpowers during WW1 but has since become an emotionally fatigued, physically battered gumshoe.

The lead writer, executive producer and co-showrunner is Oren Uziel (who co-wrote Lord and Miller's 2014 feature *22 Jump Street*). Steve Lightfoot (*Hannibal*) is co-showrunner. Both worked with four editors cutting blocks of two: Jennifer Barbot, ACE, cut the pilot and episode 105; Eric Kissack, ACE, cut 102 and 106; Tirsia Hackshaw, ACE, (103 and 107) and Géraud Brisson, ACE (104 and 108).

"Superhero TV is a familiar quantity but Oren said he wanted the show to be 70% noir detective story and 30% superhero," Kissack reveals. "That freaked some people out. Would audiences watch a black-and-white detective show set in Depression era Manhattan? Would they accept something that wasn't trying to be *Into the Spider-Verse*?"

Few of the editors carried baggage associated with this IP allowing them to approach the story on its own merits.

"I even wondered whether they'd hire me because I didn't grow up with Spider-Man bedsheets," Barbot says. "But I think that fresh perspective was part of the appeal."

Typically hired for "dramas or drama-plus-VFX projects" like *Raised by Wolves* or *Man in the High Castle*, she describes *Spider-Noir* as "about an aging detective with a big visual effects component and a comedic edge. I didn't come in with 30 years of Spider-Man history or expectations so I could approach it purely as a character piece."

Hackshaw, who worked with Lightfoot on Marvel's *The Punisher* for two seasons, says she was drawn to the show for several reasons. "First, it's part of a superhero world, which is my nerdy happy place. Then the idea of bringing this character back from the Spider-Verse universe was irresistible. Knowing it would be Nic Cage carrying it through? I would've done it for free.

"Also my dad was a huge fan of 1930s serials. I grew up hearing those stories. For me this show is about reviving that pulpy, serialized energy for a new generation."

Brisson was also invited to board the show by Lightfoot, with whom he'd worked on *Shantaram*. "The idea of cutting a series where the main character is a superhero wasn't something I expected to be offered, based on the projects I'd done," he reports. "I'm a cinephile, so that mix of influences really appealed to me."

Kissack, a fan of Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* films, deliberately avoided *Spider-Noir* source material. "One refreshing thing about this show is you can come in completely cold," he says. "Oren wasn't connecting it to decades of lore. Even the name Ben Reilly was his own invention."

In their meetings with Uziel it was clear that the showrunner was less interested in superhero characters as to what could be done around that idea.

"Oren pitched it as his chance to deal with his fears and insecurities about getting older. I immediately connected with that," Brisson explains. "Both Steve and Oren are very funny, so you could tell humor would be a big part of it."

His Girl Friday was a key text for the screwball element; *The Third Man* for atmosphere. "They even mentioned *Casablanca*, which I'd never thought of as noir, but I understood the archetypes and relationships."

Brisson's own thoughts went to Howard Hawks' films like *Scarface* and *The Big Sleep* which had already experimented with genre. "The fast dialogue, which overlaps with screwball comedy, was already present in early noir. All of that was floating around, even if it wasn't explicitly spelled out."

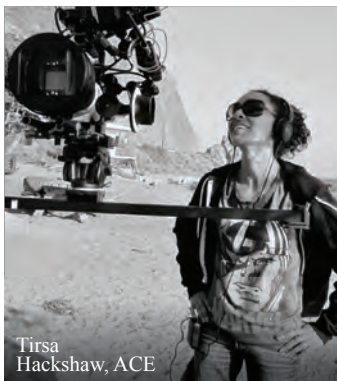
In lieu of rigid genre discussion, the mix of action, humor, and melodrama was found as they went. "We talked a lot



Jennifer Barbot, ACE



Eric Kissack, ACE



Tirsia Hackshaw, ACE



Geraud Brisson, ACE

about noir pacing,” Barbot explains, “whether to let shots hang longer, or go snappier and more ratatat between characters like Robbie (a journalist played by Lamorne Morris) and Ben, or Janet (Ben’s secretary and fellow investigator played by Karen Rodriguez) and Ben. Episode 105, with all three of them together, felt like the show firing on all cylinders.”

The opening to 101 with Reilly walking through the Standard Oil refinery set the vibe. “If we’d been tied to a big VFX heavy superhero show we couldn’t have gone as deep into drama or pacing,” she says. “We had freedom to experiment, especially with how far into shadow we could push things.”

Cage helps sell the story of a has-been superhero with the physicality of his performance. The editors would often choose takes where he looked less polished, more worn down and vulnerable.

“He brings this unpredictable rhythm,” says Hackshaw, “this slightly off center delivery that fits the noir world perfectly. It gives you so much to work with in the edit. There are so many shades of humor, melancholy, and surprise.”

“What was interesting is how controlled he was,” adds Brisson. “He pushed this weird Humphrey Bogart-meets-Looney Tunes detective persona, but never in the wrong scenes. In the emotional scenes – and 104 has several – he played them straight. He wasn’t trying to bring the more eccentric side of Ben Reilly into those moments.

“There was something unexpected in his delivery that helped shift the rhythm. He’d dip in and out of that heightened mode, and that became part of the character’s texture.”

They temped with classic scores including from 1941’s *The Maltese Falcon* but ultimately realized the show needed a more modern sound with noir nods. That shaped the overall pace.

The Alcove nightclub sequence in 101 which introduces femme fatale Cat Hardy (Li Jun Li) became a template for the season. In it she sings “Dream a Little Dream of Me” while Reilly watches on.

Barbot explains, “There’s a version of that musical number that could be cut in a flashy MTV style, hitting every beat, but something I’d been experimenting with in the pilot was nodding to an older style of editing by letting shots breathe and the camera move, allowing moments to unfold.

“That approach didn’t work everywhere. Modern audiences still expect modern pacing in action scenes but in the nightclub it absolutely worked. It felt sexy, slower, more romantic. There’s a romantic thread running through the whole series, and that scene really crystallized it for me.”

The Meaning of Color

The original intent was to produce and present the series in black and white but in order to provide VFX with color information lead cinematographer Darran Tiernan, ISC, shot in color. At some point in prep the decision was made to deliver one cut in both a monochrome and Technicolor edition.

There were long discussions about how to set up the cutting room. The result was two sets of dailies; one in color, one in black and white with the editors cutting in black and white to adhere to the creative conception. “That’s what Oren wanted to see,” Barbot says. “We had both monochrome and color LUTs, but I stayed in black and white until VFX reviews, where we’d finally see the color footage.”



VFX would temp shots in color, then deliver versions with the appropriate LUT applied. Assistant editors sometimes had to export in color too and switch LUTs depending on the delivery. It was a complicated process, essentially doing everything twice, smoothly managed by VFX editor JC Bond.

“I didn’t see anything in color for six or seven months,” reveals Barbot. “When we finally saw the color version, we realized how much more work was needed. Long black shadows hide a lot and color reveals everything.”

“It was also wild to suddenly see the world in color. I’d walk into the VFX office and think, ‘Wait, the alcove is orange and purple? Cat’s costume has gold in it?’ I had no idea.”

There’s general agreement among the team that watching either presentation delivers slightly different experiences. Broadly, the ‘Authentic Black and White’ offers a darker, grittier story while the ‘True-Hue Full Color’ offers a more cartoon-like interpretation.

“Looking back, I think I would have made different choices if I’d cut in color,” Brisson says. “For example, the Hall of

Mirrors sequence in 108 with Cat and Silvermane (Brendan Gleeson) is a clear nod to Orson Welles’ *The Lady from Shanghai*. In black and white, I could play with reflections, split screens, superimpositions. In color, I’m not sure I’d have made the same choices.”

Any series finale presents the challenge of tying loose ends and in cutting it Brisson moved one scene into 107 giving more room to the “22 pages” of dialogue in the first half of 108 where the characters face off in the nightclub. The second half is a fight between the Spider and Leydon (a villain with super electrical powers) while Silvermane and Cat fight in parallel.

“The challenge in the first half was giving the dialogue peaks and valleys, speeding it up, slowing it down, building suspense. And because it’s a finale, the audience knows a fight is coming, so you’re managing that anticipation.”

The tonal shifts inherent in the series helped. “It enabled me to release tension with humor, to reset the scene, then rebuild,” Brisson explains. “That worked across the series. If we did it right, it didn’t feel repetitive.” 

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Dune: Part Two
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Postcard from Earth/The Sphere
The Woman King
The Super Mario Bros. Movie
Elvis

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The Diplomat



Gary Levy, ACE, and Agnès Grandits, ACE, dice the dialogue and dissect the looks in Netflix's transatlantic game of thrones

BY ADRIAN PENNINGTON

Netflix's geopolitical thriller *The Diplomat* plays out like a game of high stakes chess in which every character is a pawn or a power broker. Created by Debora Cahn, starring Keri Russell as U.S. ambassador Kate Wyler and Rufus Sewell as her husband and seasoned diplomat Hal, the show has run three seasons with a fourth in post-production. Alongside Cahn, the series' regular director is Alex Graves and both work with Gary Levy, ACE, and Agnès Grandits, ACE. Levy cut the pilot among other episodes of S1, returned to the chair for the second run, and cut 302, 304, 306, and 308 of the last season. Grandits has also worked on multiple episodes across the series including 301, 303, 305, and 307.

Much of the joy of the show for audiences lies in the escalating intrigue and tension communicated not by action set pieces or chase sequences but innuendo, implication, and the charged microreactions between characters navigating political maneuvers, marriage, and power.

"The style has developed rather than changed," Levy reflects. "We found it during season 1 and leaned into the dialogue moments, the innuendo, the looks, the character beats between people rather than plot devices. We've always had plot, but sometimes it comes after the character work."

Grandits agrees, "For me, the show is about relationships. Relationships between countries, between people, and how complicated they always are. That's what Deborah [Cahn] writes so well."

At the heart of *The Diplomat* is the volatile, screwball inflected marriage between Kate and Hal. Their combative dynamic evokes classic 1940s comedies like *His Girl Friday*, though the editors insist this wasn't a conscious reference point.

"We didn't talk about 1940s genres directly," Levy says. "But some of those fights, especially in season 1, definitely had that comical energy." Grandits adds, "It's in the writing. Many scenes between Kate and Hal have that screwball rhythm."

That said, episode 206 was an homage to *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* — "Two couples fighting it out, trying to get them all in the same frame," Levy says. "I watched that film a few times. I like to think of the pair's most heated confrontations as two gunslingers."

If anything, the team spent more time pushing away from the show's more obvious influence, *The West Wing*, on which Cahn and Graves served as writer and director and producer on dozens of episodes. "We all compared it to *The West Wing* at first," Grandits says. "We studied it thinking, 'We're going to do that kind of thing...' and then realized we had to shift away and find our own style."

Both editors had previously worked together on Showtime's Emmy winning medical comedy-drama *Nurse Jackie*, a show Cahn adored. The balance of comedy woven into drama honed on *Nurse Jackie* became central to *The Diplomat*.

"When Deb interviewed me, she quoted something I'd said about using comedy in a dramatic series," Levy recalls. "I thought it sounded pretentious. Then she said, 'That's you, from an interview you gave about *Nurse Jackie*.' Apparently she loved it."

One of the show's most distinctive qualities is how it parcels out information, which can be dense with intrigue and jargon. Viewers are expected to keep up and are rewarded for doing so. Sharing and withholding information is something the editors discuss constantly.

"Giving out information is tricky," Levy admits. "I always feel like we're not giving enough information and I try to put more in, and Deb pulls stuff out. I'll say, 'Don't we need to know this?' and she'll say, 'No, we don't.' We often find the audience is too far ahead, so we take information away. Sometimes we add ADR so people aren't distracted by 'Wait, what's going on?'"

Grandits agrees: "Deb likes very grounded performances. And she treats the audience as smart. The audience doesn't need to understand everything right away. It'll be repeated later or another character will refer to it. If we believe the characters' emotions, we feel like we understand the situation."

This philosophy extends to the edit. Dialogue is often played off-camera, reactions are prioritized, and the editors rely on the audience's ability to read emotional cues.

"Reactions are often more powerful than watching someone speak," Levy says. "I'll start a line on camera so you know who's talking, then feature the listener. I stay on someone until I get the faintest hint that I'm tired of the shot — then I move on."

Technically, in terms of cutting the show, there's an oscillation between mid-shots, close-ups, two-shots. "The performance guides you," Grandits explains. "Usually it's the classic start wide, then go tighter. But it depends on the performance. Sometimes you need to go tight early, then go wide again."

Season 3 presented both editors with some of the most challenging material of the series so far. For Grandits, the toughest sequence was the opening to 301 "Emperor Dead" set in a tent hastily erected inside the ambassador's London residence. This is technically known as a SCIF (Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility) or a secure area in which the executive can discuss classified information. It's a claustrophobic, high-stakes moment that picks up moments after the season 2 cliffhanger.

"The vice president's team run into the room right after hearing President Rayburn died. It was complicated to cut – all the SCIF material, they're talking to Washington and they're scared. Kate's wondering what Hal has done. It was tricky deciding which character to be on. We cut it down a bunch to speed the decision making and ratchet the tension."

Levy's biggest challenge came at the other end of the season. The finale's barbed dinner sequence gives the episode its title ("Schrodinger's Wife") and features British Prime Minister Trowbridge (Rory Kinnear), President Penn (Allison Janney), and their spouses with Kate and Hal at a formal evening meal. It's a masterclass in overlapping dialogue, shifting alliances, and unspoken tension.

"Dinner scenes are hard and this one was very complicated," he says. "You've got a large number of people, overlapping dialogue, private conversations happening under other dialogue. Those scenes can get pulled apart because everyone wants something different. You end up going too many places. It was an achievement to play all the scenes within scenes, and to get the rhythm – bursts of dialogue followed by long awkward pauses. Alex shoots the whole table, gives you everything, and inevitably you're throwing away great material."

"Alex always tells you what he wants," Levy continues. "The first cut is very prescriptive. He has a clear intention. Then as you edit, you move away from that as you see what works."

Cahn, meanwhile, is both intuitive and unpredictable. "We have good intuition about what Deb wants," Levy says, "but she always surprises us. Sometimes she gives a note and I think, 'Where did that come from?'"



Agnès Grandits, ACE



Gary Levy, ACE

At the time of cutting the finale they didn't know how the story was going to unfold in season 4 but they've been working on that run, scheduled for release this fall, for the past few months.

"Even Deb doesn't always know what will happen next either because they haven't made up their minds or it's still in the writers room. I remember parts of the final scene Deb said I had to use because they were important for season 4. Then a month later she said, 'Take that out, it's boring.' I said, 'I thought it was important?' 'Not anymore.'"

The showrunner's trust in the editors is part of what keeps Grandits and Levy returning each season. "The writing is smart, the people are nice, and they give us creative freedom," Grandits says.

Levy echoes the sentiment: "It's a joy to choose among great options. I've worked on shows where you have a lot of bad options and have to find the good one. Here, almost everything is good."

That's particularly the case when reviewing takes of Russell's performance. "She's amazing," Grandits says. "She has great physical awareness, almost physical comedy. In episode 7 of S2, she's dancing across the room trying to put her clothes on. She has great energy."

Levy is equally impressed with the entire cast's ability to maintain emotional continuity while shooting wildly out of order.

"Sometimes they're doing a scene before and after something they shot six months ago," he says. "I don't know how they keep track of where their character is mentally. I go back to an episode six months later and think, 'I don't know what I'm doing anymore.'"

The finale ends on the steps of the ambassador's residence with Hal telling President Penn that Kate knows about their secret deal to steal a nuclear weapon. The scene is played out in loaded looks between the characters.

"Originally the ending had much more dialogue between the President and Kate, and between Todd (Penn's husband) and Kate. Instead, we ended with a shot of Kate and Todd looking pensive where Todd says, 'Nothing to worry about' – actually taken from earlier in the scene. And then a final close-up on Kate.

"Deb was nervous about the ending. She said, 'I'm not killing anyone. No one's blowing up. They're just looking at each other – what kind of season ending is this?' We worked on it a lot to make it as tense as possible because we couldn't rely on a poisoning or explosion. It's just a photo shoot with lots of quiet, creepy looks – but it had to feel like a bomb going off emotionally." **CE**

Euphoria



How the alchemy behind the HBO phenomenon is mixed in the edit

BY WALTER FERNANDEZ JR.

When *Euphoria* burst onto the scene in summer of 2019, its provocative subject matter immediately turned heads. Based on an Israeli drama of the same name, *Euphoria* explores the messy relationships and drug-fueled antics of teens at a California high school. The HBO show, created by Sam Levinson, echoes movies like the 1996 indie *Kids* or the '80s classic *River's Edge* for its unflinching look at underage sex, drugs, and deafening loneliness.

While histrionics are rampant throughout *Euphoria*, at its core it explores addiction, loss, unworthiness, and an imploding sorrow that feels like an abyss. It's because of this heaviness that audiences cling to the flashes of humor or the few comparatively healthier relationships, like the one between Rue (Zendaya) and Jules (Hunter Schafer). Managing the multiple storylines, characters, and overall intensity of the series needed a team with deft eyes and a resiliency to sift through the madness to find the balance.

Supervising editor Julio C. Perez IV, ACE, and Nikola Boyanov have been on *Euphoria* since the very beginning. "It was a true pilot," recounts Perez. "It wasn't straight to series when it got greenlit. It was a very compact team, then. Nick was my assistant editor." Boyanov adds, "The pilot was

so interesting because it was such a crazy process of forming this brand-new show. Most of the work fell on Julio, but in my supporting role [I] tried to gather everything for him." Together with Levinson, they established the tone and look for the entire three seasons in that pilot.

Boyanov explains, "We made sure everything that we learned from season 1, how we were working and organizing things on the show, continued through S2 and developed further." Boyanov was bumped up to editor for S2 and Aaron I. Butler, ACE, came on board as an additional editor. Alongside Laura Zempel, ACE, the quartet won the Primetime Emmy for Outstanding Single-Camera Picture Editing for a Drama Series for the episode "The Theater and Its Double."

Boyanov says, "S3, we totally shifted away from having assigned episodes, meaning one episode per editor. Everybody was working on everything." This Terrence Malick-style approach to post-production fit with *Euphoria*'s final form. The show was not only a massive success, but was a launchpad for most of its stars like Jacob Elordi, Sydney Sweeney, Hunter Schafer, Maude Apatow, Barbie Ferreira, Colman Domingo, and Storm Reid. As a result, the actors had busy, conflicting schedules throughout production because they were working on other projects. That meant the editing had to "evolve to a level of specificity that was largely due to how separate the block shooting was based on different actors' availability. Overall, we shot 2.1 million feet of film [this season]. Largely 65mm, sometimes 35mm for a total of 348 hours. All that gets squeezed into nine hours. That's a crazy ratio," admits Perez.

Fortunately, the team got some practice in the interim between seasons on Levinson's other HBO project *The Idol*. "I would say that was the testing ground for this method," shares Boyanov. "By the time we got to S3 *Euphoria*, it felt natural to jump around because we were shooting everything from all the episodes at the same time." On *The Idol* and S3 of *Euphoria*, editor Aleshka Ferrero stepped in for Zempel and helped shape this new post methodology.

All four editors are credited for all eight episodes of S3. Perez confides, "We essentially had eight open episodes for probably a year, maybe more. We didn't have one or two tucked away and locked. On *Euphoria*, we don't lock. We mix."

He continues, "The footage would come in and I would select passages, but it all starts with Sam. Sam being creator, writer, director, and showrunner, means his imagination and style are paramount." Butler adds, "During shooting, Sam is obviously crazy busy, but he likes to be involved with the editing the whole way through. What'll happen is, unlike most TV series, the director/showrunner usually won't watch anything until there's a first assembly of a whole episode.

"But with Sam, we'll be cutting scenes as we go. Sam will get a lunch break and come in to watch stuff right at the beginning when we're cutting. Usually, he doesn't give a lot of notes. [When he does], sometimes it'll be big picture general stuff. He's looking to see what we are doing with the material. How we are putting scenes together and [how the story] is developing. He'll feed that back into his process. He'll sometimes rewrite things, add things, or shoot different things based on what we do. I think that is a

unique kind of editorial process where editorial and production are informing and inspiring each other along the way.”

From the ad-libs and improv on the set to the alternate cuts in the edit bay, *Euphoria* was a welcoming space to let your imaginative freak flag fly high. Perez admits, “There were whole scenes that weren’t scripted that were just worked out.”

After principal photography, Levinson was with the team every day. Butler explains, “At this point, we have first cuts of all the episodes. Then, Sam and Julio will work on things at an episode level. They’ll be making trims and restructuring to make different versions. Then, they’ll call us in, the rest of the editors, for specific tasks. Maybe we’ll explore an HBO note and do a round of that. One of us or all of us will get it. Or we’ll each do a different version of a scene and see what we come up with. It’s not a competitive space. We like to play with and push the material to see where we can take it. There are a lot of scenes that Sam didn’t change a frame, or Julio didn’t change a frame after our notes process. I think that’s rare with showrunners.”

“One of my favorite things is when Sam tells me, ‘I had no idea you were gonna cut it that way,’ confides Butler. “He wrote it and shot it, but says, ‘You cut it in a way that was totally unexpected.’ If you can surprise Sam and he loves it, that’s a great feeling.”

Ferrero recalls, “We [would] have lunches together every day. We would make time as a team, all the editors, to watch each other’s cuts. Julio would say, ‘Let’s circle up.’ We would all go to Julio’s bay and watch the progress of everything we’re working on so that we know what’s going on. Especially in this season where everything was so cross-boarded, you need to do something like that to be able to track every story and know how things are developing. Obviously, if I’m doing something, that might affect something that Aaron’s doing two episodes later, that’s important to know. Or Nick discovers something on this one sequence, we say, ‘Oh, we should bring this back.’ There’s a constant dialogue that we’re having. Aaron and I would go off and experiment with structural changes on certain episodes. There’s a lot of that, which is great and not something you get a chance to do as an editor in TV a lot.”

The creative and collaborative playground that was fostered in the editing rooms was crucial to the stylistic narrative prowess *Euphoria* became known for. It even lent itself to the



music. Perez recalls working with Hans Zimmer and his team “was terrific” including with music editor Ryan Rubin.

On S3, Ferrero says, “All of our assistant editors edit on the show, and they all got additional editing credits. Andy Cruz even got a full editor credit on episode 307. He worked his butt off and did great work. We all believe in the values of mentorship, of working together, of collaboration, of experimentation, and it shows. Every single member of the team is listened to and included.”

Butler adds, “We watch all the scenes that our assistant editors cut. Aleshka and I give our first round of notes, and we play and experiment with them. We learn with them and once we’re happy with it, then we’ll move on to Julio’s round of notes. This is an amazing way for them to learn and grow.” Perez concludes, “When you have wonderful, talented, bright people, why let them run away? To impart that knowledge to the next wave of young editors is thrilling to me.”

One of *Euphoria*’s legacies is how genre agnostic it was in the way it weaved in and out of genres. It’s a coming-of-age saga, a thriller, an actioner, a melodrama, and a comedy. Despite the brutal direction the show can take, there was humor peppered throughout the three seasons. “Dark comedy’s a big mode for us,” explains Perez. “I think it took some people a little while to understand how funny the show was from the beginning.” Ferrero adds, “We’re constantly laughing when we’re watching scenes.”

Butler continues, “Our priority was making the best, most powerful, most meaningful story possible.” Perez proclaims, “For us, every editing bay is an instrument. The dub stage is a big instrument during the mixes. The ADR booth is an instrument. All of it to serve the purpose of rounding out a world that is fully, completely, and satisfactorily realized.” **CE**



Aleshka Ferrero, Julio C. Perez IV, ACE, Aaron I. Butler, ACE, Nikola Boyanov



Backrooms

Greg Ng, CCE, teams with YouTuber and filmmaker Kane Parsons to create the horror hit

BY CAROLYN GIARDINA

Greg Ng, CCE, admits he was unfamiliar with 20-year-old YouTuber and filmmaker Kane Parsons' web horror series *The Backrooms* before landing the job to cut the A24 feature helmed by Parsons and based on his material. But Ng was connected to the project through producing friends at Phobos Pictures in Vancouver, and after checking with some younger family members – who confirmed “it’s so cool” – he met with Parsons. “We hit it off and moved on to the feature a few months later.”

Now, it seems everyone in Hollywood has heard of *Backrooms*. The film delivered something new, unexpected, and its built-in YouTube fan base helped take it to number one when it opened in theaters on May 29; at press time it has reached nearly \$350 million at the worldwide box office.

Backrooms stars Chiwetel Ejiofor as Clark, an unhappy owner of a furniture store, who discovers an endless maze of rooms through a wall in his store; and Renate Reinsve as his therapist, Mary, who follows him into the labyrinth.

“The backrooms is kind of an esoteric thing. It’s a bit of a puzzle; the people that are really into the backrooms like to get involved and solve a puzzle about what it is,” Ng relates, adding that they therefore wanted to leave the story open to interpretation.

Certainly that includes the dialogue-heavy key sequence between Clark and Mary in a backroom kitchen. Says Ng, “I hope that when they do have their emotional kind of breakthrough, that the audience can feel that right along with them.”

He notes that there was a point in post where there were “self-help kind of tapes at the end that we kind of were playing around with ... but then it started to feel like we’re being too specific, so that got stripped out, which I think is for the better.

“We didn’t want to overexplain things,” he emphasizes. “We didn’t want to be too prescriptive in what is being said, and so my hope is that when people leave [the theater] there isn’t necessarily one answer.”

He continues, “Hopefully when people leave the theater, they’re left with enough answers and a lot of questions that they continue to analyze the movie and form their own answers as to what they think happened. And that discussion enriches the movie.”

Editing is often described as the final rewrite of a movie and this was no different. “There’s certain things I can’t speak of,” Ng says, adding though that “there’s definitely things that changed and shifted.” (The first cut was roughly two hours in length though the final run time is one hour and 45 minutes.)

Ng relates that as originally scripted, the story format was a sort of part one following Clark and part two with Mary. “There’s a handoff at the midpoint, then Mary emerges as the protagonist,” he says. “We had to rejig a few things to balance it out to show that Mary is in fact one of the main characters, even though she’s the therapist, and she, for the most part, is there listening to a lot of the problems for Clark. We did have to anchor her as someone important at the beginning.”

To achieve this, for instance, some of the sequences with Mary were shuffled around and used earlier in the story so that it wouldn’t feel like “too much of a reset” when Clark is left behind.

Parsons also shot a few “dream sequences” to establish Mary’s backstory, which Ng says “evolved and changed because they were too dreamy. Is this what’s actually happened to Mary? Is this part of her imagination? So those got reduced into the flashbacks that we see without having too much of a dreamy nature to them.”

They used some of this footage for a sequence that wasn’t scripted but evolved into a flashback with Mary’s mom in a mental institution and Mary home alone. “Then the camera kind of falls through the floor of her childhood home, and it sort of segues into the backrooms,” he says, noting that this shot was a happy accident. “We needed to show [why] she wants to help people, which is why she’s trying to help Clark. ... Kane was trying to change the shape of the room that the flashback was happening in, and then he started iterating it within [open source animation software] Blender.

“It’s kind of like it becomes a dream/flashback, and then the flashback transitions into the backrooms and kind of brings us back round in a kind of a beautiful way,” he says. “Many of the shots were made in Blender, sometimes entirely.”

Backrooms was filmed with the actors on a 30,000 square foot set in Vancouver, which included green or blue screen, allowing them to extend the sets in VFX. For shots without the actors that show the backrooms, Parsons worked in Blender (which he also used to make his web series) and shots were also handed off to visual effects, led by VFX supervisor Ed Douglas. “Kane would come up with the initial concept in Blender and hand that over to Ed Douglas to distribute amongst his team and kind of bring that up to a cinema quality,” Ng elaborates.

On the VFX, Ng confirms that “there was no generative AI used,” noting “all the spaces that were in the backrooms themselves were 3D modeled and built around Blender or whatever other softwares that they are using.”

The unique cutting room for the film was set up at Phobos, designed with wallpaper to resemble a backroom from the film. Ng relates that in addition to his editing system, Parsons had a desk in the room so that they could collaborate. “He had a very powerful laptop, which ran Blender and had all his music programs on it, so we could riff on ideas,” Ng relates, adding that VFX supervisor Ed Douglas was “on the other side of the wall, so everyone was very close together. There’s a lot of people coming and going and sitting together on the couch.”

The editorial and extended team included additional editor Nicholas Monsour, ACE; assistant editors Stephen Grobe and Gloria Mercer; post supervisor Andy Levine; and post coordinator



Greg Ng, CCE, Kane Parsons, Stephen Grobe

Marena Dix; VFX editor David Legault, dailies operator Jamie Quast, and technical coordinator Dave Rice. Eugenio Battaglia was the film’s supervising sound editor, designer and rerecording mixer. Parsons composed the score with Edo Van Breemen.

A “New Wave”?

Anecdotal evidence suggests that audiences in theaters have responded to *Backrooms* with audible gasps, and for Ng, “to have a vocal response like that, it was very gratifying as an editor. But just as a movie-going person, to have a collective response together is very cathartic.”

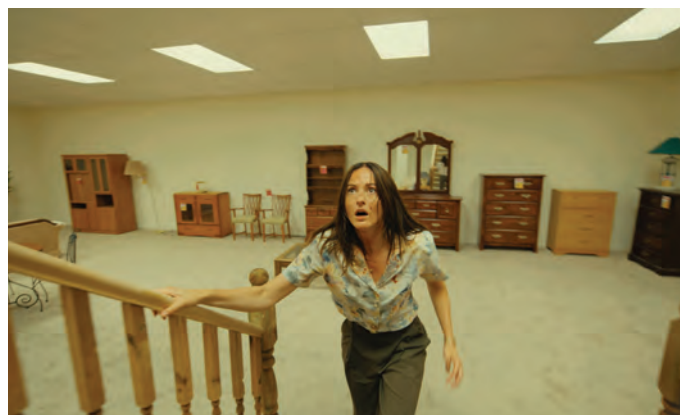
Amid this changing time in Hollywood, Ng acknowledges that films like *Backrooms* and Curry Barker’s *Obsession* are part of an interesting period for indie horror.

“You have a lot of great independent horror that people are excited to go see, a lot of word of mouth,” he says. “And it’s a lot of young people that want to go have [this type of] cinema experience. I feel like this summer we have a really good kind of resurgence of exciting things that are happening.”

Ng questions if this represents the start of what could become a sort of new wave. “There’s something to be said about studios giving people like Kane or Curry Barker an opportunity to make a movie and really push it out into the world,” he reflects. “There’s kind of a new wave – more studios going to give more YouTubers or creators out there a platform greater than what they already have. Are we gonna see a lot of fresh new ideas because people are hungry for them? I hope so.”

It underscores the impact of YouTube, which received the ACE Visionary Award at this year’s Eddie Awards. Notes Kim Larson, managing director and head of YouTube’s creator and gaming team, “When I accepted the ACE Visionary Award, I said that the line between ‘media’ and ‘cinema’ has dissolved – because a great story can start anywhere. The incredible success of Kane Parsons’ *Backrooms* and Curry Barker’s *Obsession* is the ultimate proof of that reality.

“They used YouTube as a real-time sandbox to master their craft and build audiences completely on their own terms,” she adds, suggesting that “this isn’t a temporary moment – it’s an industry shift. By building deeply loyal communities from scratch, they’ve proven that the audience is the ultimate greenlight.” **CE**





Minions & Monsters

Gregory Perler, ACE,
places Illumination's
Minions in an alternative
history of Hollywood

BY CAROLYN GIARDINA

Illumination Entertainment and Universal's latest animated movie, *Minions & Monsters*, brought its yellow pill-shaped scene stealers back to the cinema with a playful alternative history of film, edited by Gregory Perler, ACE, who previously cut the studio's *Despicable Me* and *Despicable Me 2*, as well as its pair of *Sing* movies.

Directed and co-written by Pierre Coffin – who is also the voice of the Minions – this new adventure features an ensemble voice cast including Christoph Waltz as a film director, Jeff Bridges as the studio head and Trey Parker as the antagonist Goomi. The movie immerses viewers in Hollywood history from opening credits – which portray the Minions in classic films from Georges Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon* to the Lumière brothers' *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station*.

Placing the Minions in a Hollywood narrative involved a range of tones, which was a consideration from the start. “It was always a concern that the left and the right turns were going to feel too jagged, and they were not going to feel organic enough,” Perler relates. “I think the biggest thing that helped us was the way in which we started the movie in the present in a Hollywood museum. That’s not the way it [originally] started out.”

Perler relates that the movie was initially conceived as more of an origin story when he joined the project in 2023. That version began with a montage of how the Minions inadvertently caused the untimely demise of their various bosses including a cyclops, a sorcerer, and even King Kong.

“Then you end up with this bank robber, which it turns out, is an actor in a Hollywood Western. That was a big stretch,” he says, noting that Coffin and co-writer Brian Lynch came up with the alternative idea of opening the story in a Hollywood museum to set the stage.

And so the movie begins with a tour through a film museum, during which a guide voiced by Allison Janney regales visitors

with the Minions’ “contributions” to film. They appear in a montage with nods to films such as Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* and Harold Lloyd’s *Safety Last*. This tour – which also sets up the story – takes the viewer into the aforementioned Hollywood Western.

“It gave us license to then jump in to the scene and not feel like that was coming out of nowhere,” Perler says, noting that this four-minute train chase sequence is “pretty much as it was boarded the very first time, [though] how you get into it, and how you get out of it, were two very different things.”

With that Hollywood Western, the Minions are “discovered,” including James and Henry, a pair of Minions whom have caught the Hollywood bug and become BFFs. The trajectory of this friendship was set by Coffin from the start. “We were building up this friendship so we could knock it down at the end of the second act, and then allow the third act to build it back up again,” Perler says. “We did dial that split between the two down considerably in the final version.

“Initially it was turned up way higher on the dial, and it was hard to recover from that. You spent a lot of time with Henry moping, and it just made James look like [a] misguided director and he just wasn’t very sympathetic.”

Perler started the movie in L.A. before moving to Paris where Illumination is headquartered. As is typical with animation, the story evolved through a highly collaborative process. And it was unique in that Coffin also voices the Minions, who speak gibberish.

The editor notes that Coffin began recording voiceover from the start of work on the movie, though these were not necessarily the final tracks. “I’m literally working for a writer, director, and actor who do all of that at the same time,” Perler says. “He’s doing it almost ADR style to picture, so he asks me for a rough timed out animatic of the storyboards that I’m just timing out in my mind’s ear, and I send that to him, and he

records the dialogue to it, and sends it back, and then I tweak it from there. That's how every scene starts out."

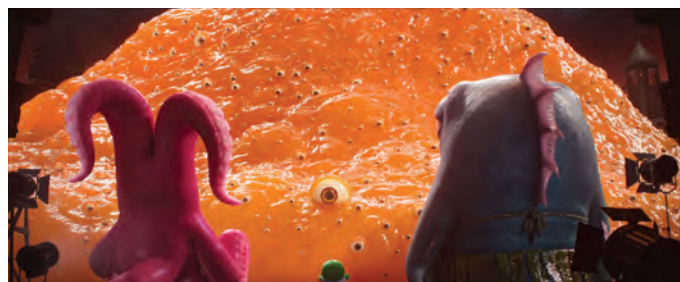
For 'English speaking' characters that have not been cast, sometimes friends, colleagues, co-writers, or assistant editors would provide scratch voice. In the case of Depression-era type of newsreel footage that that appears in the final movie, the voice of the narrator is that of L.A.-based first assistant editor Bryan Tuck.

Perler saluted the entire editorial team, which also included associate editor Fanny Bensussan, who was "my assistant for years and I moved her up to start editing on this film"; Paris based first assistant Victor Lambert; and additional editor Stephen Perkins.

Goomi and a blob

Shaping each character in editorial required careful attention. Take, for instance, antagonist Goomi, voiced by Trey Parker. "He was much more aggressive and abrasive when he arrived, which we thought was funny, and then we realized we had no place to go," Perler remembers. "We had to dial it back in the writing [and] Trey completely understood. ... It's like a Broadway show. You put it up, you try it out, you put it in front of people, and you make adjustments based on that."

The story leads to a climactic action scene, during which the Minions face a *Blob*-like monster dubbed Irene that the filmmakers worked until it felt right. "There's conjuring, there's destruction, there's James and Henry getting separated.



Fanny Bensussan, Gregory Perler, ACE, Pierre Coffin, Victor Lambert

... There's about nine different demarcations in it. I'm not exaggerating, over the course of two and a half years every one of those demarcations changed." Perler adds that in the finished scene, the Minions are "way more involved in defeating Irene than we had the first time."

Citizen Kane and George Lucas

This comedic movie contains plenty of details for film fans. For instance, in addition to those previously mentioned, there's a segment that pays homage to *Citizen Kane*, with a black-and-white animated take on the iconic opening scene, during which, rather than using the famous line, "Rosebud," a Minion voice exclaims, "Oh, poop." Perler notes that this sequence appears as boarded but the line changed along the way. "We workshopped it to death; we previewed it," he remembers.

Minions & Monsters composer John Powell created a cue for that sequence, which Perler describes as effectively a Minions theme in the style of *Citizen Kane* composer Bernard Herrmann. "[It uses] all those low woodwinds and that brass, and it feels like *Citizen Kane*, but it's not."

Among the various directors featured in the opening scene in the museum is *Citizen Kane*'s Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, and even George Lucas, who stands in a clear exhibit case. Perler notes that Lucas himself played along, recording a line. "Please let me out of this box," he asks.

Remembers Perler, "George happened to be passing through Paris, and we got him on a Sunday morning at a local recording studio."

Looking back to the start, Perler admits that getting from the main titles to that film museum was trickier than it might appear. "How do you get out of a main title sequence where you're showing silent film clips that have the Minions in [them], and transition into a tour guide in a Hollywood museum? We tried so many different handoffs and just when we thought we had it, we would start second guessing ourselves."

He relates that in the final cut when the silent movie sequence ends with *A Trip to the Moon* (with a Minion face in the moon) it appears to cut to black. "But it's not black, it's actually a monitor. You can look closely and see the pixels and the head of the tour guide steps in and just carries us along. It just had to hand off perfectly, and that's what we did." 



Disclosure Day

Steven Spielberg returns to sci-fi with Sarah Broshar, ACE

BY CAROLYN GIARDINA

This summer, Steven Spielberg made his return to sci-fi with the release of Universal's *Disclosure Day*, edited by Sarah Broshar, ACE.

The story follows cybersecurity pro Daniel Kellner, played by Josh O'Connor, who has stolen evidence from his employer Wardex Corporation of extraterrestrial life that the government has been keeping hidden from the public. When he's discovered, he and his girlfriend Jane (Eve Hewson) find themselves on the run.

In a parallel storyline, Kansas City-based meteorologist Margaret Fairchild, played by Emily Blunt, begins behaving strangely, including, during a live weather broadcast, and speaks in an unknown language. She soon finds herself, similarly, on the run with Wardex in hot pursuit.

Daniel and Margaret don't actually meet for some time; when they do, the chase continues and secrets are revealed. "It was a really good challenge," Broshar says of cutting the parallel stories while forwarding the narrative, "especially in the beginning, because we don't meet [Blunt's character] for a good chunk of the beginning of the movie. We know she's a lead, we know she's coming, but we're in the Daniel storyline, which is a very different tone from her storyline.

"You are in the middle of this man-on-the-run story," she continues, "and then you get to Margaret and it's a completely different tone. We were trying to figure out how do you get to her as fast as possible, while respecting what we need to do storywise, and then how do we keep her as part of the story."

She confirms, "There's definitely some restructuring that we did along the way to get to her a little bit faster, and once we're with her, to keep her very grounded and active in the story."

As an example, Broshar notes that there was more of Wardex's pursuit of Daniel. "It was a great scene ... very entertaining, and we just felt like we needed to get to Margaret and move on. It didn't ultimately move the story forward.

We found that when you took it out, we just got into the heart of the story quicker."

Additional elements of the script include the impact of Jane's faith, as a former nun. "That was all part of the script, and to me, there's the religion, and there's the belief, and there's the intellectual sides of disclosure and what that would do.

"But also, editorially the way we looked at it was more like there are these two couples – there's Margaret and Jackson (Wyatt Russell), and there's Jane and Daniel – and what are their dynamics and where are they emotionally with each other?

"I think that was really interesting with Jane's story, thinking that her boyfriend is doing the wrong thing, basically, and having this really deep conflict. To me, you look at it intellectually, but it's also about their relationship.

"Editorially, you're always looking at the emotion of the scene," she elaborates. "Where are these characters and relationships? When do they trust each other? When do they not trust each other? It was really about faith in each other and the faith in the relationship, in the context of a worldview. I'm always taking the giant thing and making it incredibly personal."

Spielberg often shot action practically, Broshar notes, describing a sequence during which Margaret and Daniel are in a car that is pushed into and dragged alongside a moving train. Live action was shot on location with an actual train and car. "They had stunt doubles and the actors in the car getting pushed," she relates. "And then you did have a later shoot with the actors, with all the jumping and that kind of thing on a set," she adds, noting that VFX completed the shot.

Another was a sequence during which Wardex agents are on the trail of Margaret, Daniel, Wardex defector Hugo Wakefield (Colman Domingo) and others who find themselves in an invisible house that their pursuers cannot see. "The footage was just really fun. You try to go with that, and you try not to do too

much,” Broshar says, noting that she focused on “trying to find the tension, trying to keep [viewers] on the edge of your seat a little bit. There’s an element of surprise that I think is fun when you see that the house has disappeared. [It’s about] when and how do you reveal information to get the most tension.”

Broshar chose to limit what she said about the finale, which takes place in a broadcast newsroom, but offered that “from a technical stance, that was definitely the hardest scene in the film.” She relates, “We had a ton of blue screens and a lot of blank slate there, and had to figure out every single element that was going everywhere in that whole sequence. ... You might have one screen that you’re filling into a 12x12 grid, and then in that 12x12 grid you have different graphics and transitions and cuts, so you could have so many hundreds of shots within a two second shot.”

Relating that emotion led her editorial decisions, she continues, “Then we go from sort of spectacle into emotion, and we use the NBC anchor as the emotional anchor of that scene. We cut to her reacting to what she’s seeing.”

The film’s editorial team included first assistant Andrey Ragozin; assistant editors David Thomashower, Ruby de la Rosa and David Scorca; VFX editor Corbin Mehl; and production assistants Soraya Dabdoub, Simone Wright and Elise Ferencz. Says Broshar, “Everyone’s just very valuable team members, and great, great people to work with.”

Working with Spielberg

Disclosure Day is a notable project for Broshar, as it marks her first solo credit with legendary director Spielberg.

A potted bio: Broshar grew up in Michigan and earned an undergraduate degree from Northwestern University before doing her graduate studies in the editing program at AFI Conservatory. At AFI she met Sabrina Plisco, ACE, and became her intern for *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*. “She put me forward for a small indie movie that Michael Kahn [ACE] was cutting that was looking for an intern and so I got to meet Pat Crane, who was his first assistant, and he brought me along to *Spiderwick Chronicles* [also edited by Spielberg’s decades long editor Kahn].

“Then I went on to do *The Adventures of Tintin* (2011) as the ‘Avid hands’ for Michael and Steven,” she says. “It was like



Sarah Broshar, ACE



Editorially, you’re always looking at the emotion of the scene.”



film school with Michael and Steven, best way to learn.” She’s been a part of that team ever since, moving to additional editor and then co-editor before *Disclosure Day*.

Disclosure Day was filmed in New Jersey and New York, with Broshar close by. “Steven loves the cutting room,” she relates, discussing their process. “We have a trailer on set and he makes time to come watch dailies during lunch, to come watch cuts during lunch and or in between lighting setups.”

Describing the director as “one of the smartest and hardest working people,” she says they watch the cuts over and over again. “And anytime either of us has an idea, we stop and we try it. So in the early days, you’re watching the individual scenes, and you’re trying to get the scene into shape, and then by the time we finish shooting the scenes, we have a cut of the movie within a day or two of wrapping.” Another plus, she adds, is that he has flexibility since he’s seeing this while he’s shooting.

“We have a cut very, very early on in post-production, and then we just spend a massive amount of time going through the movie, and usually we’re in person. Occasionally [we’re] remote if he’s traveling or something; he might do a couple hours, and then I take the extra time during the day to explore my own things and offer solutions, but a lot of it is spent together. Just wonderful.”

Another aspect of their process that she shares is the way in which they handle temp music. “We do the temps ourselves in editorial, but we are challenged by not being allowed to use any John Williams music, and the temp is really important to nail the tone for Steven,” Broshar relates, adding that when they do get their score from the legendary composer, “it makes it feel like this complete Steven Spielberg John Williams movie.” 

Marcia Lucas

1945 - 2026



Remembering the life of legendary editor Marcia Lucas, who died May 27 at the age of 80

BY BOBBIE O'STEEN

I had the extraordinary opportunity to meet Marcia Lucas last year for our “ACE Presents” event of *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* at the Metrograph in New York. She was tiny in physical stature but carried the weight of her own belief in herself. When she talked about her life's work, her riveting and hilarious stories were punctuated by her remarkable laugh: earthy, sparkly, and a bit devilish, owning something she accomplished or telling an uncomfortable truth. She was a straight shooter, which allowed her to hold her own when she found herself as the lone female voice among an incredibly talented group of young male directors who, starting in the '60s, changed movie history and culture.

Marcia was born in 1945, raised by a single mother, and, as a latchkey Valley kid, would watch old movies on TV “getting an education and some of my ambition.”¹ At 18, she got a job as an apprentice film librarian for the Sandler Film Library in Hollywood. She worked hard to learn everything about post-

production, was promoted to assistant editor, got into the union – and started cutting promotional films and commercials. “It was thrilling to me. I just wanted to be editing.”² She soon met freelance editor Verna Fields, who liked to give opportunities to women editors, and she offered Marcia a job as an assistant on a 1967 documentary about Lyndon Johnson's trip to Southeast Asia. Fields brought in some USC film students to help, one of them being George Lucas. “Marcia had a lot of disdain for the rest of us,” he remembers. “She was the only real pro there.”³ Marcia called him “cold fish,” he called her “full of beans. That was our chemistry.”⁴ They also shared a love of filmmaking – and soon a love for each other.

They collaborated the following year on *Filmmaker*, a documentary about the making of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Rain People*. She was also assistant editor for Coppola and other auteur directors, such as Haskell Wexler (*Medium Cool*) and Michael Ritchie (*The Candidate*). She continued to edit whenever she could, at one point cutting a 16mm documentary about author John Steinbeck. In 1969, that same year, she married George, moved up with him to the Bay Area, and one night, while watching the Oscars found out that short was nominated. “You could have knocked me off my chair. I said, ‘I think I know what I'm doing.’”⁵

In 1971, George directed his first feature film, the dystopian *THX 1138* and Marcia told him, while she appreciated the innovative visuals, the film left her cold. She encouraged George to make something more accessible, and he co-wrote and set out to direct *American Graffiti*. He wanted Marcia as the editor, but Universal insisted on someone established, so Fields was hired and Marcia assisted. She took over when Fields left, due to a previous commitment. She had a significant creative impact, helping weave the four teenage boys' storylines. As she explained, George “kept cutting away before a scene was quite finished. I said, ‘We have to understand the characters before we cut away. Give me 24 hours. I can restructure the movie.’” She took proud ownership in her retelling of the story, adding, “Well, guess what? The *American Graffiti* you see in the movies is Marcia's cut!”⁶ She also re-edited the wall-to-wall source music, which was “all chopped up ... I got all the songs to fit the scenes.”⁷

American Graffiti was a big success, and earned her and Fields Oscar nominations, so Martin Scorsese was able to hire her for *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. This was his first studio film and first film he didn't edit himself. Marcia said, “I knew Marty liked to move the camera and I thought, I wonder if this is going to cut.” She concluded “the cutting was not a problem at all. He loved everything I did. I loved working for Marty.”⁸ Ellen Burstyn won the Oscar for her beautifully nuanced performance. Scorsese subsequently hired Marcia to be supervising editor on his next film, the dark character study *Taxi Driver*, editing the brilliantly chaotic final shootout. She also enjoyed the teamwork in the cutting room with fellow editors Melvin Shapiro and Tom Rolf [ACE]: “I was really lucky that I had good editors.”⁹

Meanwhile, as the story has been told, George finished production on *Star Wars* in England and was not happy with the editor's cut, so he asked Marcia to re-edit from scratch.

Her most herculean effort involved editing the climactic *Battle of Yavin*, tasked with integrating black-and-white footage from old World War II movies. She made multiple dupes to have enough shots of planes from many angles and perspectives, which she intercut with the blue-screened pilots and live action. Overall, she reordered and reshaped the thrilling conclusion. Marcia also suggested to George: "What if Darth Vader kills Obi-Wan Kenobi at the Death Star when they're escaping?"¹⁰ George liked the idea, which would not only add danger and drama, but also, she said, "Luke could be listening to Obi-Wan talking to him from another dimension," and it would reinforce the importance of the Force as a "spiritual vibe in the universe, the glue that held it all together."¹¹

Because deadlines were looming, George hired two additional editors, first Richard Chew (now ACE) and then Paul Hirsch (now ACE), who appreciated Marcia's warmth and how fluidly they worked as a team. Meanwhile, Scorsese called her up again. This time his editor died and he needed her as a supervising editor on his musical *New York, New York*. She had to juggle both films, helping George cross the finish line on *Star Wars*. Needless to say, the success of *Star Wars* was seismic and Marcia, Hirsch, and Chew won Oscars.

On *The Empire Strikes Back*, she continued to consult George, while also helping design their ambitious filmmaking retreat at Skywalker Ranch. On *Return of the Jedi*, George again needed her help with the cut, and was given "all the death scenes, all the love scenes, everything that had emotion."¹² She honed the performances and interactions in pivotal scenes, such as Darth Vader's death and Luke confronting the ghost-like Obi-Wan about Vader being his father.

Marcia's role as emotional compass and female voice in that boys' club of filmmakers is encapsulated at a screening in 1981 of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, attended by co-creator and producer George and director Steven Spielberg. When the film ended, everyone was excited, but Marcia put a damper on the moment: "What happened to the end scene?" She was referring to a scene in the script outside the federal building after Indiana's frustrating meeting with government officials about the Ark. Marion is waiting outside, offers to buy him a drink, and affectionately hooks her arm in his as they head off. Marcia said Spielberg and Lucas insisted they didn't need it. "You left Marion in the cave where all the Nazis got killed and she was tied on the stick with Harrison (Indiana) and you were never going to see her again in the movie," she told them. "I think you're underestimating Marion."¹³

Marcia got her way, but she also could have been talking about herself. She was appreciated by Scorsese and other directors but claimed the only compliment she ever got from George was on *Return of the Jedi*, when he called her "a pretty good editor."¹⁴ (continued on next page)

A tribute to *Marcia Lucas* by Martin Scorsese

In Los Angeles in the early '70s, I was part of a very tightly knit social group that convened regularly at Ting Ho on Highland and Musso & Frank around the corner on Hollywood Boulevard. The core group was Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Paul Schrader, Brian De Palma, and me – Brian and I were the odd men out, the two New Yorkers. Quite often, we were joined by Marcia Lucas.

George was the first of us to really break through with *American Graffiti*, which was a massive success. Marcia was nominated for an Oscar for her work on that picture, which was excellent. And when the moment came for me to make my first studio picture, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, I asked Marcia if she would be interested in cutting it. That was the first of the three pictures we worked on together.

We had a wonderful working relationship. Marcia was extremely intelligent, she was fun to be with and she had a great sense of humor. Above all else, she was an excellent editor. She was meticulous, and she had an extremely sharp story sense – which is to say that she stayed rigorously focused on the story as it came alive through the picture. She could see very clearly when something was getting in the way, no matter how good the scenes.

In the first few cuts that we looked at, the opening section of *Alice* was much longer. At a certain point, we looked at each other and realized that something had to go. It was Marcia who articulated it: "The movie is called *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, so people want to see her leave, right away." We lost a lot of good material, but it was exactly what the picture needed. She was even more crucial to *Taxi Driver* and *New York, New York*, where she came on after she finished working on *Star Wars*.

After the phenomenon of that picture, everything changed. We lost touch with each other. I'm sorry that I didn't get the chance to see her once more before she passed away. She was a good friend and a great collaborator. **CE**

During that film, she and George adopted a baby girl, after years of trying to have a child of their own. Now she had something else pulling at her heart strings; the couple's priorities divided them. "He wanted to stay on that workaholic track ... I wanted to stop and smell the flowers."¹⁵ They announced their divorce in 1983 and Marcia stayed out of the public eye for many years, even though, as she said, "Lots of very famous, very good directors called me to ask if I would edit their movies."¹⁶

In 1997, when the definitive official book *George Lucas: The Creative Impulse: Lucasfilm's First Twenty-Five Years* came out, Marcia revealed, "I opened up the book ... it said one paragraph: 'Marcia Griffin Lucas was an assistant editor I married in 1969.' ... I didn't get much validation when we were together. And then when I left, there was no validation of any kind ... I was erased from history."¹⁷

Over the years, a mythology grew around her as an unsung hero, as George's 'secret weapon,' particularly about the *Star Wars* trilogy. Actor Mark Hamill remembers: "She was really the warmth and heart of those films."¹⁸

Director John Milius, who had been a USC student with George said, "She was a stunning editor ... Maybe the best editor I've ever known, in many ways. She'd come in and look at the films we'd made ... and she'd say, 'Take this scene and move it over here,' and it worked. And it did what I wanted the film to do, and I would have never thought of it. And she did that to everybody's films: to George's, to Steven [Spielberg]'s, to mine, and Scorsese in particular."¹⁹

In the last few years, Marcia started doing select interviews, owning her contributions, taking back her narrative, before she passed away in May.

Barely 11 months before, she appeared at our ACE event, where she told her inspiring, insightful tales to an enraptured audience of mostly young cinephiles. She was reveling in their appreciation.

Marcia once said, "I love editing and I'm real gifted at it,"²⁰ She certainly was, and she will be appreciated for those gifts, the love she poured into her work – and the joy it will bring to filmgoers, forever. 

Notes:

1. AVFilm's *A Conversation with Marcia Lucas* (November 2023, Petaluma Calif.)
2. *Icons Unearthed: Star Wars* (2022 documentary series)
3. *Skywalking: The Life and Films of George Lucas* by Dale Pollock (1983)
4. AVFilm's *A Conversation with Marcia Lucas* (November 2023, Petaluma Calif.)
5. ACE Presents Marcia Lucas at the Metrograph in New York (June 2025)
6. ACE Presents Marcia Lucas at the Metrograph in New York (June 2025)
7. AVFilm's *A Conversation with Marcia Lucas* (November 2023, Petaluma Calif.)
8. ACE Presents Marcia Lucas at the Metrograph in New York (June 2025)
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10. *Icons Unearthed: Star Wars* (2022 documentary series)
11. *Icons Unearthed: Star Wars* (2022 documentary series)
12. *Icons Unearthed: Star Wars* (2022 documentary series)
13. ACE Presents Marcia Lucas at the Metrograph in New York (June 2025)
14. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* by Peter Biskind (1990)
15. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* by Peter Biskind (1990)
16. *Icons Unearthed: Star Wars* (2022 documentary series)
17. *Icons Unearthed: Star Wars* (2022 documentary series)
18. *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Toshi's Station: FCC Interviews Mark Hamill* by Walter Chaw (March 20, 2005, Film Freak Central)
19. *Mythmaker: The Life and Work of George Lucas* by John Baxter (1999)
20. *Icons: Intimate Portraits* by Denise Worrell (1989)



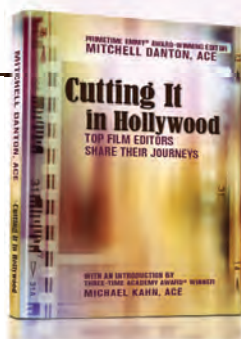
"For anyone who dreams of becoming an editor, it is an essential read."

Betsy A. McLane, *CineMontage*

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David Gamble, ACE
1955 - 2026

My husband, David Gamble, ACE, who has died aged 70, was an award-winning film editor who worked in documentaries, TV dramas, and feature films.

As the editor on the 1998 film *Shakespeare in Love*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Fiennes, David won a BAFTA, and was nominated for an Academy Award. The film, directed by John Madden, won the Oscar for best picture.

More films followed, including *Veronica Guerin* (2003), starring Cate Blanchett; and *Shopgirl* (2005), featuring Steve Martin and Claire Danes.

David was born in Derry, Northern Ireland, to Ida (nee Haire), a housewife, and William Gamble, a clerk. He attended the Model Primary School, then Foyle College, before studying ecology at Edinburgh University. It was while living in Edinburgh that his love of film grew, through the annual film festival. On graduation in 1977, he worked in various jobs including as a park ranger and as a wildlife conservation researcher.

But his heart lay in the visual arts, and in 1983, on hearing from a friend that there were jobs going in London selling tickets at the Royal Academy, he made his way there. He got a job as assistant projectionist at the London Film School, before working as a freelance assistant editor from 1984 to 1989, then as freelance editor thereafter.

One of his first editing credits was on the 1989 TV series *Streetwise*, starring Andy Serkis. In the 1990s David co-edited the miniseries *Tales of the City* starring Laura Linney, and edited dramas including the TV movies *Loved Up*, *Black Easter* (both 1995), and *Truth or Dare* (1996), as well as the pilot episode of *Cold Feet* in 1997. Moving into feature films he edited *Different for Girls* (1996) and *My Son the Fanatic* (1997), written by Hanif Kureishi, before going on to *Shakespeare in Love*.

The essence of great film editing is storytelling, and David was a wonderful storyteller. His wit and musicality informed his editing and the passions of his life were film and music – in the late 2000s he sometimes DJ'd at his friends Steve and Ali's live music club, What's Cookin' in east London. In 2006, David moved from editing to teaching, inspiring students at various film schools including the National Film School and London Film Academy, and universities such as Edinburgh, Kent, Goldsmiths, University of London, and Southampton Solent, which made him an honorary fellow in 2015. He continued teaching up until last year.

David was the kindest of men. His wit and humor, and his distinctive laugh, were all commented upon by colleagues, friends, neighbors. His love for art, music, and literature made him an erudite companion.

David and I met in 1983, at a gig by the electro-funk band Prince Charles and the City Beat. We were together from then, marrying in 1997.

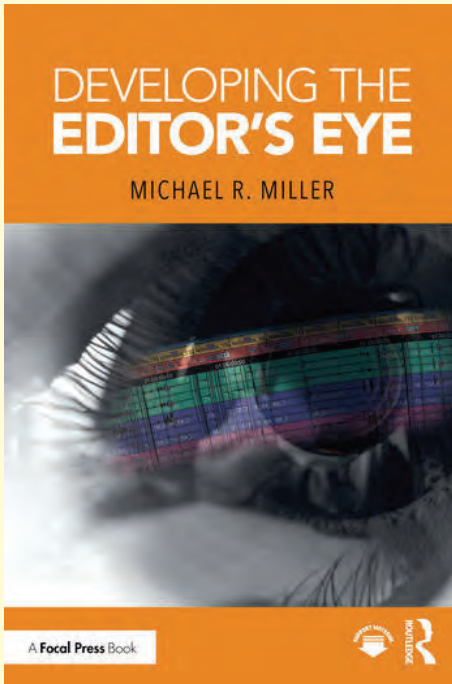
I survive him, as do his sisters, Jenny and Heather. **CE**

– ALEX MACKIE, ACE

Developing the Editor's Eye

by Michael R. Miller, ACE

REVIEW BY MOLLY O'STEEN



The idea for *Developing the Editor's Eye* had been percolating for a long time in the mind of author Michael R. Miller, ACE. Miller was part of the last generation of assistant editors who worked with film and were required to be present in the cutting room for the entire post-production period. They completed a myriad of physical tasks that led to rich learning experiences, such as spending hours finding trims and anticipating what the editor might need. "I remember having these moments where you would have an epiphany about the very nature of editing," he writes.

In the digital age, the opportunity to hover over the editor and director as they cut a picture is no longer central to the education for burgeoning editors. However, in *Developing the Editor's Eye*, Miller gives young editors the opportunity to learn valuable lessons that he gained while assisting masters such as Susan E. Morse, ACE (on *Manhattan*) and Thelma Schoonmaker, ACE (on *Raging Bull*).

Miller himself didn't attend film school; his entire education existed within the four walls of the cutting room. When he became lead editor on the Coen brothers' *Raising Arizona* and *Miller's Crossing*, and features like *D.O.A.*, *I'm Gonna Git You Sucka*, *Medicine Man*, and *Ghost World*, among many others, he continued to learn valuable lessons and artfully weaves his experiences into broader themes and guidelines. He is currently the Department Chair of Picture Editing and Sound Design at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and so understands how to clearly share both theory and practice.

This, his first book, is broken down into 11 chapters, each one focusing on important principles of the art of the cut. Miller is careful to remind the reader that while these principles are integral to the learning experience, they are not strict rules. That part of the joy of the craft is the artistry one develops within one's own personal framework and style.

The first two chapters are in conversation with one another, discussing how to choose the best moments and the primacy of performance. Miller emphasizes that editors are mining for gold, learning to

be storytellers, and leaning into their instincts. Throughout the book, Miller provides concrete examples, from films he's worked on, such as *Raising Arizona*, and those he deeply admires, such as *The Godfather* and *Taxi Driver*. His entertaining deconstruction of specific scenes makes you feel like you're sitting in the cutting room next to him and other master editors, watching them make decisions that bring those scenes to life.

In subsequent chapters, Miller focuses on pace and rhythm, speaking to both how they work together and the important distinction between the two concepts. Miller breaks down Pudovkin's five relational organizing principles and how they can be utilized in cinematic storytelling. He provides different road maps and strategies for editors to craft a story and get an audience invested in a character's journey.

Miller asks the reader to consider all possible points of view, including first-person, to help the editor think deeply about who is telling the story and how viewers can connect with the character, even when that character is unlikable and complex.

In the eighth chapter, "Opening Scenes," Miller provides multiple examples and explains why they work, and how they are often created later in the post-production process, once a clear narrative and tone have been set for the picture. Later in the book, Miller discusses the role of music and sound as intrinsic to the process of cutting a film, including how editors work with the sound department and music editors.

Radical story revisions and restructuring are often a normal part of the filmmaking process, and the editor should be open to it. Miller reminds us that, while it is important to learn all the rules discussed in previous chapters, being bold and breaking them can be just as gratifying and can produce incredible moments.

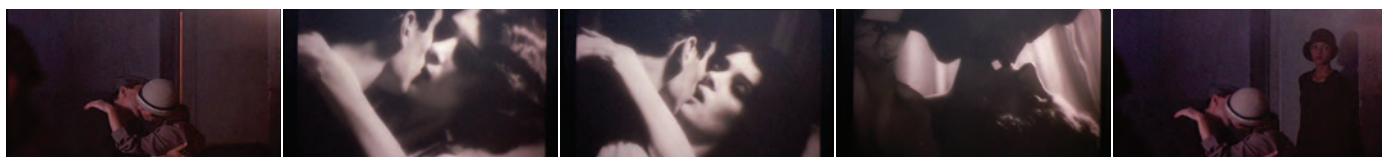
In the age of AI, Miller reminds us that editing is not just a craft but an intricate art form and discipline built on human instinct and connection. When you finish his book, you not only feel that you have learned a great deal but have a deeper appreciation for the joy of editing and the magic that happens in the cutting room. **CE**



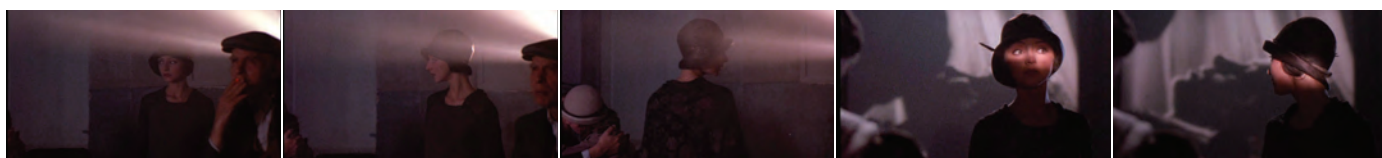
Philip Kaufman directed and co-wrote with his wife, Rose Kaufman, *Henry & June*, a biographical drama about the relationship between writers Anaïs Nin and Henry Miller and Miller's wife, June.



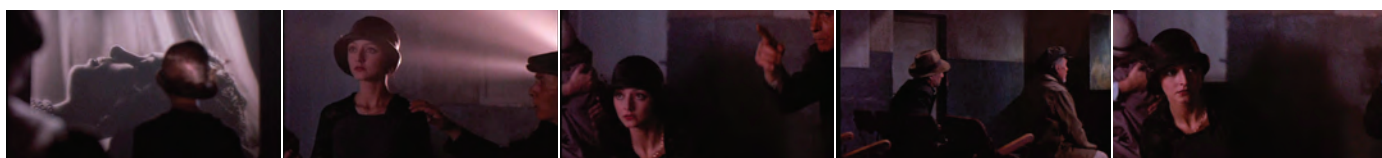
During the first act, Nin (Maria de Medeiros) enters a movie theatre showing an erotic black-and-white film, which was a favorite scene of Vivien Hillgrove, who edited the film alongside Dede Allen, ACE, and William Scharf, ACE.



"It is my favorite scene because I had to edit the black-and-white film that was on the screen before the scene with Anaïs could be shot," Hillgrove explains, recalling that Kaufman asked her to join the crew on location in Paris "to absorb the *je ne sais quoi* of the place – the feeling of the 1930s, the artistic mood, the fog, the mystery."



The black-and-white film needed to be something Nin "would have seen in that period," she says, "like a slightly seedy 1930s arthouse movie." It also needed to be projected continuously so the actors could hit the same marks without cuts. The woman in this film within the film resembles June Miller (Uma Thurman), which Hillgrove believes is why Henry (Fred Ward) is moved to tears in the scene.



It was not unusual for Kaufman to have three editors on a film. Hillgrove had previously worked as dialogue editor on Kaufman's historical film *The Right Stuff*, which had five picture editors. She also worked alongside Walter Murch, ACE, and Michael Magill on Kaufman's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.



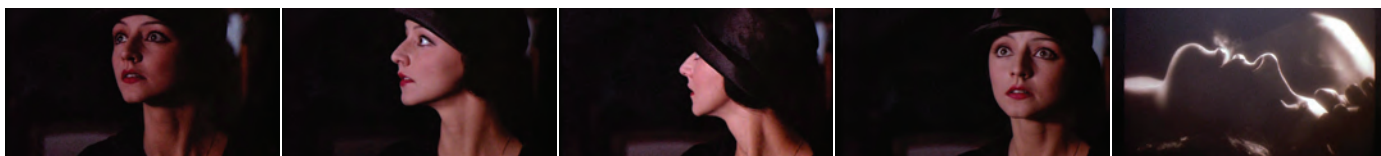
Returning to San Francisco after the Paris shoot, Hillgrove learned that Kaufman had brought in the legendary Dede Allen for *Henry & June*. “You could have heard a pin drop,” she recalls. “She walked in like she had more confidence than anyone in the world. I admired her boldness, practicality, and sense of purpose.”



Along with Scharf, the editing team now consisted of a collaborative team of three. “Dede would assemble scenes on the Moviola, then screen them on the flatbed as if projecting dailies, switching between them with remarkable speed. Her assistant, Robert Graham Jones (now ACE) managed multiple trim bins,” Hillgrove remembers.



Her memories of *Henry & June* are inseparable from those of Allen. “Her mentorship had a lasting influence on my own editing style. Her editing was clean, invisible, and focused entirely on story rather than stylistic flourishes.”



The two developed a morning ritual; meeting at the Washington Square Inn, drinking coffee, and discussing scenes, including a sensual moment between Anaïs and her cousin. They were so engrossed that strangers in the lobby listened in, captivated. “One of the greatest gifts I ever had in my life was to work alongside Dede Allen,” Hillgrove says.



Henry & June is credited as the first film to receive an NC-17 rating. Hillgrove felt this appropriate for its time. “It was right there on the edge, slightly exploitive, and overtly sexual.”



However, she acknowledges the film’s complicated portrayal of women as sexual objects and notes that “contemporary audiences, especially women, might struggle with aspects of it. Although this was 1990, there was still a real difficulty with seeing sexuality on screen, even as extreme violence was widely accepted.” 



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
- NAACP Image Awards

Please sign our petition at:

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

