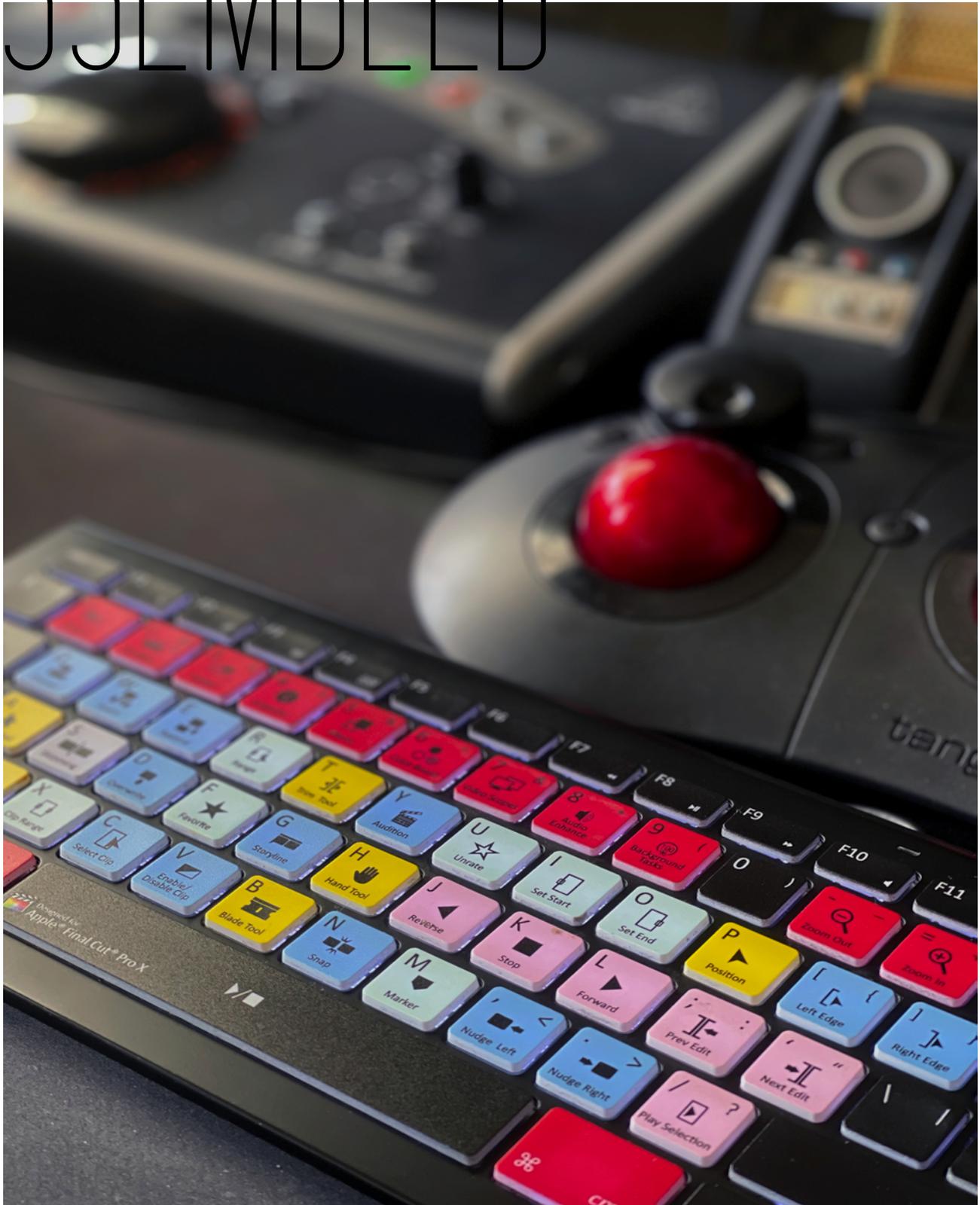


# ASSEMBLED

NUMBER 01 [APRIL 2022]



Meet the  
ISE Committee

Helen Chapman  
talks to us

Optimize Yourself  
with Zack Arnold ACE

AN IRISH SCREEN EDITORS PUBLICATION

# Hello & Welcome

to the first edition of our new magazine Assembled. Over the last three years we have striven to improve the perception of editing and to increase transparency and communication among ourselves. This seems like a natural progression; a forum to promote our craft and our members, as well as learn from other crafts.

**W**e have all made massive adjustments over the last two years in the face of Covid and while a lot of those have been positive and to the betterment of our home lives there is little doubt that the interactivity of the edit suite has been something we've all missed. Here's hoping the positive things that came from the move to working from home remain and our working lives improve as a result.

**A**t the beginning of March I had the pleasure of attending ACE's Eddie awards in Los Angeles. I was immediately struck by the enormous scale of the event; over one thousand people gathered together, in a cinema built by Mary Pickford to celebrate all that's good about our craft. It was wonderful to see Úna Ní Dhonghaile representing us; it's the second year in a row that ISE members have been nominated with Richie Cody among the team recognised last year for their work on *Wolfwalkers*.

**W**hen we spend so much of our working lives in small dark rooms it can be easy to forget just how many people work in post production, so an event like the Eddies does our industry a massive service by shining a light on what we do and how well we do it. Recently I attended the RTS Ireland awards in Dublin and in a packed room it was great to see so many editors there; recognition by their directors and producers of the contribution they had made to their respective nominated

shows. It was all the more gratifying given the devaluing of so many crafts including editing by the Oscars only a few weeks earlier.

**T**here is a lot of production happening here at the moment and while so many of our diaries are seeing the benefits it really has highlighted the shortage of good assistant editors. Culturally in Ireland there is not the same emphasis on working as an assistant as a path to becoming an editor as there is elsewhere. This is something we've been trying to address and will continue to work on as part of our main mission. Over the coming year we hope to reinstate our mentoring program and give those new to the industry the opportunity to sit in with editors and observe their working days. In the past this has proven to be of huge value to those that availed of the opportunity.

**W**e view this magazine as a platform to be more interactive with our members, and to that end we would like to hear from you all. If there are things you'd like to see, or people you'd like to hear from let us know. We also welcome any submissions or articles from members, be they edit based or just edit adjacent.

**F**inally, as we enter our fourth year I'd like to thank all the committee members past and present that have worked so hard to get us to where we are today. Special mention is due as well to Jeremy Briers who has spearheaded this magazine and has worked tirelessly to bring it to fruition.

Here's to our continued success.

Eoin McDonagh ISE  
Chairperson



**JEWEL (2022) NETFLIX**  
**EDITOR: JEREMY BRIERS**



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## John Murphy

A freelance editor working across drama and documentary. His work has premiered at Sundance, Berlin, SXSW, HotDocs, Sheffield, DocPoint and Doc Leipzig. For television he's cut multiple award winners and a whole host of shows ranging from profiles of cultural icons in sport & music to history & politics. In 2018, he was nominated for the Best Editor Award by the Irish Academy and in 2022 won the Award for Irish-Language Feature An Cailín Ciúin which also won two awards at the 72nd Berlin Film Festival.

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## Edel McDonnell

A drama editor based in London. She has worked across a broad spectrum of genres from comedy and horror to sci-fi and true life drama. Her most recent credits include A Spy Among Friends (Sony), The Great (Hulu), Kin (AMC/RTE), Flesh and Blood (ITV), White House Farm (ITV), and The Trial of Christine Keeler (BBC).



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# I S E C O M M I T T E E

## MISSION STATEMENT

Irish Screen Editors is a non-profit guild of professional editors and assistant editors. Our goal is to enhance the prominence and recognition of experienced editors in all media. Through a shared sense of community, we hope to improve transparency around working conditions, pay and advancement within our profession. Our aim is to empower professional editors and work together toward the common goal of reinforcing the respect for the art and craft of editing in Ireland.

## WHO WE ARE

Irish Screen Editors is a professional guide dedicated to:  
Supporting the pursuit of excellence in the profession and bolstering respect for the craft of editing.

Bringing together editors and assistant editors who share a common desire to advance the prestige of the profession.

Cultivating a community of transparency and mutual support.



## Eoin McDonagh ISE

An editor in film & television with over 25 years experience. He started out freelancing for Irish language station TnaG (TG4) cutting magazine shows, documentaries & music programming. In the last decade he's specialised in music & documentary, cutting many award winning projects on a wide range of genres including biography, sport, nature & observational docs. He's also edited a number of short and feature films. Cut content for RTÉ, BBC, PBS, History Channel, UTV, TV3 and for many channels across Europe. He's a founder member of Dublin Editors. He's also been a contributor to ACE's annual Editfest.



## Hugh Chaloner ISE

An award winning editor & videographer with extensive experience in music, video & TV. In a career spanning over three decades, Hugh has worked behind the lens and in the cutting room with some of the biggest names in music. From Dylan to Cooney & Begley, Springsteen to Elvis Costello, Hothouse Flowers to U2. Hugh worked with the Irish National Opera shooting & editing '20 Shots of Opera' & 'Alice's Adventures Underground' and at The Gaiety as DoP for Gabriel Byrne's 'Walking With Ghosts.' Hugh worked on TV commercials, corporate films & on the award winning 'The Young Offenders.' He has deep interest in sustainable development in third world countries and has ongoing fruitful involvement with the NGO community in East Africa.

## Eamonn Cleary ISE

A producer and editor from Dublin, with over 20 years experience in film & television. He knows his way around a film set. Starting his career as a news cameraman, he quickly found his way into live action drama working as a location scout and later as a DIT on projects such as 'King Arthur', 'PS I Love You' and 'Blood' and was a producer on the feature film 'She's Missing.' Since 2009 Eamonn has focused on post production, working on numerous short films, dramas and documentaries such as sports documentary 'Hill Street', and the multi award winning short film 'Volkswagen Joe.'



## Jenny Russell ISE

Jenny has worked across pretty much every area of broadcast since beginning her career as an editor in the mid-2000s - from news and documentary to promos and sport. In recent years she's been working as a lecturer, passing on her editing and programme making skills to media students at IT Carlow. Outside of college she works for RTE, cutting mostly for the news and sometimes for programmes and sport.



## Eoin McGuirk ISE

An editor of TV & film. His credits cross a diverse range of genres from TV dramas, to romantic features and fight units on big budget TV series. Credits include TV series 'Miss Scarlet and The Duke' featuring Kate Phillips and Stuart Martin, 'Red Election' for Mopar Media/Subotica with Director Jill Robertson, feature film 'The Delinquent Season', starring Cillian Murphy and Andrew Scott and TV series 'Striking Out' for Blinder Films/RTÉ. Previously Eoin worked as assistant editor on internationally successful productions including 'The Lobster'.



## Shane Woods ISE

An editor who has 20 years experience in post production; in both offline and online and ranging from drama, comedy and animation. He worked as an assembly editor on 'Peaky Blinders', 'Suspicion' and 'Grantchester' and also as an assistant editor on productions including 'The Crown', 'Sherlock' and 'This is England'.

## Jackie Jarvis ISE

An assistant and assembly editor, who also regularly works as an editor herself. She is experienced with a variety of formats and genres. Feature films she's worked on include 'Cocaine Bear', 'Vivarium' and 'Woken'. TV projects include 'Modern Love', 'The Young Offenders' and 'The Tommy Tiernan Show'. She's also worked on feature documentaries such as 'Songs for While I'm Away', 'Best Before Death' and 'While You Live, Shine'.





## Mairéad McIvor ISE

An award winning editor in both film & television for the past 20 years. Her most notable credits include the films 'She's Missing', 'Pilgrimage', the Bafta nominated TV series 'Tracy Beaker Returns' and the award winning films 'Eamon' and 'Savage', for which she received an IFTA for Best Editing. Her most recent feature 'The Cellar' premiered at the South by South West Film Festival in 2022 ahead of a U.S. release.

## Jeremy Briers ISE

An ex-South African multi award winning editor of scripted television and feature films. With almost 40 years of experience in all aspects of production and post Jayce has concentrated the last 10 years on editing. Cutting 100s of episodes of television for companies in South Africa as well as several high profile feature films such as 'My Zulu Wedding' (2018) and 'Jewel' (2022) with TV credits that includes 'Professionals' (2019) and 'Food, Booze and Tattoos.' 'Jayce' spent 10 years working with Marillion travelling with the band around Europe and the U.K. making documentaries and concert videos.



## Tony Kearns ISE

A highly experienced film editor based in Dublin and London. Tony has edited three Black Mirror projects, 'Metalhead' (series 4), 'Bandersnatch' and 'Rachel, Jack and Ashley Too' (series 5). He received a BAFTA TV Craft Awards nomination for 'Bandersnatch', which also won two Emmy awards. He worked on the second series of 'The End Of the F\*\*\*ing World', 'Ridley Road' and 'The Outlaws'. Feature film projects include 'The Lodgers', 'Cardboard Gangsters' and 'This Way to Egress', a part of the anthology film Nightmare Cinema.

# HOW TO BE A FREELANCE CREATIVE

JONNY ELWYN

# JONNY ELWYN FREELANCE CREATIVE

The author of *How To Be A Freelance Creative*, a deeply practical guide to building a successful freelance career.

I first met Jonny Elwyn when I bought his book in 2014. I was planning on leaving South Africa for greener pastures initially moving back to the place of my birth, the UK, but ultimately ending up in Ireland (the pinnacle of greener pastures) where we have been for over 5 years now. Jonny's book was instrumental in my maintaining my sanity in a brave new world and proved invaluable not just for my work and home life but also financially as well. I caught up with him on a mild winters day at home.

It's 1pm on a Monday when Jonny joins me via Zoom. He's sitting comfortably at home behind his desk. Occasionally throughout the hour we chat, his two kids at various times pop into the room followed by a very apologetic mum, Hannah. Jonny is relaxed and well and we catch up a little, discuss 'the Covid' and working remotely and then get down to business.

He's a busy man. Apart from editing as a living, Jonny also writes a very influential blog that has gained much respect amongst his peers, he publishes a daily subscription based newsletter and he still manages to maintain a family life, mostly working remotely from home. He tells me he's always kind of been remote, which is why his office is half a child's playroom at the minute, but for the longest time, his normal life was kind of locked down as he was always working from home and would only occasionally go in to a client's office or something, but it got fewer and farther between. Now, he says, it would be a fun novelty to be out for a day.

We move off from Covid related bollox and start talking about his book. It's not about how to edit, or even how to be a great editor, there's enough You Tubers out there telling you how to do that without Jonny's help, but it's a book that helps build a business. Jonny says...

"I wanted to put down on paper what I would say

to somebody across a couple of beers. Here's what has worked for me, maybe it'll work for you?"

I have a lot of friends who are freelance and there would always be some aspect of freelancing that they got really stuck on. Whether that was managing their finances, meeting other people or trying to develop multiple streams of income to somehow support themselves when other things weren't happening. Also when you're thinking about moving to freelancing, it all sounds scary. What does it involve? How does it work?

**So, it was a way to share what I knew and also, create a digital product as another stream of income."**

The great thing about this book in my opinion is even though it was written 8 years ago, everything is still incredibly relevant today. Topics include, how to network with other editors, how to manage emotionally and psychologically, mistakes and pitfalls to avoid as well as simple and practical advice on building a nest egg. These are not things that change in our ever evolving industry. A stroke of genius I might say. And given that he really is a very busy bee, how does he maintain a healthy work/life balance.

**"Most of the time the mix of the things work out just by itself because I'm freelance. I might be working for a week solid or two weeks on something and then I might have a week off from editing, but then I'm blogging or I'm writing for somebody else or I'm compiling Cut Daily.**

The tricky thing is Cut Daily. when I started, I didn't really think, 'oh, this is going to be every day' I miscalculated how long it would take me to do each one. Therefore there've been evenings where it's, 'oh, I just need to do a few Cut Dailys to get ahead of the release schedule.' It helps that I'm able to compartmentalise my work.

You know, multitask.

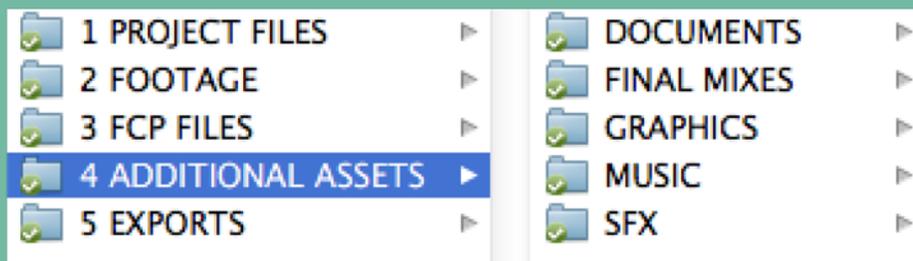
When I was writing my book, I remember hearing a podcast with an assistant editor and he was talking about working on one of the big Spider-Man franchises or something like that. He was saying he gets in at 8:00 AM and leaves at midnight and it's been like that for the last 18 months.' And I was like, 'wow, I don't want to do that. That's not how I want to live my life.'

I have many other things in my life that are more important to me than that. So, if that's the goal, then I don't necessarily want that goal.

ago? When actually, life has moved on and you need to make different decisions and have different priorities."

One of the other more relevant chapters, certainly to me, given I spent most of my working life deliberately avoiding networking with other editors in South Africa, is the importance of networking with other editors. It is something I willingly embraced as it really is massively important, not just for your mental health but other editors who know and like you play a big role in growing your career. By being a good source to bounce ideas off, or creating work

If you are a digital creative like me then the main battle for organisational harmony will come in the form of a logical system for organising your files in a useful folder structure. Ideally you want to create some blank folders that you can re-use on every job without much tinkering. As a quick visual example here is the structure I use for my film editing work.



I have an empty set of these folders stored in [my Dropbox](#) (hence the green ticks) so that I can access them wherever I happen to be working.

One of my rules is I don't usually work on the weekend as much as I can possibly help it because I'd rather be with my family.

Another rule is, I don't book half days because it's impossible to have two half days or two different clients to actually work out as half days. My minimum booking is a day. Do you want me to do it? I'll do it. And if it takes me half a day then so be it but it might take me three quarters of a day.

It's also important to recognise what 'season of life' you're in. Are you trying to live like you were 10 years

opportunities through referrals. It's something I have discovered is very strong in Ireland. We have a very good sense of community here and actively build networks within our editing and assistant editing community.

"If there's a specific career path that you're trying to get down, then you have to be strategic in terms of making connections along that way. So if you want to get into documentary editing then you need to connect with documentary editors or documentary assistants or if you want to get into the commercial game then you have to connect with the right people.

Which you can!

First of all get organized. In a way that works for you, create a simple list or a spreadsheet that lets you keep track of all of your connections. Note down their name, contact details, how you know them (if someone introduced you, or where you met), if you've worked for them and if so at what rate and also what they do.

Name	Contact Details	Their Job	Connection	Worked for?	Daily Rate
Joe Blogs	Joe.blogs@work.com	Marketing manager	Met through Sam	Not yet	Hopefully Corporate rate
Sam	sam@samjones.com	Illustrator	Twitter	Fellow Creative	Matching her rate
Bob	Bob@youruncle.co.uk	Dentist	My dentist	Last summer	£350

### Why does this help?

I've heard loads of stories over the years of people who've just politely but tenaciously e-mailed until they could get a coffee meeting with somebody and then build that into a friendship or a chance to say, 'hey, can I send you something for you to give feedback on?'

**Other editors are our community not the competition".**

**A**nother aspect of being part of the edit community or even the film industry at large is being able to monitor the average rate to charge for services.

**"It's not something you can just pull out of thin air. You've got to have a finger on where the market is at. At the very beginning of my career, whatever I could charge or whatever they were offering was what I would take, because I didn't have any other point of reference.**

**As I built a rapport with other editors and got to the point where they'd offer me their work if they were too busy. I would say, 'okay, great, what rate are you charging that client for this work because I don't want to undercut you, so I'll match your rate'. I remember at one point I'd been editing for a while and I was thinking, 'I really need to be earning more every day.' Then I managed to get a job where they said we'll have to pay you what we're paying the others, which happened to be double what I'd been making.**

**When someone says, what's your day rate, they're effectively saying, what are you worth?"**

**A**fter a bit more small talk or waffle as we decided to identify it, we wrapped up our chat. Jonny is extremely open and welcoming. Way more friendly and easy to get along with than I ever expected given his large online presence. It was great to touch base with someone who directly (from afar) helped me on my journey so many years ago, and hopefully he got at least some sense of pride in hearing me tell him how grateful I am to him and his rather brilliant book.

**J**onny can be reached at his website [jonnyelwyn.co.uk](http://jonnyelwyn.co.uk) where you will find his book, his blog and links to subscribe to his Cut Daily newsletter, which is so much more than just a newsletter. The blog in itself is a wealth of information and advice, I'll leave you with Jonny's final thoughts from his book.

**"To be honest, I've made many, many more mistakes in my freelance creative career than the five listed in this book, but these are the ones that stand out clearest to me. They are situations that have taught me the most about being a successful freelance creative and I hope they'll help you to avoid some of the same pitfalls"**

Thanks Jonny from Jayce.

# JOHN MURPHY FILM EDITOR

Winner of 2022's IFTA for Irish Language Feature Film Editing

John joins the Zoom call almost exactly on time and by that I mean he's 5 minutes late. Normal for an editor who's as busy as John. I spoke to him a couple of days after he had won the IFTA and quite rightly he is chuffed as a chuffed thing on Chuffed Street, Chuffedville. Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got (hmm!) and John certainly has made his way over the last 20 years of editing. But I'm getting ahead of myself, let's start a little earlier and begin with how it all began.

At college in second year John's regular editing lecturer was off on maternity leave and editor James Finlan replaced her. John and James immediately hit it off.

**"We just kind of shared a sensibility. And when he finished up doing the maternity cover, he asked me to do a few bits and pieces as an assistant"**

And then opportunity came knocking. An editor pulled out of a project and asked John to take his place...**cause he was doing it for nothing. So he asked me, would I do it? And that was the first thing I ever cut. I hadn't really, at that stage considered editing, I was just hanging out with James and doing a few bits of assistant work, keeping my foot in while I figured out what I wanted to do.**

I thought maybe I could write, but not. I didn't have enough of a steady hand to shoot and so I ended up doing stuff for him. And then James ended up working for Pat Shortt on a couple of DVDs and that blossomed into him directing the pilot of Killinaskully and he asked me to come on board and cut that.

So I was like 22 and cutting this pilot. We didn't really know if it was going to be a success

**or not. They just did the pilot and showed it at Christmas. It went down like absolutely gangbusters. I ended up doing three seasons."**

After his tenure with Killnaskully John wound up working with Tommy Tiernan, on a succession of material released on DVD.

John praises his directors all the time, consistently naming them and more than likely using the words 'the great' in front of all their names, David Power, Colm Quinn, Louise Ni Fhiannachta, Luke McManus and Mark O'Connor - for whom he cut King of Travellers, as well as several others he has worked with over a very diverse and varied career, from TV to corporate, to documentaries and features to shorts and music videos all around the world. An opportunity though, he owes a lot to having a career in Ireland.

**"That's a big thing. I think what's great about Ireland is that it's kind of small enough that you can do a bit of everything. It's not so big that the territories are all kind of marked off. I mean, certain parts of them are, but for instance I was in America. I lived in New York for a while in Brooklyn, in 2011 and I was working with this production company, just kind of helping out on a couple of films. There was a guy in there who'd worked on Dog, the Bounty Hunter.**

I was coming up to 30 and this guy was around 50 and had 30 years editing experience. I'd been editing for 10 and I'd say at that stage I had well over 100 hours of broadcast credits. This guy had maybe 20 hours of Broadcast Credits mostly because in the American market, it's harder to get on air but also he was totally pigeonholed. The market said he could only work in constructed reality. I was saying to him



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 GLASGOW  
FILM FESTIVAL  
2022 Official Selection

THE QUIET GIRL  
(2021)  
BREAKOUT PICTURES  
EDITOR:  
JOHN MURPHY

# *Ar Cailín Ciúin*

*The Quiet Girl*

FSI (GREAT BRITAIN), IRELAND, TDA and THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY OF IRELAND present  
"AN CALÚN CÚIN / THE QUIET GIRL" a film by COLM BARRÉAD. "AN CALÚN CÚIN / THE QUIET GIRL"  
stars CLARE KEEGAN, CAROL CROWLEY, ANDREW BANNETT,  
MICHAEL PATRICK, KATE AND CHONNARAIGHE,  
"THE QUIET GIRL" is a production of BREAKOUT PICTURES. PRODUCED BY MAIRE NÍ CHONNARAIGHE. WRITTEN BY MAIRE NÍ CHONNARAIGHE. DIRECTED BY COLM BARRÉAD.

FSI (GREAT BRITAIN) TDA and THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY OF IRELAND  
TGA Inscgal



MATTRESS MEN (2016): EL ZORRERO FILMS: EDITOR: JOHN MURPHY

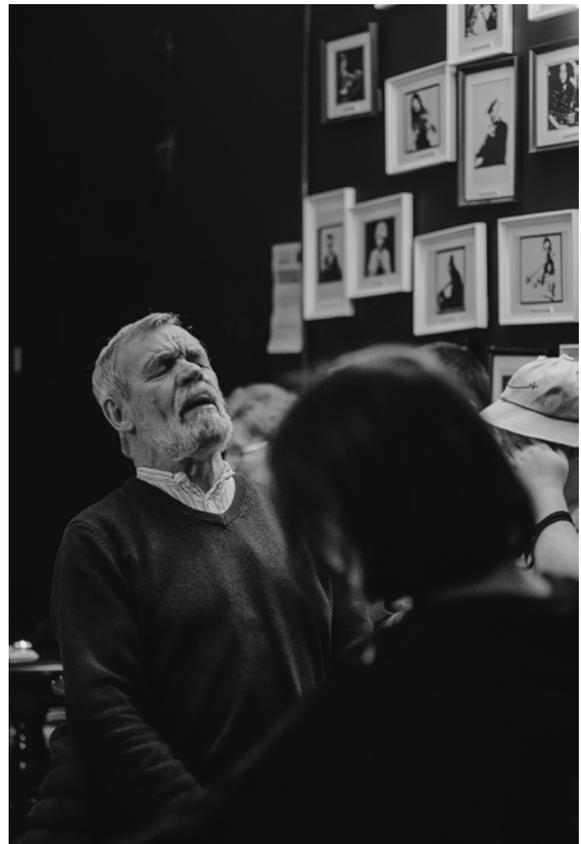
"like, oh I do a bit of music video, I'm going back to Ireland in a couple weeks to do a feature and I've done maybe 15 one hour docs for TV' and the guy couldn't get his head around it at all. He's like, 'you mean you can kind of just do whatever?' And that's just a product of Ireland being kind of small enough that you can do all that stuff."

John talks passionately about all the people he's worked with as well as the projects he takes on. I get the sense he really loves Observational Documentaries. I guess that's where he landed and it is home for him. But looking at his films he also has a passion for that too. Each job though is different and while he doesn't have a particular way of working, one thing he has tried though is the 'photos on the wall' technique:

"I would take a still from a scene, take one image that sums up that scene and actually print it off as a photograph, put it on the board with a magnet or stick it up on the wall so that I can look over and see the whole film. So for instance in a film like *Mattress Men*, which was this film that combined kitchen sink drama of the recession and real

personal struggles of the protagonist with these absurdist bits of comedy, it was really useful for us to casually look at the wall and see instantly, 'you know, actually hang on, we haven't had any comedy for like six photographs.' So it just meant that we were able to constantly in our head, time it out.

I also use an online whiteboard as well. That's useful when you're working remotely, which I have been for the last two years. I did a film called *North Circular* recently and that has a lot of music performance in it. I would colour code the scenes and we could immediately see which bits were music performances and go, 'do you know what we actually haven't had a song in like 20 or 25 minutes, maybe we need to move something around here to make that work.' And it's really just so useful for me. It's also really useful for the directors to be able to visually see the film on the whiteboard as a block and not get too bogged down in the script or performances to get a sense of the film."

NORTH CIRCULAR (2022)  
MADHOUSE FILMS: EDITOR: JOHN MURPHY

**W**e talk for a while about remote work and how he prefers to be with family where everybody knows his name (throwing back to see if you're still reading) and we get on to the topic of his work on *An Cailín Ciúin* which he finished in 2021. Directed by Colm Bairéad the film tells the story of 'a quiet, neglected girl who is sent away from her dysfunctional family to live with foster parents for the summer. She blossoms in their care, but in the house where there are meant to be no secrets, she discovers one'. So says the IMDB blurb. It's only releasing in May 2022 so I'm taking their word for it, and as for John, winning the IFTA is very much a highlight in his career.

"I was grateful to win the IFTA and really honoured. To be recognised by my peers was really, really good. Especially when my fellow nominees are like Titans responsible for some of the best, and most important work in the Irish cinematic cannon, it was like winning the All Ireland for me, it was amazing.

But what I would say is a lot of the reason why I was in that room and why I was able to be at that table was because of the recognition my previous work received at the TV IFTAs.

I'm not going to say I wouldn't have got the chance to cut *An Cailín Ciúin* or any of the films I cut if the TV work hadn't received that recognition but it definitely helped. For me, it's a terrible pity that so much incredible work across all the

**craft departments in TV no longer get national award recognition. I think it makes it much harder for newer and more diverse creatives to break through and that's something I think needs to be looked at."**

**J**ohn then goes on to cite several examples of working on Docs that were nominated which led to him working on other Docs that were nominated. He goes off on a ramble down a country road through the various pieces he did leading up to this film. Going from 'oh if I hadn't done *Luke* I wouldn't have got *Ross*' etc. And yet somehow the penny never drops that it's not about that at all.

It's just that he is so damn talented. And extremely humble about it too. Even down to the advice he would offer anyone getting into the editing game for the first time, although frankly his advice would benefit a lot of us.

"There's a writer, **Pierce Ryan** who I'm friends with, we did a panel together a few years ago and they asked this question and Pierce said 'the world doesn't need to know how

you became a genius'. What he meant by that is that you don't have to put absolutely everything you've done up on your website. It's important how you sell yourself in that regard so that whatever you choose to put on your website has to be the best version of material you have. (The internet equivalent of did you use all the best shots?) I would say as well that you just got to keep at it and also not to beat yourself up about what



other people are doing, because it doesn't matter. Especially if you have talent and you keep working at it. Talent will out and luck will find you."

I end the Zoom recording and we stop being the formal interviewer/interviewee nonsense and chat briefly about gear and software. I asked John about his review process and he uses the ATEM Mini. For those of you not familiar with this piece of kit there's a run down later in the magazine but essentially John will sit with the director over Zoom and live stream the film from his timeline through the Mini and discuss as if they are both in the room. In a way it's pure genius. A thoroughly modern solution to working remotely and have a practical way of running the film together. We get so hung up on using remote software or online review sites like Frame.io that I think we lose all of that human interaction that working at a post facility or working on site at the production office brings to the collaborative aspect of our work. I think John has a very unique take on this process because, by his

very simple and frankly unusual, 'old school' process, he is essentially keeping the concept of being in the room alive. Our work, while mostly performed alone in the dark is still very much a collaborative affair and I was quite taken aback as it fills me with hope that the days of email or Frame.io notes can at least be thrown aside in favour of getting together and watching the film together, side by side in different rooms in different parts of the country. Anyway...

Brace yourselves for more of [John's fine handy work](#) as he has several things hitting the screens all at once. Most delayed courtesy of the COVID pandemic... **"I've basically finished three feature docs and started a fourth. I've had nothing come out for years and then all of a sudden they're all coming."** Well I for one have no problem with that.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA EDITING

A Webinar hosted by The Colonel himself, Tony Kearns, that does what it says on the tin.

**O**n Saturday the 12th of February 2022 Tony Kearns hosted a Webinar on drama editing. Joined by esteemed colleagues Mags Arnold, Victoria Boydell and Nathan Nugent the almost two hour webinar is filled with nuggets of advice and information in relation to the world of drama editing. Skillfully guided by Tony - Mags, Victoria and Nathan take you on their journey of getting to the top, from humble beginnings. It's a must watch if you have any

doubts about your career or looking to see what it takes to be

a drama editor these days. The webinar was open to the public and attended by some 60 people online who took time out of their busy Saturday afternoon to participate

in the event and contribute questions for the Q&A.

**T**he webinar itself is a fascinating look into the work lives of our three guests, from Victoria's fortunate phone call where her flatmate, unavailable to answer the phone, was offered the film editing assisting job in her place, to Nathan's start assisting at RTE at the cusp of digital technology and turning down trainee jobs and to Mags' traipsing all the way from South Africa to London, England and

phoning every post production company listed in the film industry's "The Knowledge" before getting her start as a runner. We'll leave it to you to find out how far down the alphabet she got before getting that start.

**T**opics in the webinar cover, how you prepare for a job, what happens in various stages of the edit process, interacting with directors and producers as well as how their workflow is set up both

in the room, on the timeline and making decisions around

editing choices etc. There's loads of advice on how to deal with difficult situations, or tough editing decisions, how to make good edit decisions based on your state of mind and

even practical advice on using temp tracks gets a few minutes of screen time from each guest. Then the most difficult of all situations, how they negotiate notes or feedback from directors and producers etc.

**T**he webinar is available on [YouTube](#). As always it's well worth your time. Here at ISE we strive to enhance the prominence of the editor and the Webinars we host and upload go a long way in executing that mission.



# EDEL McDONNELL

## TELEVISION EDITOR

Born and raised in Ireland, Edel is now living and working in the U.K.



**KIN (2022)**

**AMC: EDITOR: EDEL McDONNELL**

**E**del finished studying film & television and promptly took a year off. She joined the workforce, at a facility house in the CAR, doing TX safeties, playouts and the like. She says preference for the edit suite over setlife prompted her to specialise in editing and her first real gig was with Egg Post Production as an assistant editor before eventually moving on and becoming a freelancer. After a stint cutting observational docs a job offer came in from editor Mike Jones assisting on Peter Bowker's 'From Here to There' in London.

"So I went over and I assisted with them and had a great time, came home and then he rang me again and he was like, 'would you like to assist me on Broadchurch?' Broadchurch was huge. So I went back over and decided to stay because the amount

of drama that was being made there, was massive. I knew if I wanted to edit drama that this would be the place to be. So I stayed around and worked my way up."

**E**del has certainly worked her way up the ladder working on some of the best shows in television in the last year but has this stopped her from achieving more? No.

"There's always different things I'd like to do, different genres and I'd like to get more into features as well. I've kind of fallen into the TV world. I've done one feature - Tales from the Lodge, it's a comedy/horror. I had a really great experience cutting it. So, yeah I'm always open to cutting more films.

But no, I definitely haven't stopped progressing



THE GREAT (2022)  
HULU: EDITOR: EDEL McDONNELL

or I haven't settled, although I am happy where I am at the moment. You kind of have to keep going. I think everybody wants to progress beyond their borders. I want to build new relationships. There's so many distinctive voices and young up and coming directors I'd love to work with. There's a lot of exciting stuff around right now. So yeah, definitely not resting on my laurels."

**T**estament to that is when you take a look at the volume and the quality of jobs Edel has been on in the years since her days in CAR. Sneak a peek at her [IMBD](#) page and be impressed. What's also clearly on display is the path her career has taken. So how does she choose what job to take on next?

"Well it's script. I like something fresh, something new, something just different. The CV of the writer or the director is also going to appeal to me. If I know that they've done very good quality stuff, it makes it

easier to choose. One thing I will say though is that you have to realise, you're going to be sitting in a room with these people for a long time and you're going to have some very big conversations with them and so you have figure out if you'll get on with them."

**S**omething I think we all worry about in the edit suite is making sure our voice is heard, that we are taken seriously, not as button pushers but as story tellers in our own right.

"Yeah, that is tough. It's important for them to see I am not just a button pusher. I always go into the edit suite with an aim to make a great show and being straight and upfront with the director/show runner that I'm here to help realise their vision, I am able to contribute. Sometimes you will end up at odds with one another - you want to go this way and the director wants to go the other way and so it boils down to building a good relationship right from the start."

**E**del is a firm believer in watching all the takes in all the rushes and relying on her gut instinct to work subconsciously on some of the 'more trickier' editing or story decisions. Something good editors nurture is their gut instinct.

**"I watch everything because I'll be at home cooking dinner and I'll remember an expression or something like that from an actor that I think would work turn a scene. I do definitely think we're instinctual, I pick a take based on what I feel works rather than look at like what the director has favoured and automatically go with that. And I just know when to cut."**

It's a hard thing to answer - why did you cut there? And I'd be like, I don't know how to describe why I did that. But, just that it works there and nowhere else. It just feels right.

I think it's from doing it over and over again and from watching lots of films and TV."

**G**iven that Edel spent a number of years working her way up from assistant, does she have any advice for the current crop of assistants who want to progress and make the transition to editor?

**"It's harder and harder for assistant editors to look at what editors are doing as mostly these days they tend not to be in the room with them for safety reasons or are working remotely. But if I was an assistant, I'd be asking constantly - can I assemble scenes? Can you give me feedback on scenes, I've assembled? Can I do sound work for you? And then as an assistant, trying to get to edit shorts, trying to edit as many shorts as you can get your hands on. Most importantly**

**talk to your editor and try and get your editor to give you an episode or even just a scene to start off with."**

**A** healthy work/life balance is something we all strive for and it seems Edel has found a way that works for her, this interview happened after she had put the kids to bed and every morning she cycles to work. She has also found **"thanks to the pandemic that I don't have to always be in the office as work can happen just as easily from home and I do not have to be in the room with a director for 12 hours of a day to get something done."**



**TALES FROM THE LODGE (2019)  
XYZ FILMS  
EDITORS:  
EDEL McDONNELL  
AGNIESZKA LIGGETT**

**A**s we wrap up this interview Edel offers her final piece of advice, for all of us to be congrisant of and that's... **"I think we really have to know our worth. Directors and writers are coming around to the idea that we are a smart group of people and that we do have good ideas. I think we work really hard and as a bunch we quite can be quite insecure some of the time, so know your worth."**

**T**hanks Edel for the time spent after hours chatting to us here at ISE, we look forward to hearing from you again as you continue to grow and move on to bigger and better things. As you say, always trying to do better.

# DERMOT GRACE ASSISTANT EDITOR

An Assistant Editor for over 10 years living and working in Dublin.

**D**ermot has over [10 years experience](#) in the industry, and has worked as an assistant editor on Irish and international productions, both at home and abroad. Primarily working in drama editorial, his personal highlights include Rebellion, Resistance, Ms. Scarlett & The Duke, RAW, and Professionals. He is currently assisting on a series for Paramount Plus.

"I was working for free on different small productions, you know those ones that you think, 'oh, yeah, get some great experiences on these' but which never lead anywhere until I reconnected with a editor who was our mentor

on the Film Production Masters I did at UCD. They recommended me for a stint of 5 TV movies that were happening back to back. And so I said, 'yes, of course.'

I'd been trying to get into the industry for two years at that point and finally, success. So I started off assisting on these SyFy Channel creature features and some Hallmark Channel stuff and it just went from there.

I was very fortunate that they decided to take a chance on me cause I didn't have any experience in the cutting room apart from what I knew from university. It's here where I realised I had a flare for it and I kept going."



**T**ime and again we hear the stories of people getting into editing and its because they knew someone, or someone who knew someone and it just reiterates the sentiment expressed by Jonny Elwyn earlier about the editor is your community and not your competition. So it's very important to maintain good relationships with our peers. Obviously doing a good job so you get re-hired.

"Sometimes you'll be asked on a job. Sometimes you're in and the editor doesn't get a say but I suppose I just try and get along with the editors I work with, trying to do a good job.

Sometimes I feel I'm not quite as useful as I could be because edit assistant roles themselves are quite diverse. Some editors allow you to assemble stuff, some you're not allowed to do a thing except what they tell you to do. Every editor is obviously different in the way they approach a relationship with their assistant.

But it also depends on what you are you looking to get out of an assistant editor job. Obviously you're there to provide efficiency for your editor but what are you trying to get out of that job, what is it that you want? For me it's the quest for knowledge. I firmly believe that no knowledge is ever wasted and the more you can put into your brain the more useful you become."

The dreaded fear of making a living as a freelance creative is of course being out of work, or inbetween jobs, so how does Dermot handle those 'difficult' periods?

"I don't mind the time off, as long as there's something on the horizon. I don't have dependents and it's clearly a completely different world if you do. So I tend to take the time off and occasionally enjoy. At times I'm terrified I'm never going to work again. I always love it though. It's a dual thing: Fear of never working again and should I travel abroad for a few months?"

We get onto working remotely, something which pre-pandemic was very much a novelty. Editors usually just popped into the country of production to cut and then bugged off back home until the next job or another country on another job. We generally learned to be, to some extent, nomadic, moving from suite to suite. But that has all pretty much changed as you know.

"I think remote work is good in terms of a lot more flexibility in your day. Also if there's a strong relationship between the people who are ultimately making the show, I think it can work quite well.

There are a few technical hurdles to get over in terms of working remotely. I like the kind of hybrid approach. And by that I mean: being able to work from home, logging in to the post house to do my job, distributing footage to myself and editors also working remotely and then also having an office at the post house for days where things are more demanding than an internet connection can handle. We make it work at the end of the day, but I do think there seems to be a massive desire from editors and creatives now to get back into an office and get cutting together again."

Really good assistant editors, like Dermot have to rely on more than just knowledge and talent and often have to rely on their wits and savvy to get jobs done. Sometimes it can be a (criminally) thankless job but assistant editors are the back bone of the editorial department and so often have to overcome barriers and obstacles to keep their editor working at their best. Rewarding work but also challenging.



LEONINE

PROFESSIONALS (2019)

LEONINE: ASSISTANT EDITOR (IRE): DERMOT GRACE

"An edit assistant's job is a high pressure job. You're a valuable member of the team, a huge cog in a very small wheel. If you're not as efficient as you should be, that spoils everything down the line.

To that end, the most important aspect of my job, is presenting what is shot in a way that makes it more efficient for the editor to present their edits to the director. So in the same way that a DIT will present the information to me, everything on drives, clear notes, continuity reports from the script supervisor etc. I will present that in a way to the editor that makes the most sense so that they don't have to even ask a



**REBELLION (2019)**  
**SUNDANCE: ASSISTANT EDITOR: DERMOT GRACE**

question as to what something is or what's there.

So yeah, it's about making the handover from production to post production as seamless as possible in running the cutting room, ensuring clear lines of communication between all the departments and having a through line to production."

**A**ssistant editing may be a demanding job but many assistants choose to make a career out of it. Others choose to use this high pressure job as a stepping stone to becoming a full fledged editor.

"I don't think pressure is necessarily something that comes into people's minds when they have an interest or a love for their craft. From my early 20s, I wanted to work in film. It was never a case that I thought it was going to be easy. There are far more gruelling jobs out there (like being a chef in a busy kitchen).

I also think that you don't necessarily need to have a natural aptitude to make it as an assistant editor, I wouldn't let that stand in the way of people getting into it. Starting out you can get by on your passion and pure graft. You'll very quickly find out if it's for you. It's very rewarding because you're the first line of defence as it were in terms of getting stuff out and when it all comes together, it really is incredibly rewarding."

**T**he beauty of an assistant editing position is that it is hands on. It can be taught as you are doing the job. Trainee positions are always available and taking Dermot's advice and finding someone who does the job and sitting in the edit suite, over their shoulder looking and learning. Of course formal education is also an option.

"I did a one year Masters in Film Production. I was learning everything from doing sound recording, editing, camera etc. It was the broad technical stuff across all departments and not so much in terms of detail. You learn that detail on the job. But it was a very, very good grounding and incredibly useful for giving me a broad overview of everything that needs to happen."

**D**ermot has some sage, practical advice for anyone willing to take the leap into assistant editing fresh out of college or even someone who is just starting out looking to make a start.

"Get in touch with somebody, in production and network as much as possible. Get to know either, the producer, the editor or somebody who's currently assisting and see if they're able to take you on, shadowing them."

Thanks Dermot.



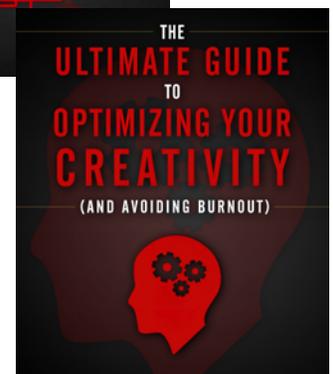
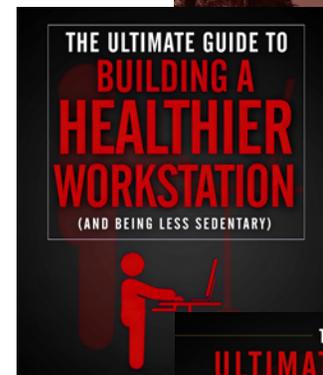
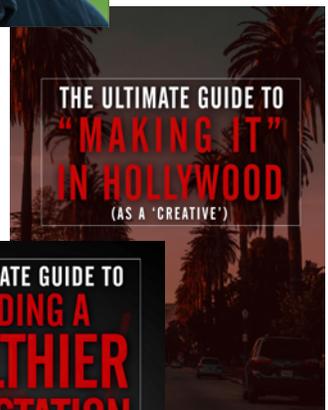
# OPTIMIZE YOURSELF

## with Zack Arnold ACE

A far more serious problem than we like to admit but, sitting down all day staring at our computers screens is bad for our health. Both physically and mentally. The old cliché of editors sitting in the dark hunched over a computer is only a cliché because it's true and it's been going on so long we continuously mock it. But as Zack Arnold found out, it can be debilitating.

Zack Arnold. is an award-winning Film & Television editor (Burn Notice, Empire, Underground, Glee), member of the American Cinema Editors (ACE), a documentary director (GO FAR: The Christopher Rush Story) and father of two. When he first began his career as a film editor he believed he was a machine that could work 24/7 and nothing could stop him. Then at age 25 he hit the first giant brick wall of burnout and suicidal depression. After having worked 16 hour days for several months straight, he distinctly remembers one very late night sitting in the dark, holding back tears, and thinking to himself... **"I cannot live like this anymore."** At that moment he decided he'd either end his life or figure out a better way to live it. From that day forward he began his quest to learn everything possible about blending high performance with creative work while sitting at a computer.

Now Zack helps ambitious creative professionals learn how to more efficiently manage their time and energy so they can maximise their creative focus and minimize procrastination, anxiety, depression, and burnout with his online programme Optimize Yourself.



Through a series of newsletters and weekly motivational emails, podcasts, workshops and through his website, Zack is trying to make editors' lives better by showing us the error of our ways and then teaching us how to correct them. Zack has three 'Ultimate Guides' available when you sign up to his programme: The Uimate Guide to Optimizing your Creativity is 52 pages of well informed and well researched information to help us get the best out of our day. Starting with Move Yourself.

We all know by now that standing for a few minutes in every hour is a very good start. However we need to do more than that to benefit further. And Zack points out that there are five small changes we can make to our daily routine that will help us achieve optimal movement. If you work in an office don't go for the 'Company Parking' option, park down the street or at the end of the parking lot so you get a good walk into the office. When talking on the phone, walk around. Drink lots of water throughout the day not just for the healthy scientific benefit but it will get you running to the loo more often. If you lose focus or hit a mental block, don't surf the net or check your social media, take a 15 minute walk, round the office, the garden, the park and take your phone to record a voice memo if lightning strikes. Create a dynamic working environment and by that Zack means, don't have everything within arms reach. Have office supplies on the other side of the room, or in a different room entirely, put the rubbish bin on the other side of the room, or your water bottle over by the door so you have to get up each time to drink water. By implementing these five small things into our daily lives we are creating more movement and ultimately being more healthy. That also helps us build a better mindset to expand on that mentality to perhaps join a gym, or enable us to work an hour-long walk into our end of day activities etc.

Next chapter in this book deals with Focus Yourself, starting with some simple advice. Stop working harder and start working smarter. An interesting addendum to this section is a link to a LifeHack article on how to determine if you

are a productive person or a busy person and then being able to recognise the difference. The chapter also gives advice and tools to help us with how to handle daily communications, how to manage our time more effectively and clearing your task list.

The final part of this guide is Balance Yourself and is the longest chapter in the book as it deals with the most fundamental of problems we face in the industry: The work/life balance.

**"If you define 'balance' in the traditional sense where everything is weighted equally, I agree it's probably not possible to spend an equal quantity of time at work as you do with the most important people in your life if you're career-driven. However, if you start defining balance as it relates to the quality of your time both during work and your free time, then the game changes. Working 45 hours per week and then spending 45 hours per week with your family may sound like balance, but if during your family time you are still "connected" and constantly responding to emails, phone calls, and being distracted - that's as far from the term balance as you can get. Let's say instead you work 60 hours per week and only spend 20 hours per week with your family, except in this instance you are 100% present. No checking emails, no doing work on the side, no watching a screen when you should be watching your daughter's soccer game. That's my definition of balance."**

If you really want to optimise creativity and avoid burnout, you need to prioritise sleeping, eating properly and managing stress and this guide is full of ways to get you on the right path. With tips and tools on getting the best sleep, the importance of a healthy diet and introducing smoothies to your daily nutrition, as well as the importance of stress management and learning ways as to how we can reduce anxiety.

We highly recommend signing up to all of Zack Arnolds' free programmes at [optimizeyourself.me](https://optimizeyourself.me) to really get the best out of your day and night.

# Q and A with HELEN CHAPMAN

We send out Questions and we very kindly get back Answers

**Q:** Can you remember what it was about editing that drew you to it as a career?

Growing up I once told my mum I wanted to be a film director, but as I got older I realised I really don't like to be the centre of attention or large groups of people, so that was out. So being an editor is perfect I get to be the co-director in the edit, working with the director to make the story work. A story very rarely stays the same from script to screen, the director can make changes while they're shooting but it's in the edit where you can really see what's working and what's not.

**Q:** How do you choose what to work on? Script? Creative team? Dynamic with the director?

All of the above. If I know the director and have an existing relationship with them I will always consider a job, I'll then read the script and see if I like it. If I know the director it's easier to discuss things that maybe don't work in the script, also discussing their ideas for the finished piece. The DOP and Composer are important to me too, especially if I know them. Being part of an existing creative team is always easier as you know what you're getting. On the other hand I also like to work with new people across the board as it's good to be out of your comfort zone and to be pushed by new people.

**Q:** How important is the relationship you have with your agent?

For me very important. I have worked with and without an agent over the years, and do find an agent helps. If you get a lot of repeat business as I do, you might think that you don't need one

because your effectively getting your own work, but what I find is that they are out there looking for the next job while I'm hard at work on the current one. They also get you in the room with new people that you might not otherwise meet and do all the negotiating which can sometimes be tricky.

**Q:** How do approach your work? Do you have a process that you follow on every job?

Yes, once I've taken the job, and before they start shooting, I'll do some research. Watching films & TV series in the same genre to get visual ideas, and start listening to music. I like to have a clear idea of the soundtrack I might use before I start. Talking to the director and discussing ideas at this point is key too.

Then, unless I am unavailable to start at the beginning of the shoot, I always assemble my own rushes, its the only way to really know your material. In drama we have the luxury I think of assembling while the shoot is happening and are generally a day behind, this enables us to have a cut of each scene to be able to see what is and isn't working, speak to the director and discuss what might be needed to help the scene.

The assemblies are also the perfect time for me to experiment, you get to play about and make mistakes here.

Once the shoot finishes the fun begins. I would have the whole thing assembled with SFX and music and any changes that I think might work so that day one of the fine cut myself and the director can sit down, after a coffee and a catch up (all the shoot gossip!) and watch it through afresh. It's the one time you'll be truly able to do this as from here on in you will watch it again and again and again...

The beginning of the fine cut is my favourite bit, when myself and the director are working together to make the story work. Once we show our first cut and other people get involved the process becomes much more focused on individual moments, but at the start you're working with the whole story and it's the most creative time.

**Q:** How important is your relationship with your assembly editor?

I very rarely use assembly editors as it's at this stage where I get to know my rushes and experiment. It's a very important part of the edit for me.

**Q:** What advice can you offer in dealing with and getting through a complex edit?

Don't Panic! And trust yourself, often your gut instinct is the right one. Also don't be afraid to ask advice. I often pick the brains of other editors who are friends of mine and have given it in return.

**Q:** Are there any particular challenges or requirements when there's more than one editor working on a drama series?

Talk to each other and don't be precious. I've been on jobs where the lead editor doesn't speak to the editors who are following them. And heard stories of others demanding to see everyone's assemblies.

This is a team sport and although the lead creative team do set the style and look of a show, the later blocks have to have some space to do what works for their episodes.

Most of the shows I've worked on, we've always talked out story problems together. I might have an insight into a story beat because I started the story off, whereas I can inform the episodes in front of me if I'm cutting the last block. It's always more fun to work together on a show.

**Q:** Do you find inspiration/creative stimuli in particular places?

I watch a lot of TV drama and films, listen to music and also talk to my editor friends about what they are working on.

**Q:** What do you get your biggest kick from?

Cutting a really cool sequence and watching it back at full volume. Making someone jump or cry with something you've cut. I also really love watching something I've cut on Gogglebox - to see them all reacting to a sequence you've spent hours working on is a complete masterclass. As an editor during screenings you're usually in the dark at the front of the room with your back to everyone so don't ever have that luxury.

**Q:** What do you find most challenging at work?

Other people ...

**Q:** What have been some of your favourite projects to work on over the years?

I've been lucky enough to work with some great directors on some really cool projects, I just finished Rogue Heroes about the origins of the SAS in WW2 in Africa, and before that Stephen, about the Stephen Lawrence case; the two couldn't be more different, which is what I love about my job. Every job is completely different.

I do have favourites, Rogue Heroes was a lot of fun to do, as was Killing Eve and The Serpent. Stephen, a true story, was a hard story to tell, we needed to get it right for the family, but they were very happy the end result and that's praise indeed. My all time favourite is still Broadchurch though, I did 2 series

and apart from the fact it was a brilliant story, being able to cut actors of that calibre was amazing, you really enjoy just watching the rushes when you've got a scene with Olivia Coleman & David Tennant.

Also the creative team was brilliant, I'd worked with the Director Mike Barker and DOP John Conroy before so knew I'd be getting great footage. Writer and show runner Chris Chibnall was amazing to work with. Not only did he write a great script but was brilliant at working complex story beats within the whole series.

**Q:** Do you enjoy one type of job over another based on content and/or theme?

Not really, if I like the script and the director then I will consider it.

**Q:** When you work on a project, do you ever feel you can predict its success with audiences?

Sometimes, when you have a great story and great actors you know it'll do well, Killing Eve for example, we knew it was good but nobody expected it to be that popular. Generally by the time I have finished a job I'm too close to it and can't tell anymore. I've been very lucky with the jobs I've worked on and most of them have been well received.

**Q:** Have you got a particular professional ambition or goal?

Just to do good work and work with people I like.

**Q:** Have you any advice for aspiring editors?

Keep cutting, it's good practice. You can learn a certain amount but most of it is on the job.

I'm still learning.

I think if you're starting out it's great to work with an editor whose work you like. As an assistant editor

you get to see how a cutting room works, and how we need to be able to read people, one to one and in a screening of 10 people. Sometimes they want your opinion, sometimes its best to just listen, you can't be taught that. You learn it from watching other editors.



Thank you Helen for taking the time out from a very busy schedule to answer our questions.

Helen Chapman has been a Film & TV editor in the UK and Ireland for the last 19 years. Her credits include 'Killing Eve', 'Stephen', 'The Serpent', 'We Hunt Together' for Showtime; 'Single-Handed', 'The Clinic', 'Bittersweet' for RTÉ, and 'Secret Diary of a Call Girl' and 'Foyle's War' for ITV.

CV available with her [Agency](#) as well as on [IMDB](#)

# AN INTRODUCTION TO DOCUMENTARY EDITING

A Webinar hosted by our very own Chairman Eoin McDonagh

Guests Mick Mahon, Maeve O'Boyle and Connie Farrell join ISE Chairman Eoin McDonagh in a one and a half hour insight into the workings of documentary editing.

Mick Mahon is probably best known for his work on the 2019 documentary, Gaza which garnered numerous awards on the festival circuit including at the DFI, Sundance, New York Festival with several wins for Best Documentary of the Year. Mick personally won the IFTA for Best Editing in 2020.

Connie Farrell recently completed editing on the highly acclaimed documentary - New York Our Time and is currently working on The End of Romance a documentary about W.B. Yeats and Maud Gonne.

Maeve O'Boyle started as an assistant editor working in television documentaries and recently completed work on the compelling documentary The 8th, about Irish Women and their fight to overturn the restrictive laws on abortion.

Eoin steers our panelists through a variety of topics and manages to squeeze every ounce of information time allows about documentary editing. From the obligatory question, how did you end up getting into documentary editing to simple questions about approach to the work and

at what stage of the production they get involved.

I am packed with solid advice, tips and knowledge, the hour and a half zips by. Online attendees got to ask questions at the end of the chat, which is customary at our webinars as we appreciate the interaction and it allows our audience



to directly engage with our panelists and ask specific questions that speaks to their needs. The style of the webinar is very relaxed with our guests feeding off one another and leading each other deeper into the conversation offering needle sharp knowledge and finite understanding of documentary editing.

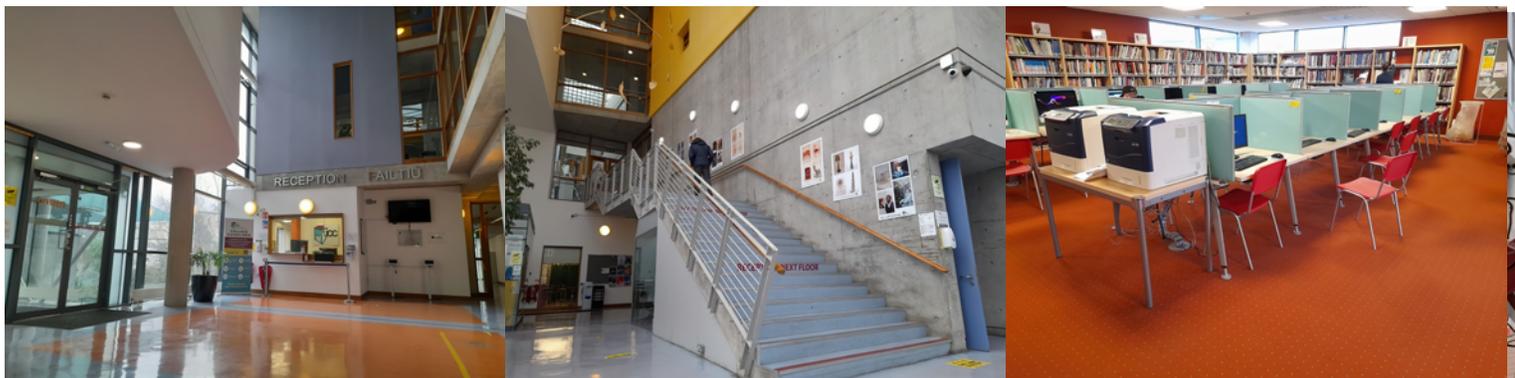
The webinar ends with another obligatory offering of advice for editors getting into documentary editing and this answer from all three guests on the panel is loaded with insight. Mick's answer specifically is webinar gold. The webinar can be found on [YouTube](#) and as we always say, is well worth taking the time out to watch.

# ST. JOHN'S CENTRAL COLLEGE BRIAN O'GLANBY

We chat to lecturer Brian about the courses on offer at St. John's.



St. Johns Central College photographed by Shane McCarthy.



St. John's Central College is a further education college in Cork City and is administered by the Cork Education and Training Board. Courses on offer, both full and part time include Applied Sciences, Art & Design, Construction & Engineering, Information Technology, Media Technology, Software Engineering and Services.

The Film and TV Department delivers a wide variety of modules from Directing, Camera & Lighting, Screenplay Writing, Photography, Studio and Location Sound production to Producing, Editing, Documentary, Digital Film Production, and Art Direction over two years at levels 5 and 6.

On the successful completion of level Six, students have the option of furthering their education at a host of partner institutions, and obtaining degrees from Brighton Film School, Sunderland University or Southampton's Solent University in the U.K. or move on to colleges such as the National Film School, IADT, GMIT, LIT or UCC, etc. in Ireland. Students have often progressed directly into the industry as D.O.P.s, Sound Recordists, Producers, Directors and Editors.

The campus has a purpose built TV studio, broadcast multi-format cameras, dedicated film cameras, sound studio and location sound kits including extensive lighting kits and the most up to date Apple Mac computers and software.

A few of the film programs well known alumni include Damian McCarthy - Caveat, Writer Kevin Lehane - Grabbers, Writer/Director Peter Foott - Young Offenders (the feature film

and spin off TV series.) Documentary director and DOP ED Godsell - The Road to Moneygall.

St. John's has a large department with a vibrant staff body comprised of specialised trainers, who have come from and maintain links with the film & television industry. For instance Lecturer Brian O'Glanby is a paid up member of the Directors Guild of Ireland and runs his own production company, Restless Crest from his home in Cobh.

Brian started his career in the Netherlands working in Set Design before moving back to Ireland working in Studio Production and Music. He spent time working as a Location Manager and inbetween all that, actually studied at St. John's. He went on to receive a BA Honors degree at Sunderland University and obtained his Masters in 2021.

The first year of L5 includes courses on film and TV editing, traditional B&W photography, studio production design, TV studio production, scriptwriting, film production, media analysis and communications. For the second year for an L6 qualification, students are offered courses in studio and location sound, documentary production, film directing, production management, scripting for film and TV, film and digital video production as well as more advanced courses on the previous years topics.

As Brian puts it, the film course at St. John's is... **"so hands on and practical. You get first hand experience at using a camera, editing software, recording sound, you're all doing the makeup, you're all doing the hair, you're all doing the set dressing. So everything that's taught here you're going to use in the industry. You pick it up, it's in your hand and you've already learned it."**

St John's is located in Douglas Street in Cork City. For more information about the film production course go to [stjohnscollege.ie](http://stjohnscollege.ie).



# SOUND IN POST PRODUCTION

BAFTA nominees and IFTA Winners Steve Fanagan and Niall Brady chat to us about Sound Best Practices

**T**here are very few more qualified people to talk to about sound in post production than [Niall Brady MPSE](#) and [Steve Fanagan MPSE](#). Both are extremely talented, extremely hard working and extremely busy. They took time out to chat to us to discuss ways we can best enhance our client previews as well as help, once we have picture lock (whatever that is!) to turnover our project onto the next stages of the process. The sound edit and the final mix.

**N**iall and Steve are Sound Designers and no, being a sound designer does not mean finding new ways to make that RayGun sound less Pew Pew or more Zingy, it's about, no wait... It is that. And so much more. An official job description would be - The job of a sound designer is to search through commercial audio libraries to find the right sounds for a project, or, when the right sounds cannot be found or licensed, record sounds in the studio or the field and process them through a digital audio workstation (DAW) to create the desired effect or tone. In addition to placing mics, recording and editing dialogue, and recording and editing field sounds, sound designers are likely to mix sound for a film or TV Show. Or a more informal description would be Steve's interpretation.

**"I like the idea that the term sound designer can refer to the creation of original sounds. But I, think more importantly in a film context it relates to the idea of someone with an overall tonal or aesthetic idea for the film. When we think of sound design, sometimes we think of the obvious material. We think of drones and tones, we think of lasers and we think of spaceships and the like, but actually good sound design is about the right choice of wind or the right choice of air for an interior, it's about tiny details. How does that**

**footstep sound in that hallway or on that surface or if the actor is wearing very elaborate earrings, do we want to hear them while he or she walks?**

**There's lots of micro-decisions of what should be in the tracks ready to mix from a sound design point of view. And I think a designer's job in collaboration with the director, editor and the rest of the sound team is to sort of collect all of those signs and figure out where they should go and how to play them."**

Niall, your thoughts...

**"Along with the overt sound design part, where you may be imagining brand new sounds for something, you are also conceiving of what a world should sound like to the subject or where the sound should be in regards to the story at that time. So it's kind of interpreting the story in a narrow way. You may not be conceiving of a brand new sound every time, sometimes you are going back to your library and just taking media and changing it slightly. But you're really in service of the directors vision and you aim to bring all of your experience to that end."**

**T**here's a few different schools of thought amongst us editor types, there are some of us who lay in temp tracks of music and the occasional sound effect, those of us who do nothing at all, or the type of editor who does everything to make their programme sound as close to the final product,



short of performing a final mix inside the NLE. Or as Niall puts it... "I think producers and people nowadays coming in to watch a final cut from an editor expect a much more evolved soundtrack than they did a few years ago. When the dialogue is up here, there and everywhere and the music's too loud or even too soft, or there's no sound effects, it spoils your view of the episode and you start seeing things you don't want to be seeing. So I always feel, the better the sound, the better the viewing and the far easier the next phase is."

Here's a great tip from Niall to use in the edit suite, whether we use internal sound cards or external boxes, headphones or big speakers.

"Take an episode into your NLE that you like and play in the room you're in and find a decent, comfortable volume level and lock it in. Mark it on the volume controller and know that that's your Mean. Then never touch that volume button. So any changes to volume etc on your timeline are all playing to that set output level, your Mean. It makes for a more balanced edit, which in turn makes for a better mix."

It's also a good idea to calibrate that sound level at regular intervals to keep the integrity of the Mean and maintain consistency over the duration of the project. Bear in mind that once you are done and pass on an AAF to the sound guys, every decision you made in the edit around sound is included in that file as reference for the final mix guys to expand upon.

"It starts off with a good workflow," says Steve. "If we get a crystal clear turnover it's much easier for us to maintain the integrity of the editor and the director's intent. You know, if you get a good AAF from the offline, then you've got a very good sense of the shape of the

sound and how the editor was thinking about the sound. And that's even before you get to have a conversation, you know, there's lots of clues and lots of hints on that in the editors mix via the AAF."

The reason for that becomes very clear especially when Steve points out... "It's just about the most important thing from the point of view of sound to maintain the intent and to really understand what's been worked up in the edit and to not jeopardise it or not mess it up because chances are, if the film is working, the decisions around sound the editor is making, is part of that.

There are so many sound choices being made in the picture edit. A lot of the time I think, when takes are chosen, it's not just about picture, it's about performance and part of that is always going to be about sound. Like 'I love the intonation of a word', or 'I love the pause that's there'. All sorts of things, either consciously or subconsciously sound wise, that an editor is reacting to."

Which leads us to the question of turnover to sound. Niall and Steve both prefer to have a conversation with the editor or the assistant editor preparing the turnover. Niall has a word document he created detailing best practices for him to start the job the minute he gets all the files. A sloppy turnover is not a great start. As he says... "If you're using the same folder structure every time I can just go back and get things, I know where it is every time. So much of those workflow details are designed with the aim of allowing us to do the sound job and not to



be firefighting or trying to figure out intent, 'how does this work?' and 'why am I spending all this time just getting the AAF to a place where I can start working?' I'm employed as a sound designer, sound editor so that's what I want to be doing, not wrangling material.

That's why the organisational stuff is important, it allows us all to do our jobs better. The better deliveries give us more time to actually do the work, to make the edit sound better."

**G**ood organisation, like allocating the NLE's tracks in an orderly manner - dialogue on 1-8, FX on 9-16 and music on 17-22 - is a good way to start when preparing for final mix. Ideally if you make it a habit to work with this format or even just similar, but consistent, from the very beginning of your timeline workflow it saves time all round. Always include a guide track of your mix and make sure your final export matches the version you are sending to mix. Niall may be in sound but he says... "It is essential that cuts be identified with a letter rather than calling it a final cut because final cuts often change and then you can get into a naming protocol that can quickly become confusing. Cut A, Cut B, Cut C etc is simpler and better.

I never want to see something called final cut. I've been there where it's final, final cut, last Tuesday's final, the final final less effects etc.

The other day we were in a remote ADR session where the picture had been sent to the studio the actor was and suddenly we were out of sync. The actor was in the hosting studio and I was on zoom. The director and my co-supervisor were in another studio connected via Source Connect. So five or six people are all going, 'Niall, why is this out of sync?' I was able to go, 'well, I can see from your feed that you're looking at the right picture, can you look at your guide tracks?' He looked at his guide tracks and he had received the wrong one. Cut C instead of cut D and so, very quickly, you're just able to go, 'okay we now know what the problem is' and fix it. That's only down to sticking to the simplest things, like having labels be consistent for every turnover."

"I remember early in my career, one of the people that I worked for said to me, 'you know Steve, we have to think about this as a manufacturing process and the ultimate goal is that we have this thing to deliver and it's to this spec, whatever that spec is'. So as long as you're aware of what that is at the beginning and you're working toward it and you know where the end point is and you get everything in place as you start the process then hopefully you won't have to think about it too hard and you can get on with the creative stuff within that technical spec."

**A**nd for both Niall and Steve it matters not if they are working on a big budget Hollywood feature, a TV series or an independent short film the approach is the same.

"You're trying to achieve the same thing with all of them. And I don't think any of them deserve less attention from you, and none of them deserve less love from any of us. The challenge, always, is time."

**A**nd we all know the saying... Time is money. So anything we can do to help speed up and make the back end of delivery less difficult the better all round and of course that helps build good relationships which in turn leads to repeat business.

**O**ne of the difficulties of working with sound effects etc is that editors rely on buzz tracks or room tone to fill in the sound. Or alternatively they might have access to a few SFX libraries they bought ages ago on CD and loaded onto a drive for easy access. But a lot of the time there may be nothing available. Sometimes you might get lucky and you have a sound designer available who can go out and record the sound for you to pop into your timeline.

"I enjoy going and recording something and sitting there quietly recording. On the job we just finished it's set in Dublin, I did go out and do a lot of recording for that as did Steve Fanagan who was my co-supervisor on it. We both recorded an awful lot of material for that show because it's on our doorstep, it's Dublin, it'd be pretty bad of us to lean on libraries for a Dublin based drama"

**O**f course some of us don't have the luxury of having a sound designer to hand and have to make a plan for sound effects. Niall recommends [Soundly](#) as a great place to start and is easily integrated into your workflow.

**A**nd finally, to what Steve calls the most important tool in the post production process.

**"When the work makes the transition from the edit suite into sound post, the most important thing is that we're having a conversation back and forth, and that we're hopefully communicating in a way that it's obvious we're both trying to do the same thing and achieve the same goal. I think my biggest fear is when it becomes a stress or restrained, then it's probably distracting from the creative part of the work. And all we really want to be doing is thinking about the creative stuff.**

**Essentially just a good line of communication."**

**N**iall Brady is a supervising sound editor and sound designer working in Ireland. He works at Outer Limits. Niall has been a member of sound teams that have been nominated for a craft BAFTA, won numerous sound IFTA's and has also been a MPSE (Motion Picture Sound Editors) nominee. Niall has supervised and designed sound for many films, TV series and documentaries. His most recent credits include 'Conversations With Friends', 'Redemption', 'The Dead Zoo' and 'Normal People'. His favourite sound is rain on windows and his favourite food is other people's chips.

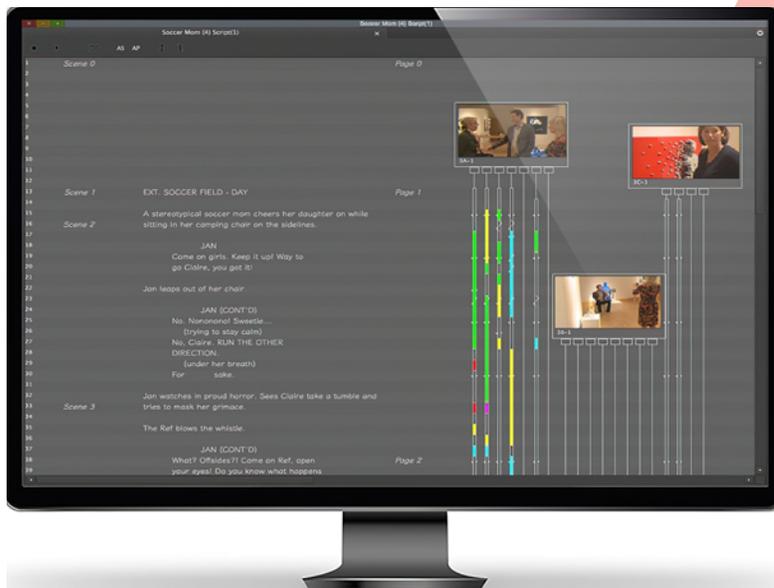
**S**teve Fanagan is an award-winning Irish sound designer, supervising sound editor and sound re-recording mixer. His recent projects include BBC and Hulu's, Conversations With Friends, AppleTV+'s Swan Song and the multi-award winning Irish Language feature, The Quiet Girl. He is a member of The Academy, BAFTA, European Film Academy and Motion Picture Sound Editors' Guild.



# GEAR REVIEW

Our featured article subjects favourite pieces of kit

## EDEL McDONNELL: AVID ScriptSync



"I find it invaluable especially in comedy or in big dialogue scenes. You can go to one line and you can get every read of every line on that. ScriptSync is brilliant."

A powerful dialogue search and sync option for Media Composer. Eliminate time consuming manual media searches and quickly find the best take or perfect clip fast. [ScriptSync](#) phonetically indexes all text and audible dialog in your project automatically and then syncs each source clip to its associated line in the script. Once synced, you can quickly locate all relevant clips in seconds based on a scene number, page number, or word or phrase search, enabling you to compare performances in the context of your story.

## JOHN MURPHY: Black Magic Design Mini ATEM

"When I got it, I was like telling everyone, look at this box, it's class, it was the first time I got really excited about gear."

[ATEM Mini switchers](#) make it easy to create professional multi camera productions for live streaming to YouTube and innovative business presentations using Skype or Zoom! All ATEM Mini models have USB that works like a webcam so you can use any streaming software while the ATEM Mini Pro and ATEM Mini Extreme models add live streaming and recording to USB disks. ATEM Mini even has secret broadcast features for high end work!



## JONNY ELWYN: Elgato StreamDeck

"This is actually really useful and fulfills all of my criteria for a device that controls my NLE. One of my favorite things on my desk."

[Fully customizable](#) LCD keys poised to trigger unlimited actions. One-touch tactile operation. Instant visual feedback. Advanced yet easy-to-use software. Traditionally this level of control was exclusive to mainstream entertainment broadcasters. Now, it's at your fingertips. Hotkey actions make remembering keyboard shortcuts an issue of the past. Now, you launch apps and websites, open folders, instantly access pre-composed texts – control anything you want – without second-guessing.



## NIALL BRADY: Rode VideoMic Me-L

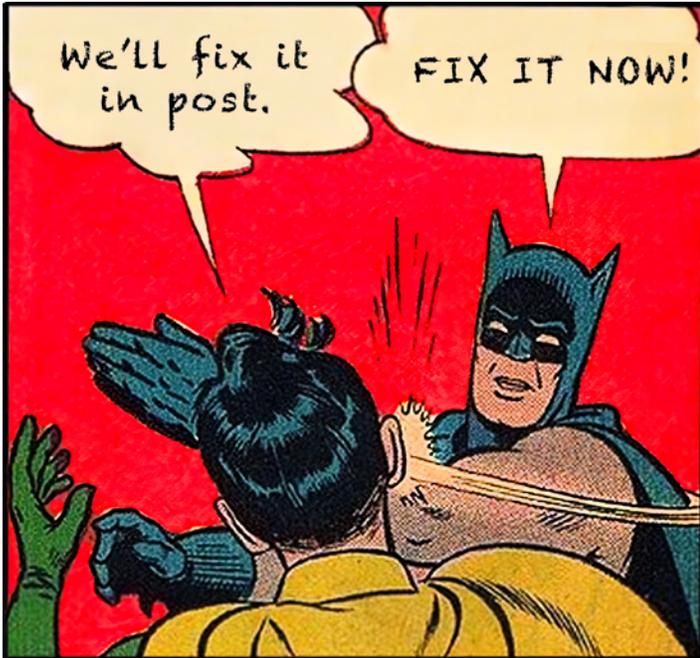
"it's a great little microphone and it just fits into your pocket and then you pop it on top of your phone into the lightning port. And so your phone becomes a recorder."

[The VideoMic Me-L](#) is a high-quality microphone for your mobile device, designed to give you incredible audio when shooting video. The microphone's directionality reduces surrounding noises to focus on exactly what you're filming, ensuring your videos sound clear and intelligible. The VideoMic Me-L comes with a mic clip to ensure the mic is secure and a furry windshield suitable for filming in outdoor and adverse weather conditions.

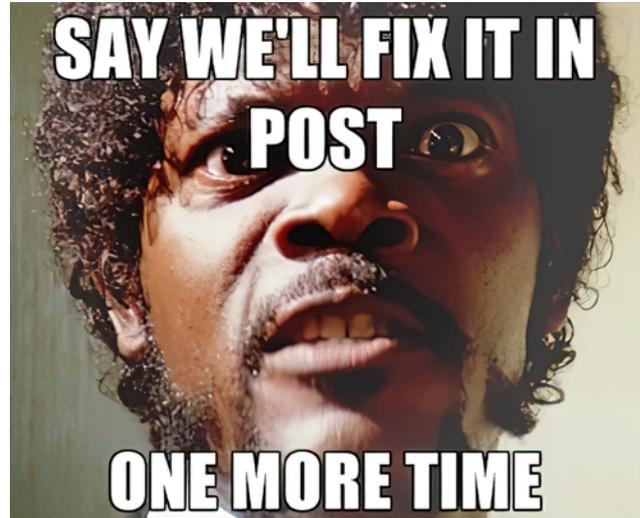


# THE BACK PAGE

The great film editor is not a cutter, he's a story teller, right?  
Ridley Scott



A day without editing is like... damn I don't know.  
Joe Dante



I think editors know so much about how to tell a story with pictures. It's such an important facet of becoming a film director to know how footage can be controlled and manipulated.  
Martin Scorsese



Editing is where movies are made or broken. Many a film has been saved and many a film has been ruined in the editing room.  
Joe Dante



I've always equated the writing process with editing, sort of like when I get through editing the movie, that's like my last draft of the screenplay.  
Quentin Tarantino