





Peggy Tachdjian, ACE – Editor

Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story

How did you get your start in the business?

My first job out of college was as a night receptionist at a post-production facility in NYC. It was in 1999 when a lot of editing was transitioning from linear to non-linear formats. I had learned the basics of Avid during a college internship, so when this company rolled in two new Avids, I was one of two people in the building who knew how to use them. I quickly went from being a night receptionist to their assistant editor and would spend nights and early morning digitizing BETACAM TAPES (that's how old I am) for them.

What made you decide to become an editor?

I always thought I'd end up being some sort of writer - journalist or novelist - but when I got to college, I took a film production class for fun. Everyone was vying to be the director or DP, but I volunteered to be the editor on a group project. Pretty quickly I realized how much input you can have on story as an editor and how much it felt like

writing but with visuals instead of text, and I was hooked.

What is it about editing that attracted you?

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Have you worked in both scripted and non-scripted?

Yes, 17 years in non-scripted, 8 years now in scripted.

What do you see as the differences and similarities of approach in these two genres?

I get in trouble for saying this, but I don't think it's that different to cut reality from scripted. When I worked in reality, I was convinced scripted was so much easier because, well, they have a script! You're not trying to make the story work, the story is already there! But now that I'm in scripted I realize that editing is always trying to make the story work. What performance from the actor or reality star is the most believable? What cutaway will best show what the other person in the room is thinking? The same digging I used to do in reality still exists. And all the tricks I learned in unscripted about how to make something funny when it's not, or how to speed up a scene that's taking way too long, I still use in my scripted work.

What's the best advice you ever received?

Best advice has been and will always be- don't take the notes personally. Filmmaking is such a collaboration, and it's so subjective, you have to trust the process and try every note, even if you are feeling very attached to something.

What advice would you give someone just starting out?

Meet as many people as possible. Go to EditFest and Mpeg mixers and don't be afraid to introduce yourself to someone whose work you admire. Join a committee, go on a group hike, just meet as many editors as you can and let them know what you are working on and what you hope to do in the future. I have met a number of AEs recently in this way and now I have a pool of people that I will pull from the next time I'm in search of an AE.



Evan Wise, ACE - Supervising Editor

Chimp Crazy

What made you decide to become an editor?

As a kid I would make very bad skate/snowboard videos with my friends and I always enjoyed the editing process more than shooting them (this was in-camera or camera to VCR type editing in the mid 90s). During my first year of high school I took a class that introduced us to digital nonlinear editing in its most basic form and something just clicked, I knew I wanted to do that forever.

What's the best advice you ever received? The worst?

I was an AE on an MTV tribute show to Evel Knievel, that was run by the Jackass guys. One of the editors let me cut a small scene about a guy skydiving without a parachute (he was fine). I cut the intro and then got right into the plane very quickly and had him jump. Spike Jonze was one of the EPs, and happened to be in the office that day, so he screened the

scene with me. He had to leave right after watching, but he handed me a piece of paper with his notes and all it said was, "BE WITH HIM". My young editing mind didn't understand that sometimes the lead-up to an event can be more interesting or dramatic than the event itself; and that editing is more than a presentation of ideas, it's an experience you are creating. That note completely rewired my brain and now everything I cut, I always think of how I can make the audience "BE WITH HIM".

Can you take us through the workflow for this show?

I was the first person on in post and worked by myself for a few months, just screening things that I found interesting and cutting a scene whenever I felt inspired. After 2 or 3 months of that, I realized this was going to be a very big endeavor, so I brought in a longtime collaborator, Tim Moran, to help write and produce along with me. We wrote the first version of the series outline together and started to arrange things more intentionally into the first episode. Around that time we brought in another longtime collaborator, Chuck Divak, ACE to start up episode 2. As we got further into the footage we brought on Adrienne Gits, ACE and Doug Abel, ACE to helm episodes 3 & 4, respectively. We also brought in Sascha Stanton-Craven as an additional editor for a few months to help us get through everything and act as a free safety, going back through things we had already watched to see if there was anything that fell through the cracks.

All of us worked across the entire series in some capacity, but generally people would be responsible for their own episode. We also were constantly screening amongst each other and giving notes back and forth, it was a very editor-driven process. Once episodes would hit Fine Cut, they would come to me to do a final pass across them all. Everything was remote, on Avid.

What advice would you give someone just starting out?

Ask for what you want, because no one is going to just give it to you. I've never gotten a title bump or a pay raise that I didn't ask for. If you are an AE that wants to edit eventually, make sure your editor knows this, we *will* give you stuff to cut! We used to be in your shoes and we want to help you. Don't take notes too personally (I still struggle with this and am working on it!) Try to figure out what you can learn from them. Often the note don't mean exactly what they are saying, but there's something happening in that moment that is causing them to react. Take care of your physical health. If you are a successful editor, you are going to be getting paid to sit down for the rest of your life, so try to move your body as much as you can.



Darrick Lazo - Editor

The Amazing Race

What made you decide to become an editor?

As a kid I had played around with some cameras here and there making videos for my own amusement. In the 5th grade, instead of standing in front of the class and presenting a book report, I asked my teacher if I could do a video presentation. I ended up shooting reenactment scenes to summarize the book. It was a hit in class when I presented it, but I did get in a bit of trouble. One of my scenes included me smoking a prop cigarette as the main character and I had to explain that it wasn't a real cigarette and was a prop I made of burning paper. I still got a good grade on that project but it was really when I learned that every detail mattered in the story.

Have you worked in both scripted and non-scripted?

I've worked in both scripted and non-scripted. I built my career in non-scripted television but I studied Film in college, I do enjoy both. I've been in television for about 18 years, and editing professionally about 12 years. In unscripted, I worked my way up from Post PA to the Edit seat mostly at "The Amazing Race," but I have bounced around working on several different genres in unscripted (casting, promo, pitches, food, automotive, and User Interface). On the scripted side - I have an additional editor credit on a feature, assisted on "Station 19" for 3 seasons, and assisted on another feature and show. I've also worked on some independent animated short films.

What do you see as the differences and similarities of approach in these two genres?

Differences - The main difference in approach with scripted is that you usually have all the pieces to tell your story, in un-scripted you might only have the main idea around a scene and you have to go hunting for the bits (soundbites/footage) that support that. In scripted you're looking at nuances in performance through each of the takes to find the subtle differences, in un-scripted you're trying to distill down and refine what's there.

Similarities - They're both similar in approach in that you're building up the emotion throughout the scene ultimately for it to pay off in the end.

What shows are you watching right now?

Some really great shows I've finished recently, The Studio, The Last of Us, Shrinking, Twisted Metal, right now working through Chief of War and The Paper is next on my list.

What advice would you give someone just starting out?

Build your network, and be authentic. Let people know what you want and your goals. Approach everything with, "What can I bring to the table?" Develop a thick skin when it comes to your work, defend your choices - but have some adaptability.



Matt Mercer – Editor

Life Below Zero

What made you decide to become an editor?

When I was a student in film school, the edit was where I felt the most energized and creative. I loved the magical alchemy that happened when I started to add music or restructured a scene to make something surprising and new. When I started to get good feedback for my editing, I thought that I could make a career of it.

What is it about editing that attracted you?

Editors have a tremendous amount of control over how the audience will receive a story. We can change a performance, we can rewrite a scene, we can fine tune a shot composition or use the shots in unexpected ways, and we can weave together sound and music to add new meaning to a scene. Although we work closely with directors and producers, in many ways we get to collaborate with just about every department of the filmmaking process (even if some of those collaborators may never meet us),

because it is in the edit where it all comes together.

Have you worked in both scripted and non-scripted?

I've done some scripted work, including an Apple pilot, but I have mostly worked in documentary television and film.

What do you see as the differences and similarities of approach in these two genres? I think each genre requires a different initial approach. With unscripted projects, editors often must be comfortable looking for ways to tell a story within a mountain of footage that may not have an obvious throughline. They have to approach the edit first with the macro-storytelling ideas in mind before they can get into the finer details. Scripted editors must be masters of manipulating those fine details, such as sculpting a performance or finding the exact pacing of a sequence, and they often have to navigate more options on the micro level.

That said, all editors must have the same basic set of storytelling skills. Whether it's for a scripted or unscripted project, the editor must mine the footage, bend it to their will, expand or contract time when needed, and weave it together with a variety of tools (sound design, music, graphics & VFX) to tell a clear and efficient story. They must be able to break a story apart and put it back together again. All editors are writers in the language of cinema, and any editor who is a good storyteller can tackle any genre.

What advice would you give someone just starting out?

When trying to move up in your career, embrace adversity (within reason). Whether it's staying late to figure out a cut or putting in extra time as an assistant to help a senior editor, sometimes the best way to set yourself apart is to simply bust your butt to get through a difficult job. When I look back at my career, the hardest times tended to lead to the most personal and career growth. That said, it's also important to take care of yourself and find a balance with the rest of your life, which is a constant negotiation that never ends in this line of work. It's unsustainable to make a long career out of a job that is always draining, so you have to pick your moments.



Kelly Lyon, ACE - Editor

Bill Burr: Drop Dead Years

How did you get your start in the business?

My first internship was at MTV. My first paid job was answering phones at a post house in NYC called Crew Cuts.

What made you decide to become an editor?

I learned to edit at my high school's public access TV station, TV-10. I took an independent study to create

my senior class video yearbook. I learned how to cut on the Media 100, and fell in love with the process. My teacher, Mr Cobb was very encouraging and said "editor" is a real job and I should pursue it. I initially wanted to make cool, music videos. I was more interested in visual style and rhythmic editing than storytelling. It didn't take me long to realize the best way to connect with an audience and be memorable is through narrative and humor.

What challenged you the most on this show?

Usually stand up sets are relatively dialed in before filming. Bill did not have an established set. He did 3 different 90 minute sets all with different material in a different order. Jokes he repeated across shows were not told in the same way. We really crafted the final stand up set in the edit. We even changed the main "theme" of the set. Originally Bill was going to call the special "The Spectrum", but once we got in there, we realized "sad men" was the real theme, and we wanted to build the jokes carefully to lead up to the big revelation that Bill was "touched as a child". We moved the run about sad men up to about 20 minutes in (originally it had been about 50 minutes in). We even cut Bill's big closer about doing mushrooms at a Billy Joel concert because it didn't serve the bigger narrative we created.

What's the best advice you ever received?

The best advice - although it is sort of graphic - came when I assisted Jeff Sebenic on a pilot for Comedy Central. While working on a rough cut of a scene, he told me "You're thinking too much. Just shit it out!" I think about that all the time. I used to try to do a fine cut on my first pass, but that's almost impossible and a painful way to work. If I grab my favorite selects and lay them out quickly, I have something to react to and I'm not staring at the dreaded blank timeline.

Any interesting anecdotes we haven't touched on about this project or your career?

I was in the edit suite with Bill Burr in LA when I found out about my first 2 Emmy nominations (last year for Tig Notaro's Hello Again and John Mulaney Presents everybody's in LA). I said "maybe next year, it will be us!!" and it was!!!

What advice would you give someone just starting out?

Edit anything you can. volunteer to cut things for up and coming people you admire. If you want to edit comedy, take an improv class and edit videos for your team. If you want to make music videos, ask a local band if they need help. I was lucky to meet comedians like John Mulaney, Michael Che, and Tim Robinson before they were household names. If you can find a collaborator that you love working with, there's no telling what you can do together.



Eric Kissack, ACE - Editor

The Studio

How did you get your start in the business?

As is so common, I met someone who took me under their wing. Alan Oxman was Todd Solondz' editor and we were introduced by a friend. We hit it off and I assisted him on a pilot. When the pilot (Stella for Comedy Central) was picked up, I was fortunate enough to become an editor on the show.

What made you decide to become an editor?

I did a semester abroad at the film academy in Prague in 1997. As the culminating event, I wrote and directed a short film that we shot in the central Prague train station. It was the dead of winter

and I got violently ill right after the shoot. As I recovered, I started going to the edit room. It was warm and calm and I could actually think as opposed to try to just keep up with the chaos of set. I loved it and decided that it was the place for me. I also love the collaboration. I love sitting with a director or writer and methodically making things clearer, more impactful, funnier, more exciting. I love working with the composer, the visual effects supervisor, all of the incredibly talented people who come in and elevate everything. It's a very satisfying process.

What's the best advice you ever received? The worst?

Paul Hirsch was an early mentor and gave me so much good advice. Something that always sticks with me is how he described jobs... you take them because you love the material, you love the people or they pay you a lot of money. On a good job, you get two out of three. The very rare ones give you all three. But try not to settle for just one of the three. The worst advice... hmm... I tend to ignore or forget bad advice so I can't tell ya!

Have you worked in both scripted and non-scripted?

I worked in non-scripted very briefly early in my career but not since then.

What do you see as the differences and similarities of approach in these two genres?

You're always telling a story. You always want that story to be exciting, gripping, emotionally satisfying and clear. I see more similarities than differences, to be honest. I tend to think of non-scripted as harder or at least involving more patience. I'm in awe of so many non-scripted editors.

What shows are you watching right now?

Just finished the Pitt. Loved it. Am watching Task and Slow Horses and Platonic.

What advice would you give someone just starting out?

Say yes to everything. Even if you think it won't be any good. It's all valuable experience when you're getting started!