

ASSEMBLED

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EDGAR BURCKSEN ACE

MICK MAHON ISE

IFEF AND TEMPO

AN IRISH SCREEN EDITORS PUBLICATION

Hello & Welcome

Welcome the third edition of Assembled.

It's been a very busy few months since the last edition. ISE was once again represented at the International Film Editors Forum, held in Cologne in October. This was the first in person forum since 2019 and was attended by representatives of editing groups and guilds from around the world. The forum is an opportunity for editors from different countries to meet and network with a view to increased co-operation and understanding, and the elevation of the craft. You can read more about it in Shane Woods' article inside.

This year ISE also joined TEMPO, Federation of Film Editors Associations. Their aim is to bring together editors from around the world and to provide a platform for film editors organizations, associations, guilds, and their members, to collaborate, to support and inspire each other, and to strengthen the standing of editing.

It's almost Oscars time again, and I know everyone in Ireland will be rooting for An Cailín Ciúin (cut by ISE member John Murphy), for Paul Mescal, and for Banshees of Inisherin. Personally I was delighted to see Eddie Hamilton received an editing nomination for Top Gun: Maverick. I first encountered Eddie in June of 2013. It had been a rough year for me; I had fallen out of love with editing and I felt my career was barely treading water. Something needed to change! In a quest for inspiration I travelled to the inaugural Editfest London, organised by ACE. Over the course of a day they had panels on TV and Film, featuring many amazing experienced editors, and an interview with Ann V Coates. The film panel was in the afternoon, and I was excited to hear from Chris Dickens, John Wilson and Mick Audsley. However it was Eddie Hamilton that stole the show for me. He spoke quickly, about how he'd started out, the sacrifices and the deals he'd made with himself along the way, and in the few minutes he was talking I was re-energised. The passion he spoke with left me wanting to burst from the Soho

theatre and find someone, ANYONE, with a film that I could cut. Afterwards I saw him in the lobby surrounded by film students, taking time to speak to each one in turn. Hearing someone so clearly in love with their craft had a profound effect on me; two weeks later Dublin Editors was founded. A couple of years later he visited Dublin as a guest for one of our In Conversation events, and was just as generous with his time and his knowledge as I'd remembered. So I hope that he wins the Oscar, not just for the work he's nominated for, but also the inspiration he's been to me and many more like me.

On a personal note, this is my last time to write the Note from the Chair for Assembled, having taken the decision to step down from the ISE committee. I am immensely proud of all that we have achieved together since the first exploratory chats about forming a guild back in 2018, and I look forward to seeing the organisation continue to grow and expand. To see the ISE acronym in the credits on film and tv is especially heartening, and I hope to see all our members adopt it going forward.

Eoin McDonagh ISE



edia Offlin

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Once again I would like to say thank you to everyone involved in this issue. The people we spoke to, the people who contributed and all involved in making sure my swearing is removed from all interviews I conduct.

This is a magazine not just for ISE members but for anyone who visits our ISE website, however if you are eligible for membership I encourage you to apply. You don't even need a Leaving Cert:-) We are always looking for contributors and ideas for articles so feel free to get in touch with any of the committee members or myself. jayce@irishscreeneditors.com. Don't be shy, I don't bite, but I have been bitten.

As usual, no bribes, no synthesisers and unfortunately no swearing.

Jeremy Briers



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AMY O'CONNELL ISE EDITOR

Our newest member of the Irish Screen Editors Guild. (At the time of writing.)

• 0:00 - 0:01 Oh, it's horrible.

Those were the very first words of the Zoom recording as my chat with Amy begins and unfortunately refers to the very tedious diseases I was harbouring at the time. It is definitely not about Amy's very brilliant rise from edit assistant to currently being the only in-house editor at Element Post which I think is, well, brilliant. A big step from her college days as a production designer.

"My college years were filled with a mixture of production design and editing. So when we got out of college, we were all working part-time jobs to pay the bills and trying to make our own stuff on the side. So I kind of fell into a lot of production design that way, just with friends making no budget or micro budget stuff. I worked in the sound department for a couple of years because again, I was working part-time and there was some jobs in sound, so I said, I'll go over there and I'll do that. I was working in a recording studio that actually needed a lot of video content for social media, so I ended up being a video editor at a sound studio."

• 2:13 - 2:14 Um, it's an unusual path.

So sayeth the ex sound man turned editor himself. But for Amy just out of college and at the very beginnings of her hustle to land the perfect job, she went where the jobs were.

"I graduated in 2012 and it wasn't exactly a booming time for getting on the ladder. I think a lot of our lecturers were looking at film and broadcast students going, 'what? You think you're getting a job?' A bit of an unusual path yes but it took off when I was there and I just loved it."

As with all aspiring editors eventually the bug bit for bigger and better things and it was time for Amy to move on from days (and probably a lot of nights too) of social media content creation to er... bigger and better things.

"The work was great but I wanted to spread my wings a little, so I weaselled my way in the door of Element where I am now, by asking... 'Can I just sit behind someone for a day when they work? Can I just be in the room when something is happening?' I was in there two weeks and their assistant editor



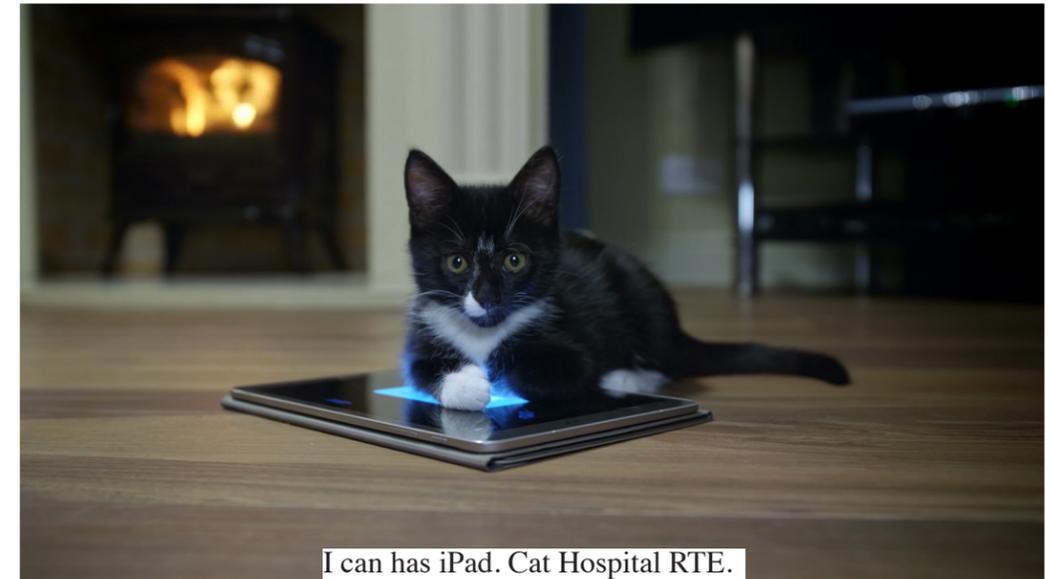
handed in their notice. So I was perfectly placed at that time to say I could do that. And that's how I got going really in the proper picture sphere."

• 3:37 - 3:49 Why editing?

Full of hard questions me! But Amy shrugged it off like a pro and talks much more eloquently than I about how she loves the process, the collaboration and having a hand in telling the story.

"I was never someone that loved being on set, particularly in that college setting. We did every job. I remember I was a producer once on a short film and I just ended up in tears in the kitchen. Life on set was all standing around for an hour then go for five minutes then stand around for an hour and it never really appealed to me. I just love that you when you are editing you are always busy and I do like being the commander of my own time."

"Edit assistant was a great place to start because when you're assisting you're in the thick of it. I was working with some great editors and they taught me so much. Element started to feed me on small edits to get me going. Like commercials for digital content etc. until I built up to working on an advert for TV which was very exciting. Then suddenly I'm doing more TV commercials than digital content and after a couple of years of assisting and the bits and pieces of editing I was doing I moved into full time editing. Which was intense. Especially when I landed my first series Cat Hospital for RTE. It was a lot of late nights, a lot of long days working out what I was doing. I knew how to put together videos but I had never worked on a big scale broadcast like this. Even if it was at first just the one episode. I was working with Brenda Morrissey on that. She was lead editor who very much guided me through the process while I was both semi assisting, semi editing. it was more exciting as I was dying to get at it so wasn't too scary."



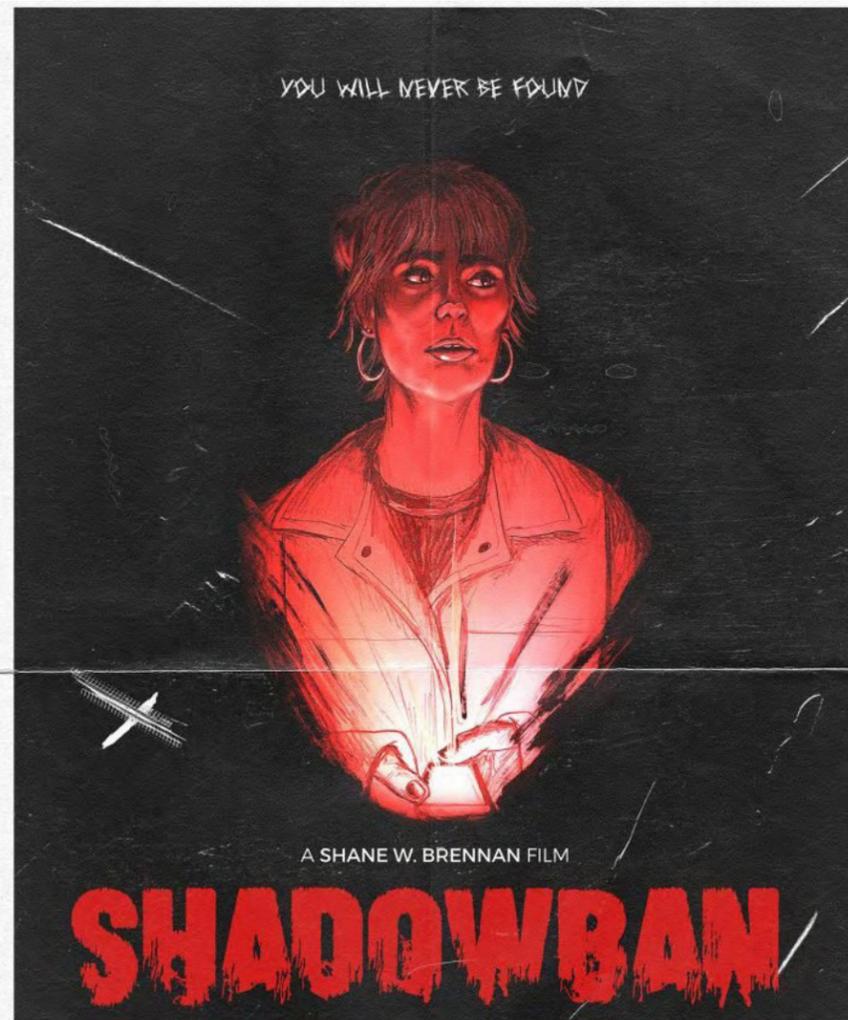
I can has iPad. Cat Hospital RTE.

Amy joined Element Post in 2017 albeit initially as she puts it 'watching over the editor's shoulder' and then when that lucky break happened, which she grabbed with both hands (she wasn't doing anything with them anyway so why not) she spent two years assisting, always with the view in mind of wanting to be, THE EDITOR!

And so now it is on to bigger and better things with one job leading to the next. Or in Amy's turn of phrase, half hour TV shows for RTE turned into hour long episodes for The Food Network with John Torode's Ireland produced by the same company. What followed was a show with Virgin Ireland presented by Lucy Kennedy and

currently a travel show presented by Julia Bradbury.

"I hope that people who work with me once will come back so it's about getting the repeat business, the building of relationships with production companies and directors that I strive for. The majority of the work I have lined up for 2023 is all with people I've worked with before. It's great for me as an editor because I know how these people work and they trust me."



• 15:33 - 15:54 So you're in your element at Element?

"I am very happy here. I think what really works is my relationship with Chriona (O' Sullivan, Director of Post.) We talk all the time about what's the next thing that I want to be doing? Like 'okay,

you've done a lot of commercials, are you happy in there? Or should we start looking for docs? Should we start looking for features? Should we start looking for dramas?' There's always a conversation to be had and that is very appreciated."

So what is next on the horizon for Amy? Well after doing a horror short last summer she has set her eyes on a feature film at some point in the next few years

"I do love what I'm doing. I love the wheelhouse of the ob-docs and the travel docs and stuff like that. But I'm also wary of pigeon-holing myself. So occasionally if I have a break in broadcast I will do a commercial. Or recently I've been doing a couple of short films because you can, if you have a three week break in your schedule, get a short film in there in that time. But ultimately I'd love to get stuck into a feature and just keep learning, just keep moving."

With Amy's relatively new ascension to the ranks of full time editor why did she choose now, to become a member of the ISE? Well it turns out that for her it's the huge social aspect of our Guild that drew her in.

"I was aware of the Guild when it was founded because I was assisting and had been to a couple of the meet ups. It was always in the back of my mind as a great network to have. All of the editors I know working in Dublin are members. So I just wanted to get into that loop. Editing is a solitary job and being able to gather all these people in the same room for drinks

I think is brilliant. I was happy once I eventually had enough credits that I would be able to get in."

• 24:51 - 24:51 <laugh>

IFEF and TEMPO



On the 5th October 2022 the International Film Editors Forum was held in Cologne, Germany. As part of Edimotion; the oldest and largest film festival in the world to focus exclusively on film editing; the IFEF is a full-day networking event aimed at film editors who are actively involved in advancing their profession and working conditions in their respective countries.

The 2022 IFEF marked the first time that the forum had been held in person since 2019 and was well attended, with 50 editors travelling from 26 countries around the world including from as far away as Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Gambia, India, Iran, Kenya, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand and the USA. "I first attended the IFEF online in 2021 but to be in the same room with 50 editors from all over the world was so inspiring," says Sarah Mc Teigue (AMC,

Associazione di Montaggio Cinematografico e televisivo, Italy) Sarah was born and raised in Dublin before moving to Italy after completing her film studies. She has been working in Rome for 20 years, starting as an assistant to editors including Sidney Wolinsky and Barry Brown. Sarah is now an accomplished editor in her own right with films that have premiered in Venice and Rome as well as documentaries premiered at Taormina and Bologna. "Being Irish in Rome has definitely had advantages for me. I've had the opportunity to work with Americans and Italians doing films in English. I love this aspect of work, mixing the two languages and cultures." It was this interest in creating and maintaining international relationships that brought her to Cologne. "I think it's very useful to compare issues on an international scale, see how much we have in common, and how we're different. Even still, I was surprised how common our issues are."

2022 also marked the first year where travel grants had been provided to film editors from emerging and developing countries. "I just want to let everyone know the impact that IFEF has had on me," said Bongzi Malefo; South African Editors Guild member, first time participant and travel grant recipient. Based out of Johannesburg, Bongzi was a multiple SAFTA Winner for her work on the telenovela series / The River/ but the trip to Cologne marked her first time visiting Europe. "Meeting so many people who are so passionate about the craft and speaking on the same issues we all face globally has been so inspiring. I recognise myself in all of the participants stories, and with this information I am armed to keep highlighting the plight of editors and especially assistant editors." Since returning to Johannesburg Bongzi has a new assistant editor and has been working to establish her own post production facility.

Discussions on the day included age-old issues such as gender balance, the role/responsibility of an editor and the changing role of education of editors as well as more niche subjects such as authors rights for editors and freedom of artistic expression. For Sarah, the conversations on authorship rights was a highlight of this years forum. "It is very interesting to see how different countries approached the issue to get their results. One of our board members is on the Tempo task force concerning authorship."

Some of the more serious issues raised included detention of some editors in Turkey and later Iran for editing films. Erhan Örs, an editor from Turkey, was imprisoned in June of 2022 for his role in a documentary about Arab, Kurdish, Yazidi and Christian refugees in Turkey. Later we heard of Nik Yousefi, an Iranian editor and film maker who was also arrested for



his work. Both editors have since been released.

As well as the IFEF itself, the Editmotion festival had a wonderfully scheduled collection of film screenings and panel discussions including a screening of Alcarràs, this years Berlinale Winner, and an interview with its editor Ana Pfaff.

Dietmar Kraus, who has been running the festival for the last number of years, is incredibly proud of the many successes it has achieved in this period and is especially happy to welcome people back in person this year. The festival and the forum have helped inspire a number of other ventures over the last couple of years "One of the things we're working on in Italy

now is getting an editing festival up and running," says Sarah Mc Teigue. "Dietmar has kindly offered to give us advice based on his experience."

One of the biggest successes of the International Film Editors Forum in past years has been establishing TEMPO, The Federation of Film Editors Associations. It came about after conversations at the IFEF in 2018 highlighted a need for a platform for film editors organisations, associations, guilds, and their members, to collaborate, to support and inspire each other. It was founded in IFEF 2019 and now has approximately 15,000 member worldwide. This year ACE, the American Cinema Editors, joined as well as ISE.

Another advantage of joining TEMPO is being part of their huge online forum where you can connect with thousands of other editors who have signed up. This is a safe space for editors to get together and discuss topics of the day, work issues and passionate causes such as gaining writer credit on documentaries and loads of other discussion groups. TEMPO Forum members can create topics on just about anything, to share ideas, experiences or just to chat over a cup of coffee.

ISE members are free to sign up via the online portal. You do have to be a member of the ISE though to benefit from this great resource. All Irish applications are vetted by the Irish Guild to keep it real like. We encourage you to take part in the conversation.

Link to the forum is available on this main page <https://www.tempo-filmeditors.com>

Once you click on the link it will take you through to the forum page and present you with the opportunity to sign up. Approval should only take a short time while we verify you.

MICK MAHON ISE EDITOR

Nothing compares to this Editor. (*Groan Ed.*)

"Editing was something I was interested in at college, but it wasn't something I specialised in. I originally specialised in cinematography and thought that would be my potential career path. I'd been an edit assistant in the nineties on several feature films as a second assistant. I never did get to be first assistant."



Not the words one would expect to emanate from the mouth of such a well respected editor. An editor of some of the best documentaries to come out of Ireland and yet...

"The digital crossover happened and I got a little disillusioned with the role of the assistant editor. I missed the cutting room the way it was, the cracking open of those cans of film in the morning, the syncing up, the physicality of it, the tactile nature of it. And

the three or four Assistants in a room all working together. I just liked that aspect of it. So I lost a little of my love for assisting and went off on a bit of a tangent for a while. I directed some stuff and I spent a couple of years not really doing a whole lot to be honest. And then eventually came back through doing corporates and music videos and shorts."

Which all led to doing his first ob-doc called Coach, about an American high school sports coach, a few arts documentaries for RTE and slowly but surely the foundations of the editor started to take hold. In the process Mick was also doing quite a bit of light entertainment cutting, from Naked Camera to A Scare at Bedtime with Podge and Rodge.

"It was a real mixed bag of stuff, but it gave me license to try different things and flex my muscles in different areas. And I enjoyed all of it. There was no sense of me going like, 'I want to do feature doc, I want to do feature drama.' I think there was always this thing that ultimately it'd be nice to be cutting films, but I didn't differentiate between cutting an episode of a hidden camera comedy sketch show and doing a documentary about Flann O'Brien. To me they're equally valuable and equally relevant.

Editing at the beginning was a means to an end for me. I'd always thought I might be a director having decided not to do camera. And I felt, the editing room was probably the place I'm going learn the most about filmmaking so I can become a director. But, I kind of got to a certain point where I felt, 'you know, actually maybe you're not bad at this. Maybe there's something to this and just

stick at it.' And it turned out that, I just love editing and I wouldn't really want to sacrifice the career I've made as an editor to be a jobbing director."

Some would say that was a wise decision given where things are currently. It all started to change for Mick when he was approached by director Adrian McCarthy to edit his first feature doc, Rough Rider. A controversial story centring on journalist Paul Kimmage and his uncovering of several doping scandals within the sport of cycling.

"This was shortly after the whole Lance Armstrong thing had broken out, and Paul was going back to cover the Tour de France for the first time, having been a pariah in the cycling community for so long, because you don't speak out, about this whole omertà around cycling. So this seemed like a really interesting project to get on board with. Even though the film never actually got released theatrically, it did get TV airings and I won an IFTA for that. And it brought me to the attention of some other directors.

Conor Horgan approached me, he was doing a film about Panti Bliss called the Queen of Ireland. So I rolled straight into that. That was a great one because again it was an opportunity to tell a different story. This could've been a very straightforward portrait of a drag queen which would've been very much a television thing to do. But because it was all happening alongside the Marriage Equality Referendum it seemed like a perfect moment to integrate a social history of Ireland with the personal narrative of Rory O'Neill/Panti Bliss, And that, that was a really popular film. It just seemed to hit on a nerve with the public and was really well reviewed."

Which seems to have started a trend for Mick as from here on out his work was beginning to get a lot of notice. Nominated seven times for an IFTA and having won twice so far, it's a remarkable turn of events given this was not his first choice as a career.

"When you work on a project that's well received and seems to be critically acclaimed, but also



loved by the cinema going public it kind of gives you more confidence. So from there I just started to balance between doing TV docs, which I have always loved doing and the longer feature docs."

And so began a whirlwind of high profile work. I, Dolours, Citizen Lane, and then the standout, GAZA.



GAZA co-director Garry Keane is an old friend and colleague of Micks who was trying to develop a film about photographers and came across photographer and subsequent co-director Andrew McConnell who at the time was on assignment in Gaza for a story about surfers. Keane found this an intriguing idea and thought it would be a great to expand that idea into a film. But it was discovered that a documentary already existed on the surfers in Gaza and that was when the latest conflict broke out. Soon after that Garry Keane arrived on Mick's doorstep with over a hundred hours of footage.

"GAZA was a very tricky film to crack. It would have

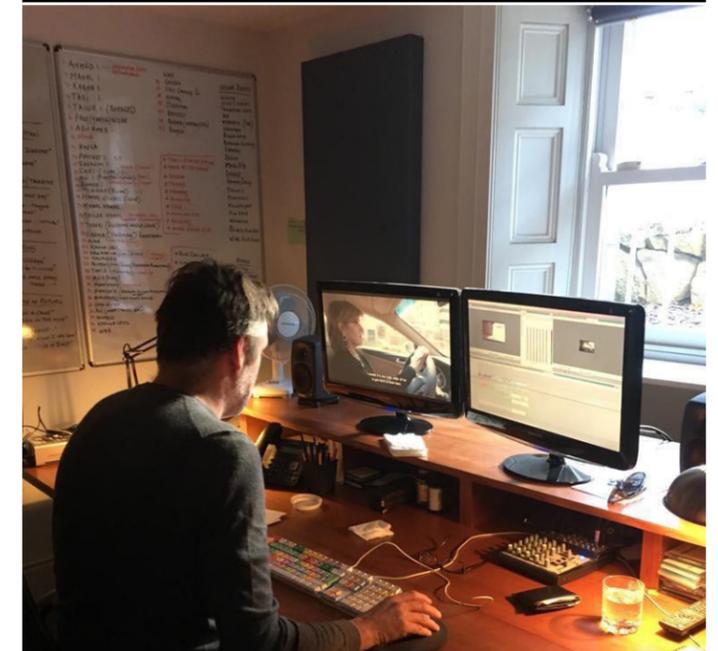
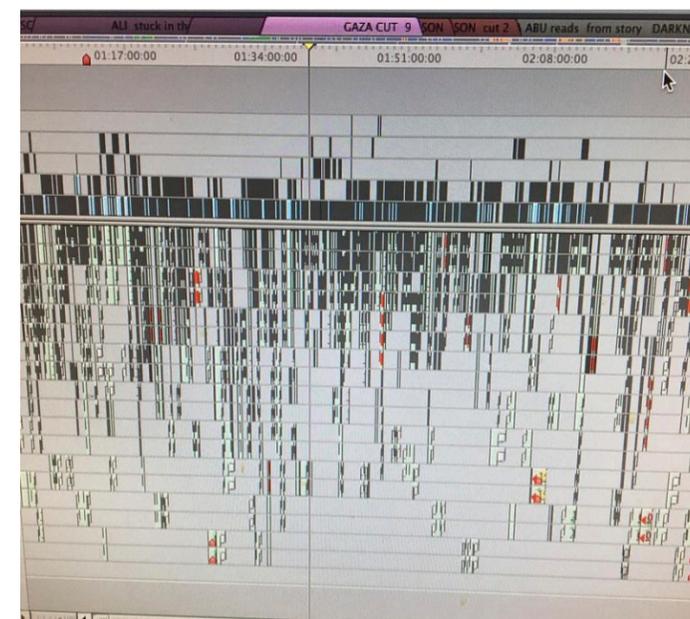
been very easy to have top loaded that film with shocking imagery and there was a lot of very graphic imagery that did not make the cut ultimately. We felt it was just too much for a viewer to take, but we still had to watch it and digest it and assimilate it and assemble it in order to remove it which was tough. It gets into your head and you have to disassociate or become weirdly desensitised to it.

I did find that if I was working with particularly difficult material, I would try and do that earlier in the day, so it wasn't the last thing I would take home with me. We spent a lot of time just sifting through it and trying to figure out a tone for a film that didn't feel exploitative or sensational.

We didn't want to make a film just about war and conflict. We wanted to make a film about people, surviving within that environment where this is a daily threat. They're either in a conflict, awaiting one or cleaning up after one. They are the three stages. It's a constant cycle.

There was no way to get rushes out to me from Gaza. This led to an concerns about not seeing anything until the shoot had been completed because we knew there was no opportunity to go back in afterwards. So I actually went to Gaza for the final leg of the shoot with Garry, Andrew and sound recordist Bob Brennan and put in a cutting room on location. That made it a much more extraordinary experience. To be there cutting, working with local people as translators, because I don't speak Arabic and dealing with a language barrier as well. For the five weeks we were there it was an absolutely immersive situation, we had nowhere else to go or nothing else to do. So when we came back, I felt like I've absorbed a little bit of Gaza into my DNA in a weird kind of way.

Being in Gaza gave me a deeper understanding of the situation that people find themselves in. Had I not been there I probably would have approached it in a slightly different way. But it was a film where you're finding the film in the rushes. You're very much looking for it. Trying to find that right balance of characters, tone and making sure that you don't lose sight of the important thematic elements of the film as well."



Then after another round of TV Shows and a few shorts and one more foray into the Middle East with an Epic Arab Network TV movie Khorfakkan it all changed. For the next three projects Mick was to do all focussed on musicians. First up in 2021 the stellar Breaking Out, the Fergus O'Farrell documentary was followed by Love Yourself Today about Damien Dempsey and his fans and culminating in 2022's brilliant Nothing Compares.

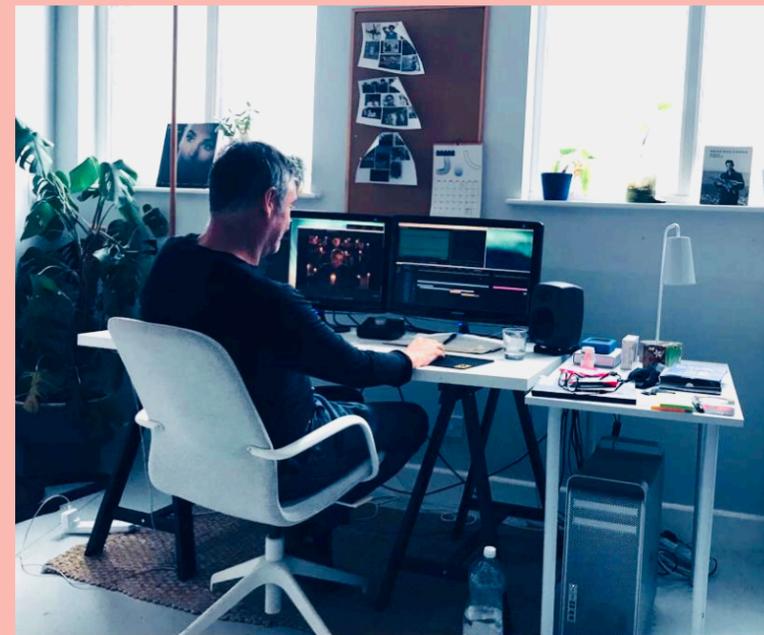
archive and these audio interviews. So, I had to sort of put together a radio cut, if you like. We had a vast amount of archival content as well as audio interviews with the contributors, so really the shooting of the film was determined from the edit. I was working remotely from home, I mean I didn't meet the director in person until nearly three months into the edit when I went to her place in England. I literally put my edit suite in the boot of my car and drove to Margate in England. I was set up there for two weeks where we basically shaped the narrative. And then it was a case of 'what do you need to shoot to illustrate this?'

SHOWTIME PRESENTS
NOTHING COMPARES

A FILM BY KATHRYN FERGUSON



"Editing on Nothing Compares started just as Covid was kind of finishing and they needed to get into production. The director had a young child and rightly she wasn't prepared to travel over concerns about Covid and protecting her family. So the producers made a decision that they would do all the interviews as audio only. They could do it this way on Zoom. So all that was 'shot' was the audio interviews initially. There wasn't a single frame of footage other than



So together, we came up with a shot list, or a series of scenes that could potentially work. And then we talked about how do we integrate it into the archival material that exists in the film? And so the idea emerged to actually shoot in multiple formats. It was shot on 16mm, VHS, Super Eight which then enabled us to create these invisible stitches between the archive and the shot footage, to the extent that some people when they watch it, don't know what is archive and what isn't. So to that end I think it works in that we're just using the visual language of the era of the late eighties, early nineties.

This was director Kathryn Ferguson's first feature

documentary. Kathryn placed a lot of trust in me and encouraged me to suggest and present stuff to her. She's a director who responds to something visual as opposed to talking about it. And this is the way we would engage. So most mornings we'd get on a Zoom call, do half an hour to an hour of talking and then she would leave me to it, I would just cut away. And then at the end of the day present to her what I had done and if she liked it we parked it



and moved on. And that's the way I kind of moved through the film. I would suggest a scene, or she would suggest an idea and then I'd just go and cut it and show it to her. So there was never any point at which she was sitting beside me editing. We didn't do live editing on Zoom. This process was great because it gave me freedom, a carte blanche to be experimental and try things. Particularly the opening with Sinead at the concert in Madison

Square Garden, it created a bit of intrigue around this woman being vilified and booed by this crowd and the viewer wondering what's actually happening.

And then eventually we strung all these scenes out into an assembly and watched it all on a run. We got a real sense of the ebb and flow and where you needed to have those non-narrative breakouts which themselves were great fun to do."

And as the world of Mick turns, out of the blue comes a call from a rather unexpected source. "It was very strange how that job came about in the first place. I got an email from Neil Jordan's producer just doing an availability check without him saying what it was for. Then Neil rang me and says, 'I have this movie and, I'm looking for an editor, would you be interested to have a look at the script?' I went, 'of course I'm interested to look at the script.' So I read it that night and I was offered the job to edit Marlowe the next day.



Working with a director like Neil who's so experienced, has so much confidence in what he is doing, a true artist, a true storyteller, was a great experience. His notes will be direct and to the point like, 'you don't have to use every shot. Just because I shot it doesn't mean you have to use it.' Or 'lets have a little more humour.' His notes would never tell you how to do it but they would make you think about how to approach a scene.

Because of the nature of the film, it's a detective story, so it's a series of conversations, it limits what you can do with that structurally, you can't really flip it on its head. I mean, if a documentary isn't working, you can do a complete 360 and take it in a completely different direction. Whereas with this, you needed to look at cause and effect from scene to scene. You chisel down the long dialogue scenes to their essence and remove superfluous scenes to streamline the narrative.

It was just a really enjoyable, fun film to do. I'm really like looking forward to doing another one with him at some point."

Editor and director Cara Holmes and Mick worked together on 2019's *Welcome To A Bright White Limbo*. Their latest collaboration is a feature doc, *Notes from Sheepland*, which was part of the Arts Council funded Reel Art scheme

"Because of budget constraints Cara couldn't afford an editor for 12 weeks and came to me with an assembly. She left it with me for a week or two, didn't come near me. I would do a pass and then I'd hand it back to her and she did a pass without me interfering, and then it came back to me and we kind of passed it between each other over a month or two. Then we sat together or the Fine Cut. Our relationship comes out of absolute trust. It's the first time I've ever co-edited a film and I'm very happy with the results."

So are a lot of other people as *Notes from Sheepland* won Best Documentary at DIFF 2023.

"It's a bold film. Cara is doing something different with the form. We had this mantra while editing which was purely about, don't shackle yourself, don't let your internal censor, the inner editor stop you doing stuff. Just be completely free, 'Release the Bats!' And so that's what we did."



MARTIN FANNING ASSISTANT EDITOR

Head of Editorial at Windmill Lane.

No matter how big or small the job Martin has delivered consistently for Windmill Lane throughout his tenure here. His latest move into Head of Editorial couldn't be more deserved. He will now head up our international standard editing department. As Head of Editorial Martin will work closely with our team of Producers quoting, managing and organising incoming work, fine tuning the shift structures and managing his talented team. With his skills and experience our Editing facility is in a safe pair of hands. Dave Quinn CEO Windmill Lane

Martin Fanning has been with Windmill Lane for seven years now, before that a brief hiatus as a stay at home dad and before that nine years with Screen Scene, so another thing that can be said about Martin is, he is extremely loyal. And another is that he is extremely shy and nervous about interviews or cameras. And what follows are examples of the ISE helping him to face his fears. First up...



And now.... Jason talks to us, like in an interview.

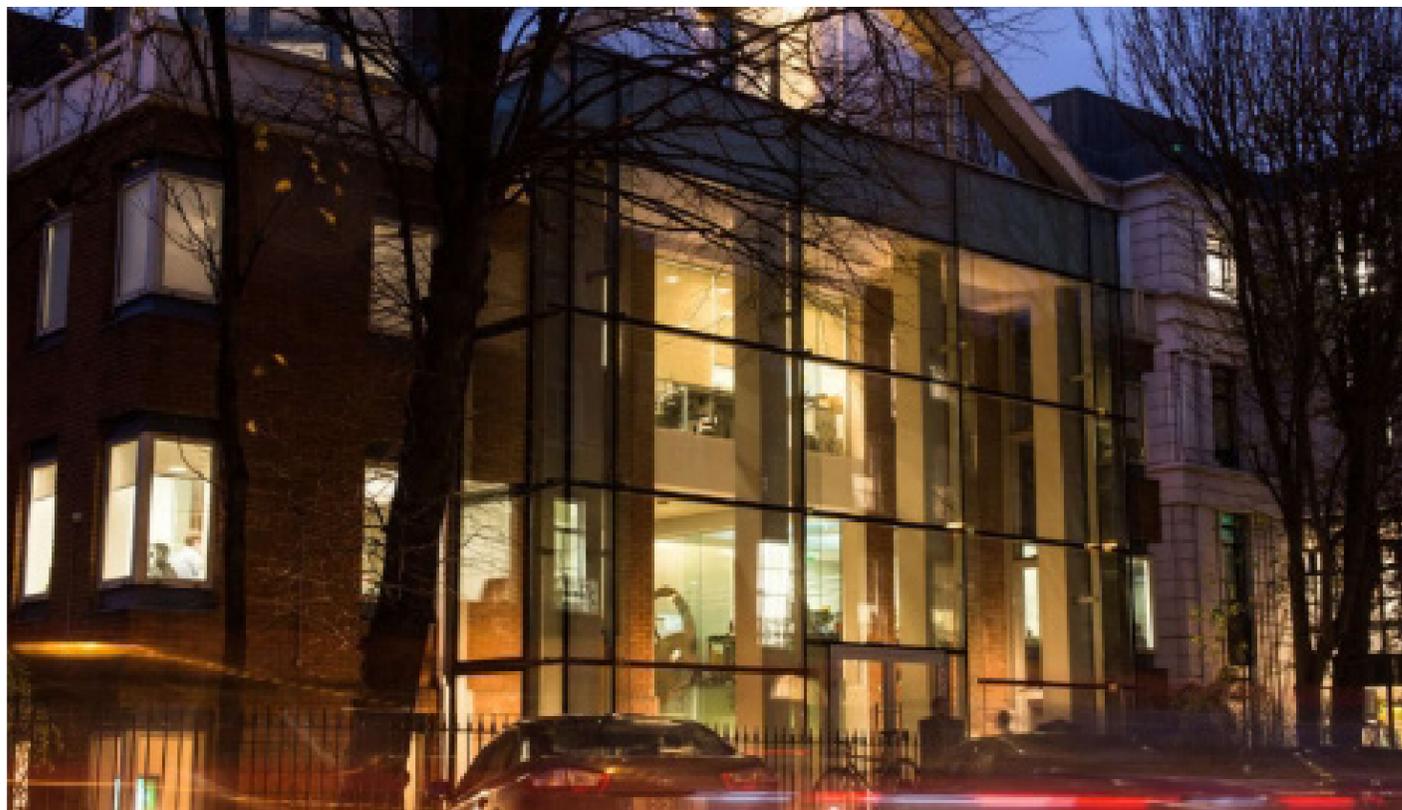
"I had done a film production course at Ballyfermot BCFE in 2000. After that, myself and a friend set up a business cutting showreels. Our computer was an old Gateway with a 4 GB Hard Drive. It would take hours to render somebody's reel which we were

then playing out onto VHS anyway. After that I ended up getting a job as a runner in Screen Scene. I did that for about six months and I was promoted to the position of librarian looking after the Film and Tape Archive. I did that for about another year until I was promoted again. This time to assistant editor."

After about a year of assisting on a plethora of different projects, Martin got roped into editing inserts for RTE which were quick turn and burn type projects with maybe a day or two of shooting and a little over a day to get a finished cut on air. Which led to another year of editing on a factual show which was shot Monday and on air Sunday. All of which caused Martin to pause for thought.

"At the end of the year I just thought, I don't know if I'm suited to this. So I went to my boss at the time and said, 'I'm more interested in Drama and Features and learning that side of it.' Which he understood. I took a step back from editing and ended up working with Tony Cranstoun on *The Old Curiosity Shop*. And it was just a real eye-opener. So I did a couple of those projects and eventually became a Senior Assistant."

It became time for Martin to take a break from the industry and become a stay at home dad looking after his son and occasionally dipping his toe into the swirling waters of freelance assisting on several projects over a four year period. One of



those freelance gigs was at Windmill Lane in Dublin.

This one job evolved into several until inevitably Martin got the call to go full time and permanent at Windmill Lane.

"Windmill contacted me and asked if I would be interested in managing the edit assist department? I thought, 'It's not everyday I'll get a phonecall like that.' It's not something I'd ever done before. I'd never managed a team. My thing was always just working with the editor, making sure they had everything they needed. I never pursued the path of editor, so I saw this as a new and interesting career path to take. And that was seven years ago. Over those seven years the role has evolved into Head of Editorial."

The beauty of being at a facility like Windmill is being able to work on a wide variety of projects. They're not limited to commercials or corporate work, they have a very broad range of capabilities. It's just a matter of bringing in the right people to do the job. And for the most part a lot of those great people

are sitting right there in the building. And because of that, it is also a breeding ground for young talent.

"I've always agreed with promoting from within and you can see certain people really eager to move up. Staying after their shift, learning, watching, they're grafters and then you see them catapult. It's amazing. I prefer to get someone at that level, to come in, teach them, train them and then see them grow."

Martin, a career assistant editor who was at peace looking after just one person is now looking after several assistants, editors and not to mention the daily running of such a large facility, so how has his role really changed in the grand scheme of things?

"An edit assistant's job is to facilitate that, to make sure they're not looking for anything that's missing. I've always felt the working relationship of the assistant and their editor is a role of trust. Whether that's making sure all footage is cross referenced or liaising with production and crew about specific

issues that arise during the shoot - you shouldn't have to worry about that stuff. That's my job - leaving you to concentrate on telling the best story.

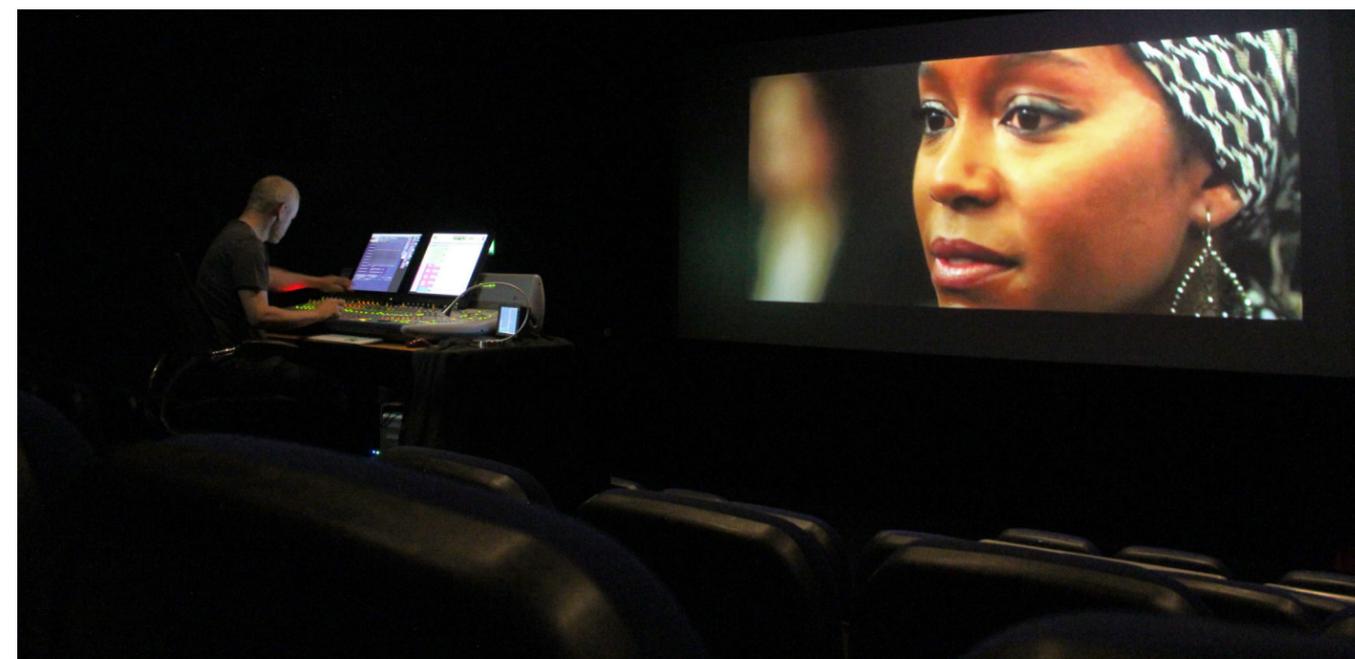
I'm still doing that but on a much bigger scale. It's about allocating jobs to edit assistants and having a lot more meetings about workflows with producers and managing each stage of the editorial process so that it moves smoothly through the building and to each department - audio, conform, online or VFX."

Covid-19 has obviously had a massive impact on our lives and business. Facility houses like Windmill Lane had some truly humungous challenges to face for the two years we were locked

how happy I would be to hear the sound of a ping pong ball going back and forth, it was music."

Finally and sadly we come to the inevitable question of what advice does Martin have for people who are just starting out and are looking to get into assisting or even just editing in general.

"Don't be afraid to ask questions. When I first started out I struggled to tell the difference between an OMF and an EDL even after it was explained to me again and again. I had to keep asking 'which one is which?' And so don't be afraid to ask questions. I'll always appreciate it when somebody is willing to learn. I believe in opportunity and I



down in Ireland but it seems now, a year later, things are finally getting back to the way it was.

"In the last couple of months our editorial department, which has nine edit suites and two presentation rooms above us on our top floor, was full of editors, assistant editors and freelancers. It was amazing to see all these people back in the building, to see the kitchen area which had been cordoned off due to Covid restrictions, now full of people chatting and also playing the occasional game of table tennis on the balcony. I never thought

believe in timing and everyone is given a time when you're presented with an opportunity. Just take whatever opportunity arises and go for it"

For the uninitiated Windmill Lane has been at the forefront of the film and television business in Ireland since 1978 and continues to grow from strength to strength. Facilities at Windmill include white mark audio studios and ADR Suites, custom built colour suites, a couple of floors of edit suites as well as presentation rooms.

RECOMMENDED READING

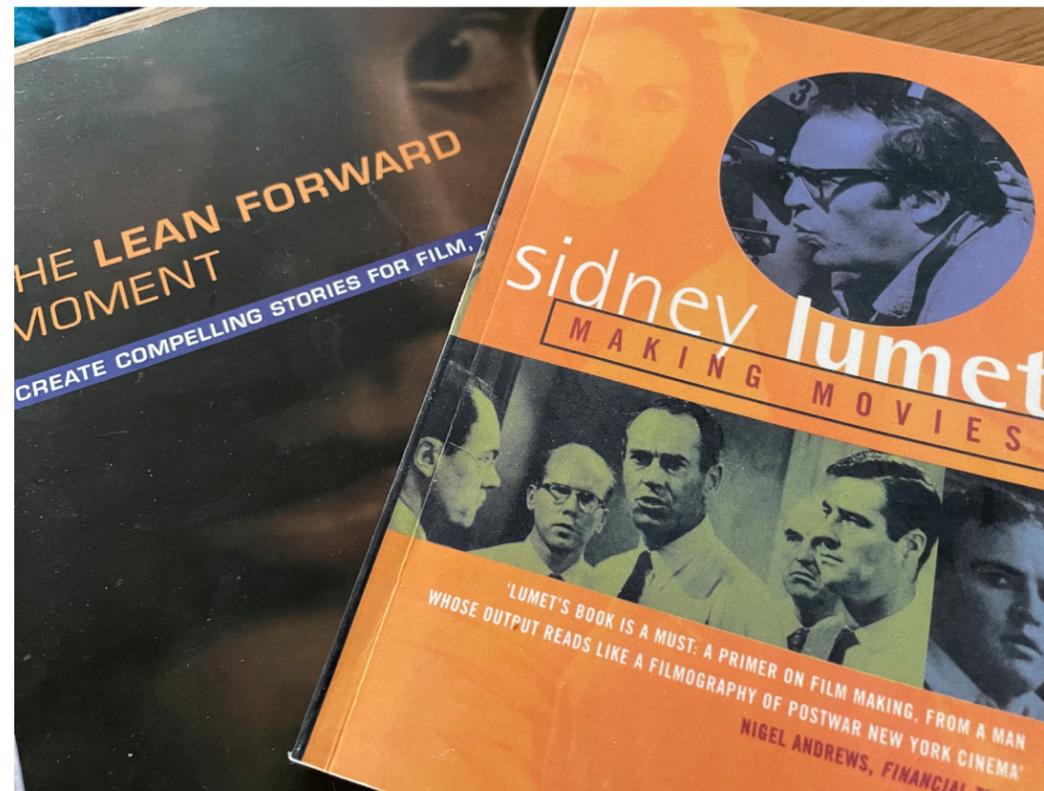
Making Movies by Sidney Lumet

The Lean Forward Moment by Norman Hollyn

When sitting down to write this edition's article I found it impossible to choose between these two books. One written by an editor, the other by a director; they're both an intensive guide to the process and workflow of making a film. In a lot of ways they're opposite sides of the same coin; they can be seen as companion pieces, although each is written from a very different perspective.

When people search out books about their own craft they can usually be said to be operating from one of two motivations: will this entertain me, or, will this help me improve. *Making Movies* belongs largely in the first bracket. It is the kind of book you can sit down and read for an hour or an afternoon. Sidney Lumet breaks down a film in to its constituent departments and writes an engaging and informative chapter on each based on his own extensive experience. *The Lean Forward Moment* definitely belongs in the second bracket: Norman Hollyn taught film and editing for many years and this feels very much like an academic text. Again, each stage of the film-making process is discussed, but in a more technical way. His concerns are not based on entertainment but on informing and educating. As a result this is not a book you are likely to get lost in, but that is not to say it's not worthwhile.

We're here to talk about the editing though, so let's cut to the chase. Sidney Lumet's chapter on the edit is entitled *Alone at Last*, which is in keeping with the stresses and pressures detailed in his book so far. In the first paragraph he gets straight to the point:



"For many years, the cliché about editing was 'Pictures are made in the cutting room.' That's nonsense."

As editors I don't think we believe that cliché to be literally true, and in the context of this book it would be disingenuous of him to say otherwise. There is no doubt that he holds editors in high regard and he was worked with some of the best, including Dede Allen, Alan Heim and Ralph Rosenblum. For Lumet there are two main elements of editing; juxtaposing images and creating tempo, and undoubtedly he relies on

the skill and craft of his editors to execute these.

Discussing editing *The Pawnbroker* with Ralph Rosenblum he explains how they arrived at the use of exceptionally quick two frame cuts to evoke memory, and here his thoughts on tempo are fascinating. In a section on editing *Dog Day Afternoon* with Dede Allen he describes reaching a crisis of confidence in the pacing of the first part that

I think most of us can relate to. He later recalls a review that described Dede Allen as a brilliant editor with an instantly recognisable style, and how she would have been distressed beyond measure had she read that...

"She is a brilliant editor. But she prides herself on doing whatever the picture and director ask of her. She's proud that the movies she did for George Roy Hill are totally different from the ones she did with Warren Beatty or that she and I have done together. She wants the picture, not Dede Allen, to stand out. She is selfless, she is making the same movie."

It is an interesting insight into how a director views the editing process, and while you may have found his earlier dismissal of the "pictures are made in the cutting room" maxim somewhat derogatory, the fact that the chapter on the sound mix is subtitled *The Only Dull Part of Moviemaking* should tell you that he holds the cutting room in some esteem.

Norman Hollyn himself was an editor and music editor with a career spanning thirty years, so his take on the edit was always going to differ greatly from that of Sidney Lumet. It must be said, *The Lean Forward Moment* has one of the greatest bad reviews I've ever read;

a film school graduate for whom that process had been "a waste of my parents' money" wrote...

"THE LEAN FORWARD MOMENT constantly refers to *The Godfather*. That's great. BUT... who still watches *The Godfather*? That's for freshmen film theory students and dinosaurs"

One can only wonder at how the film career of that reviewer developed...

Hollyn does indeed talk at great length about *The Godfather*. The chapter on editing opens with a discourse on the scene where Michael Corleone shoots Sollozzo in the restaurant. I've seen this scene many times, but to read Hollyn's shot by shot breakdown gave me a new appreciation for the editing here. So much of what we do is instinctual, and we can easily become blasé about it, so analysis of this nature can really refresh the way you look at cuts. Hollyn also devotes chapters to music and sound in post-production, and again draws heavily on the Sollozzo scene to illustrate his points. Watching the scene again after reading these chapters allows you to see and hear it in a very different way, which in turn can help you see and hear things differently in your own edit suite.

Although this is a book written from an academic point of view it resists the temptation to rely on established Hollywood classics as examples. Instead he draws on a wide variety of formats and genres, including short film, TV, and episodic web series. While it can in places be a little simplistic in its approach I don't think the experienced editor should be put off by this; there is certainly something for everyone in here.

Ultimately, *The Lean Forward Moment* is a great resource on how to make films and *Making Movies* is an excellent insight into why you might want to. Both are available from the usual online sellers, and I have a copy you can borrow if you promise to return it.

EDGAR BURCKSEN^{ACE} FILM EDITOR

Veteran editor and CinemaEditor magazine chief

I was lucky enough to meet Edgar at the IFEF festival in Cologne in 2022 when I plucked up the courage to have a brief chat about his time as editor in chief of the ACE in-house magazine CinemaEditor and could I contact him for pointers on making our ISE fledgling in-house magazine stay the course. He very graciously said yes and so a few months later Edgar and I had a brief conversation about the magazine and then hours of talk about his huge body of work over the last many years in both the Netherlands as well as in the USA.



Part One: My Mother Made Me Do It!

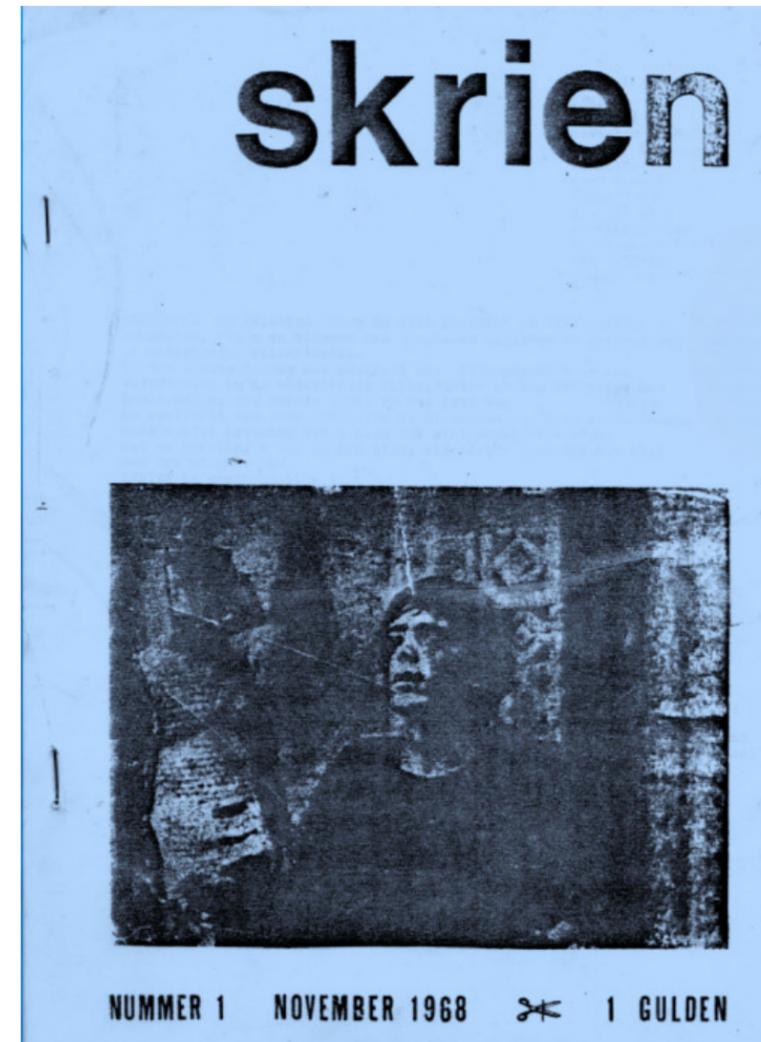
And she did too.

"I wanted to be an agricultural engineer. But my mom said, 'well, before you decide that why don't you try something creative,' because in high school, and all throughout my youth I'd been very creative at drawing and writing. I did the school newspaper and that kind of stuff. I said to my mom, 'I'll try.' So I submitted some short stories I'd written to the film school in Amsterdam, they invited me to sit the entrance exams and of the 2000 or so people that applied I was selected to go to film school. I then had to make a decision between engineering and film. The engineering university was in the east of Holland in Wageningen and the film school was in Amsterdam. And so I thought, 'Amsterdam!'. This was in 1968. It was a very happening city."

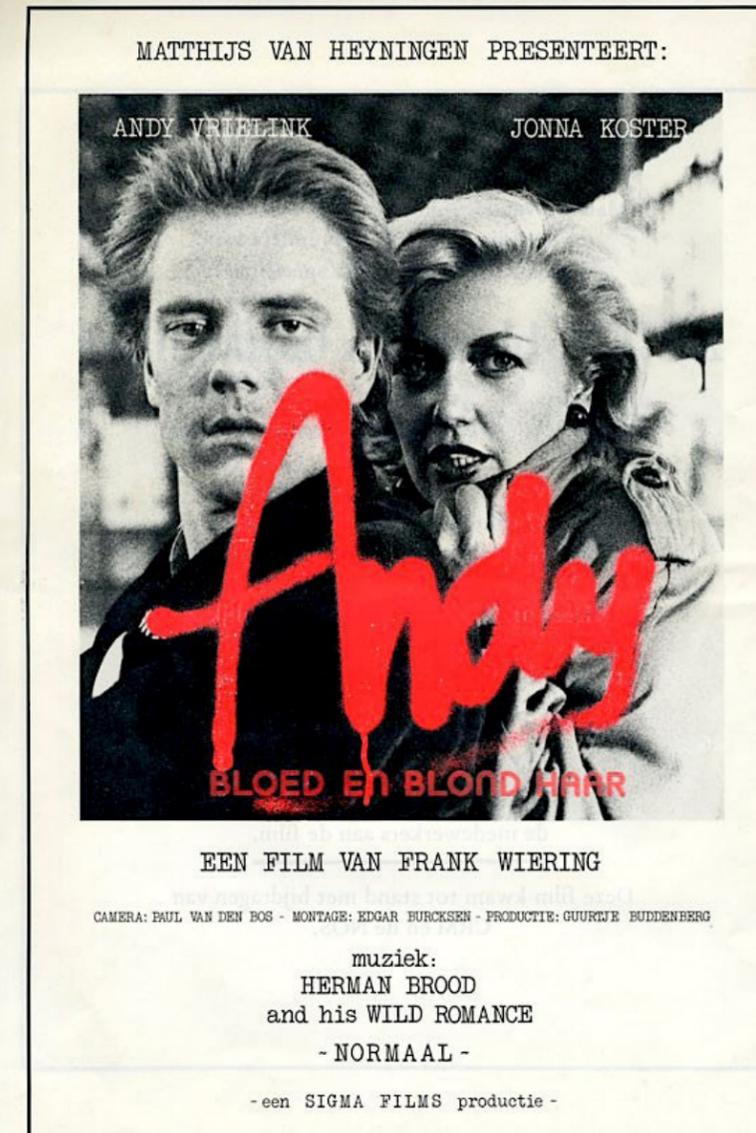
Edgar's first foray into actually making a film was during a student riot when he and a few class mates hijacked a camera and joined the students in the building they had occupied and started filming. This almost got him kicked out of film school, Fortunately a professor stood up for them and they were able to complete their film.

"I started editing on a Steenbeck with that material and that's when I thought, 'this is fantastic. You can do anything.' So out of the class of about 30 people who all wanted to be directors and me originally a Screenwriter I was the only one that was sold on being an editor. Editing that film changed my whole view of what I wanted to do."

But this did not deter Edgar from wanting to write and late in 1968 Edgar started and wrote for film magazine Skrien(Filmschrift) which only ceased publication in 2010.



Between writing and being the only editor in his class all throughout film school Edgar was developing a real love for telling stories. Edgar's final 1972 graduation film Groeten Uit Zonnemaire with director Digna Sinke is listed as his first film credit on IMDb. For the rest of the seventies Edgar built up his portfolio of work on shorts and features but it wasn't until 1979 that things really started to take off. Andy, bloed en blond haar is the film Edgar regards as his real entrance into the world of editing feature films.



Edgar continued to write for Skrien as well as edit several documentaries and, as he calls them, blockbusters in Holland when there began rumblings of working in the USA.

"I had never thought about going to the United States because I was a very lefty guy. And of course the United States was in Vietnam and I was at all of the Vietnam demonstrations so it never really crossed my mind. But then I got hitched to a beautiful girl (who I'm still married to.)

We decided, before we settle down, before we start this buying a house and having kids stuff, let's do a world trip. We wanted to go to Russia and then to

China on the Trans Siberian Express but at that time it was impossible to do because my wife was from Eastern Europe. Even though she became a Dutch citizen when we married, she was still a fugitive from Czechoslovakia and so we couldn't go east. Instead we decided to go west to the United States.

We went to New York, bought an old Chevy Impala station wagon and drove 35,000 miles around the United States.

We went from New York to Key West, crossed all the way to Southern California. We saw everything, it was incredible. We ended up in Glendale in L.A. where I had an editor friend who I had met while he was working on an American film in Amsterdam. It was a film I was supposed to edit but that never happened and the editor they brought out to do the film and I became really good friends.

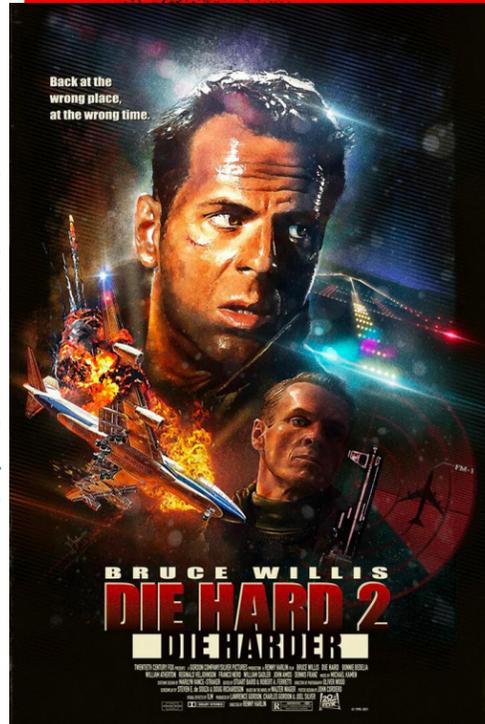
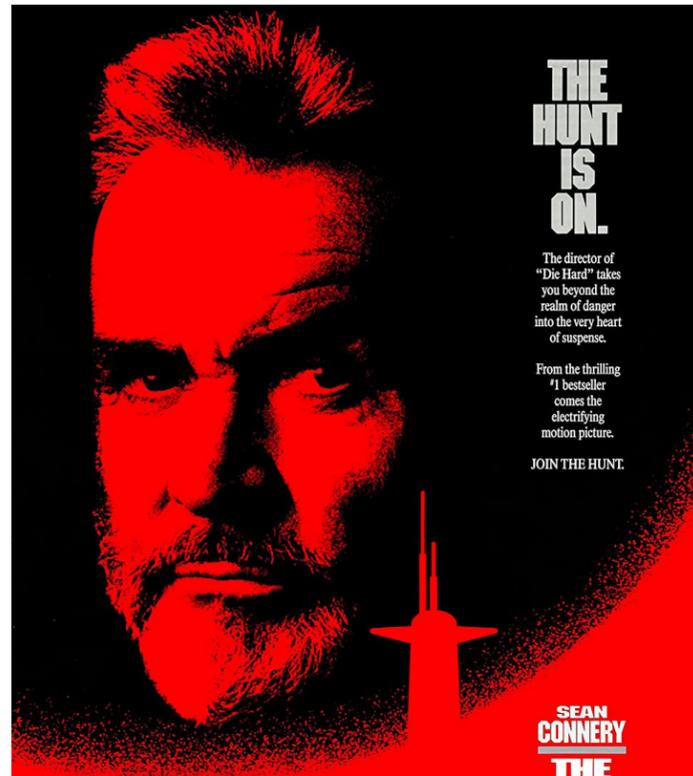
We were staying in Malibu at a camping ground and when we drove back from my friend we went on the 10 freeway that ends up on the PCH. We were driving by the sea, the sun was going down and it was very quiet between me and my wife. At a certain point I turned to her and said, 'are you thinking the same thing that I'm thinking?' And she said, 'yes.'

Part Two: My Wife Made Me Do It!

And she did too. "We went back to Holland and I did a few more successful movies and saved up some money. In 1985 I had just finished a feature and they asked me to do another, I had to say 'no I can't do it because in September I go back to the United States.'

The week before I was going to leave I got a call from a producer friend of mine and he said, 'I heard you're coming to the US.' I said, 'yes.' He asks where" I tell him L.A. and he says, 'if you come to San Francisco I have a job for you,' So I changed my ticket to San Francisco for Saturday and Monday I was at work. Fortunately I didn't have to worry about a work visa as the production company was Belgian, producing in Marin County and I was being paid in Amsterdam.

It wasn't until after that I had to worry about getting the H1 Visa when I was pulled into Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) as the VFX Editor on Hunt for Red October in 1990. And then followed that up with Die Hard 2"



Meanwhile Edgar was editing commercials at ILM in his downtime when a brand new piece of kit arrived through the doors. No one knew what to do with it, not even George Lucas whose company Droid Works had developed this sparkling new technology. I am of course referring to The Edit Droid. Edgar on the other hand took one look at it and went...

"THIS IS THE FUTURE OF EDITING."

for George Lucas called Young Indiana Jones.' I said, 'well, if you need an editor, let me know.'

That same afternoon I got a call from Lucas Film saying George would like to meet me. The next day I drove to Skywalker Ranch and I met George, and he said, 'so I heard you are a feature film editor and we're shooting this new series on Super 16mm and planning to do post-production in London. But I'd like to keep it closer to the vest, so we'd like bring in a Steenbeck and do it here.' I said, 'why don't you do it on the Edit



This was indeed the Droid that Edgar was looking for and so at night and at weekends he taught himself how to use the Edit Droid.

"At some point somebody called the editorial department and asked if there was anyone who knew how to work the Droid? And they said, 'yeah, Edgar knows.' They needed to do a promo. I said, 'okay, yeah, I'll do it.' We put it together I think on a Thursday and the producer said, 'this is so great that you can do this and oh, you have an accent, where are you from?' I said, 'I'm originally from Amsterdam where I was a feature film editor with 15 features to my name before I came to the United States and now I'm trying to get my footing here.' She said, 'I'm so excited because we're going to do a new series

Droid?' And he said, 'if you think that you can do this, you're hired.' And so I figured out how and I was hired.

The problem with film those days was, you couldn't do anything digital. But Kodak came out with Keycode which to me was the missing link between digital and film."

Edgar started working with a company in San Francisco where they devised a way to get the neg film transferred to D2 Tape with the KeyCode embedded on screen which was matched to the timecode on tape which in turn was captured onto VideoDisc for use with the Edit Droid. Up until that point in time film was being transferred to tape via Telecine and edited in a linear fashion, so if you made a change at the beginning of the project you

had to pretty much start all over again. But with this new fandangled digital non-linear computer editing system it didn't matter where you started.

The concept of the Edit Droid was very simple. Videodiscs with KeyCoded film footage were placed into Videodisc players and the computer would be telling the players what section of the disc would need to play. The Graphic User Interface was very similar to what we still use today and is in fact where the timeline was born. The controller would queue up each edit in advance and switch to the other shot at the point of the cut. Then at the end of the edit an EDL would be printed and matched back to the original neg using the Keycode.

"It was the perfect way of transitioning from film to



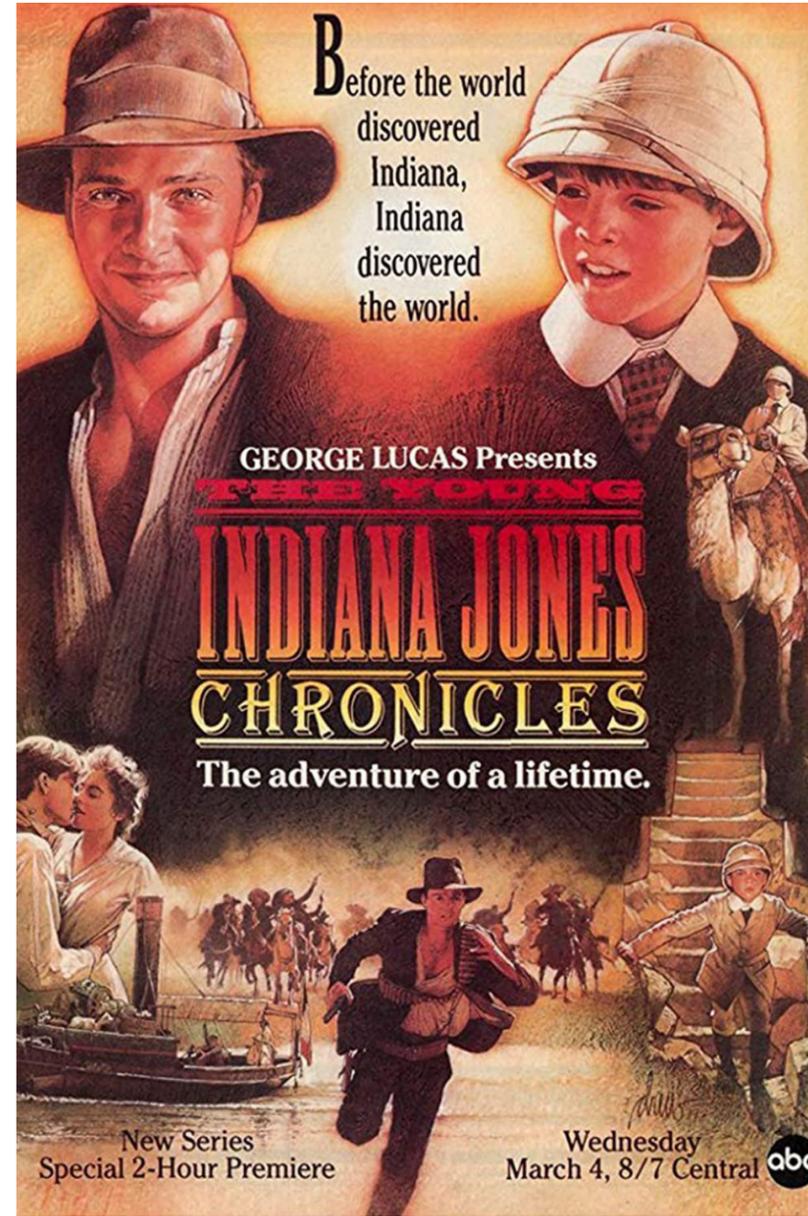
digital. And so in 1990 I started working on Young Indiana Jones. It all went pretty well. Eventually though George didn't want to spend money on the Edit Droid anymore and the company Droid Works closed down. Avid was coming up by then but the problem with Avid was it being totally 30 frames per second based. It couldn't do 24 frames a second. But George ended up selling the Edit Droid to Avid who then developed it into Avid Film Composer."

This pretty much launched an explosion of 'non-linear' systems in the 80s. Including Ediflex which used JVC VCRs instead of laserdiscs was extremely popular at the time as too was the Montage Picture Processor which used BetaMax tape players. It was the start of a revolution in film making, and here is Edgar right in the middle of it. Just before editing Young Indy Edgar was working on commercials and started using the Harry system by Quantel and it was here that he saw the potential to use the Edit Droid in conjunction with Harry to do VFX.

"I sold the idea to George that we can do all these visual effects on the Harry and then import them back into the Edit Droid, like he did for Star Wars, Hunt for Red October and Diehard and in a higher resolution than before. So that was another thing we did. We introduced visual effects in Young Indiana Jones that were never seen on TV before because you couldn't do it budget wise."

Edgar had spent almost 20 years editing on film and in the space of four or five years went from Edit Droid and Harry to editing on the Avid and eventually witnessing the decline of both film and video tape. And let's not forget the utter disappearance of the VideoDisc and BetaMax.

Young Indiana Jones was eventually cancelled by ABC and Edgar, having subsequently been laid off at ILM found himself being charmed by an ILM breakaway company called Pixar but as the work was similar to what he had been doing at ILM he passed on an offer, threw all his belongings and family into his trusty Oldsmobile



station wagon and headed for Hollywood.

"I got an apartment here and started applying for jobs, trying to get an agent. Nobody wanted me. I thought, 'why, I won an Emmy for Young Indiana Jones and nobody wants me and I was told, 'once you do your first Hollywood movie you can come back to us.' I said, 'but that's why I need you, I couldn't get a Hollywood film without an agent. And I couldn't get an agent without a Hollywood film.

But then I was thrown a lifeline. There was a guy I had worked with at ILM and he needed

an editor to do the first part of a four part documentary called 500 Nations. And that was basically the start of my career in L.A. I had done documentaries in Holland so I had experience doing that. That led to doing other documentaries which eventually led back to feature films.

In the early two thousands, I did a movie that was very successful in Berlin called Left Luggage which is when I became a member of ACE."



After a short time it came to be known that Edgar could write mainly due to the fact he had written articles for the ACE's CinemaEditor and had started a magazine back in Holland in the late 60s. When CinemaEditor was deemed to be in trouble Edgar was approached and asked if he would be interested in taking over the magazine and potentially bringing it back to life and more importantly bringing it back into profit?

"At the time there were a lot of post production magazines and other magazines covered all aspects of the film but there was nothing that focussed on the creativity of editing. And that's what the magazine became, changing it into something that didn't exist before. We didn't talk about the newest software or hardware and all that kind of stuff. No. We talked about the creative part of our job.

And that is basically what we are still doing with the magazine now. Editing is unique to motion pictures. It doesn't exist anywhere else in life.

So the magazine has gone back to being profitable mainly because we stayed true to the cause. Although, now I have stepped away as part of the editorial team and act purely in an advisory capacity"

THE MAGAZINE FOR FILM & TELEVISION EDITORS, ASSISTANTS & POSTPRODUCTION PROFESSIONALS

CINEMAEDITOR

THE AWARDS 2 ISSUE



After the myriad non-linear edit systems of the late nineties and early noughties it seems we have settled on a Big Four. Avid, FCPX, Resolve and Premiere Pro and given that Edgar is a champion of change how does he feel about the competition?

"I used to be editing on film where I just deliver the film and two soundtracks, and that was it. Now I have to deliver a complete soundtrack when I do my first edit. Sometimes with producers asking, 'why isn't there any foley?'"

Our roles have changed quite a bit because these things are so much part of the editing process now.

I've been asked many times, 'would you want to go back to film? I say, no, ***** way. The things that digital allows me to do now makes me such a better storyteller. I can do things now I could never do on film. Simple things like dissolves or green screen or how we tell our stories now with speedups, blowups and reframing etc. Those are things we never could do before. So I would never go back to cutting on film. No. It's broadened our creative possibilities. It's a tool I would never like to lose.

Another thing people ask is, 'do you know how to work on Premiere? Do you work know how to work on Final Cut?' I say, 'no, I've never done a movie on Final Cut, but in two days I'll know how to do it because my job is storytelling and it has nothing to do with the technology. However I do still prefer Avid purely for its stability."

Edgar is currently finishing on a slew of projects, a couple of feature fFilms and a couple of feature docs, one of which, Strings of the Heart involves a Dutch director friend from the 70s and a story about Country and Western music in Louisville Kentucky or as Edgar puts it...

"Two cheeses from Amsterdam are actually doing a movie about country music. But that's the way it is."

But has Edgar not had enough? Is it not now time to hang up the last strip of film and kick off the loafers and just chill?

"I love editing. If there is a job that is challenging then I will do it. I want to work with people that have the same feelings about what a movie should be and what a movie can do. I'm grateful that I can still do that now. I'm still editing. In fact I'm actually sitting at my Avid right now talking to you from my editing room at home. I've always edited outside of the home because I never wanted to have my work in the house. But since Covid... well this is where the Avid is now, home. My wife hates it. She can't walk through the house in her pyjamas anymore because the director comes in at nine o'clock."

forget about it. You're never going to succeed in the way I think you should succeed. Movies that I've been working on and have been successful were not movies I did because I made a lot of money or because I thought it was going to be good for my bank account. It's because I thought these are great projects.

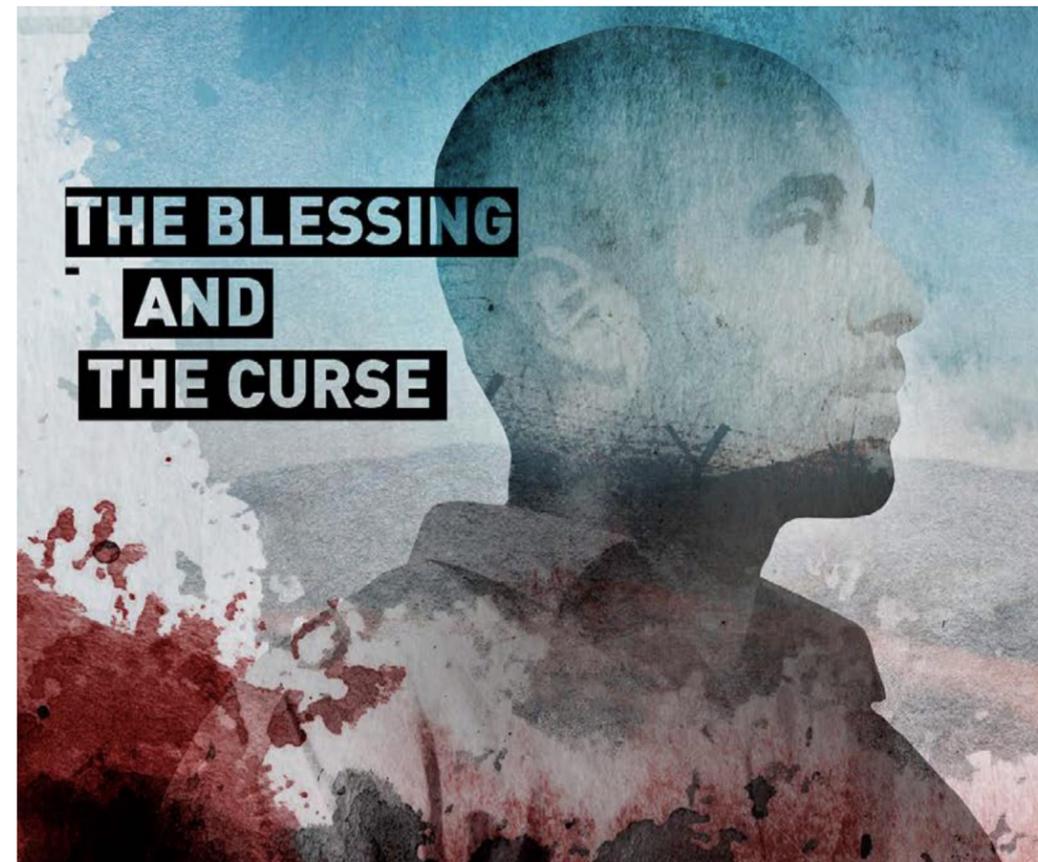
Another thing I would say is develop your intuition. When I first started out, because I was in film school, I learned all the various film theories and we went to Eisenstein and all these big French theoretical people like Baer and theory becomes everything.

But, you know, that's not the way it works. I found that the more successful I was, the more experienced I got, the more I started relying on my intuition, on what felt right and good to me.

And that's how I work still today. It has nothing to do with, 'oh, this shot doesn't fit that shot. No, it has to do with how it feels and how it works for you emotionally. It's total intuition."

Edgar has travelled a long way from his younger self whose mom suggested he be something other than an agricultural engineer in Holland in the late 60s and he's probably just as far from his slightly older self in the mid 80's when his holidaying around the United States with his wife turned into an adventure filled

with Emmy wins and Oscar nominations or even when finding himself at the birth of a revolution as we transitioned from film to digital film making until finally we end up here 54 years later and we find Edgar is still very much in love with his craft. And I might add, his very supportive wife.



And as the wise sage of this particular issue of Assembled does he have any advice for anyone who finds themselves at the cusp of their very own revolution?

"I would say follow your passion because if you are not passionate about it, it will never work. If you're in it because you think you can make good money,

GEAR REVIEW

Our featured article subjects favourite pieces of kit

MARTIN FANNING: The Internet

Every so often we'll get a phone call from a producer. 'The editor's cutting on Final Cut, it's a multi cam show we need to online, can you do it?'

We've then got to figure out. So if there's a tool I depend on, it's the internet. Everything is there so you can go and research how others have made the impossible possible. And get back to the producer with a, yes we can do it. And sometimes it's a simple thing like forgetting the shortcut for Motion Effect in Avid and, well, the internet provides.



EDGAR BURCKSEN: YouTube

In my previous movie, I needed several drone shots of the Kentucky countryside we were featuring and as we didn't have any when we were editing, it was go to YouTube and type... drone shots, Louisville, hit enter and within seconds there it is, 4K. The biggest thing was needing a beautiful opening shot of Louisville and again, YouTube, boom, 4K.

And then it's up to production to decide whether to shoot it or just buy the clip when the time comes.

YouTube is also a great resource for sound effects.



AMY O' CONNELL: MOUSE PAD

I do have one of those mouse pads that stops you getting the claw. It's got the little cushion and everybody that comes into my room is like, 'that's a nice mouse pad you have.'

Thing is if I'm moving around rooms a lot doing different projects or if I'm like going home for a week and coming back in, that is probably the one thing that I actually bring with me always. We have to be comfortable and it's beats RSI, so we also have to be looking after ourselves.



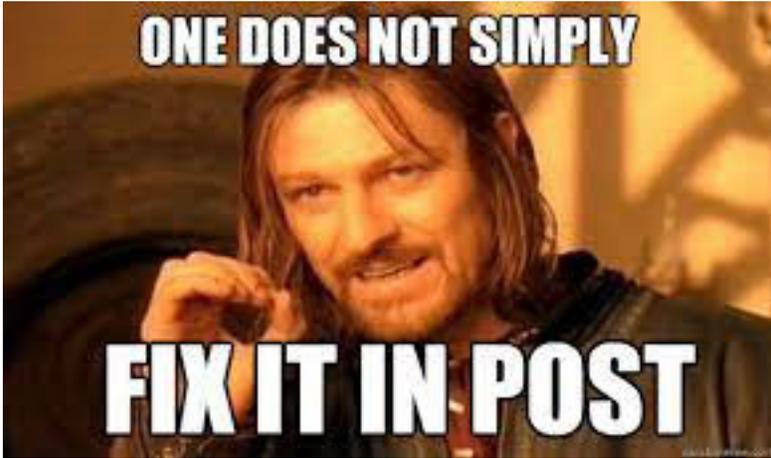
MICK MAHON: iMAC Pro



On Marlowe for security reasons we were not to have internet connectivity on our edit computers and I thought this was the perfect opportunity to simplify my edit suite even further. I'd been using a tower with big dual Samsung monitors up till then and so I splashed out and invested in an iMac Pro. It is such a beautiful thing to work with, like it's the piece of kit that is the most valuable to me.

I think.

THE BACK PAGE

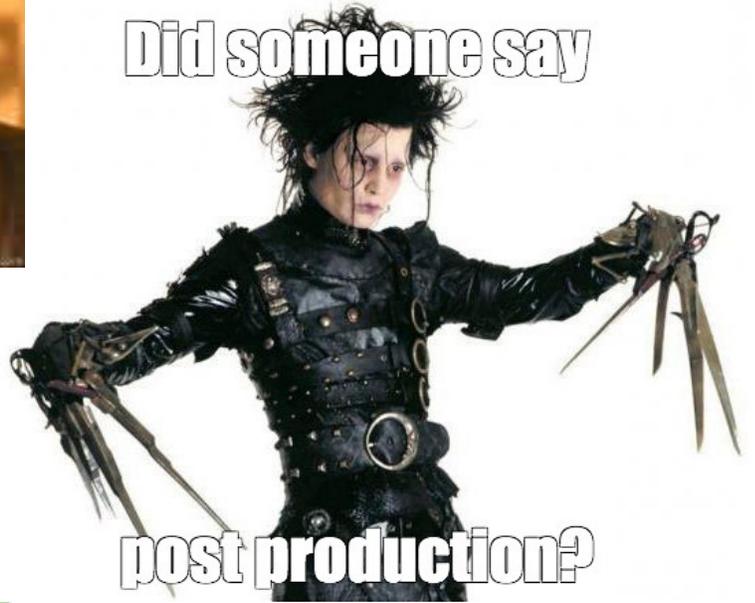


Writing is fantasizing about what your film will be like. Shooting is reality. And the post-production is recovering the idea you had.

Nicolas Winding Refn

* Today's absolute final edit forms the starting point of tomorrow's draft edit.

Did someone say



Outside Mexico:



Inside Mexico:



* The best editing committees are composed of three people – two of whom are absent.

* Deleting all project files guarantees the client will come back to make changes they are willing to pay for.

* No one knows how long 30 seconds can be and how short 3 weeks can be like an editor.

* Excerpts from Larry Jordan's Editing Truths

