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BAFTA-New York Scholarship
June 15th, 2012

My Love of Film, My Passion for Editing

Film was my babysitter. My father managed several small-town Ohio movie theatres and I grew up watching (and re-watching) whatever was playing. The movie theatre was my second home and the movies were my playmates. From this early introduction to cinema, to the continuing influence of my father, to my innate passion for storytelling, it was only natural that I should find my true calling as an editor.

Some of my earliest memories are of days spent at Dad's cinemas – playing in the dressing rooms, in the projection booth, or behind the concession stand, and voraciously watching movies from the balcony. Dad was also a journalist. As his career in newspapers took-off, he left theatre management behind and became a film critic. I often accompanied him to screenings and then back to the paper's offices where we would discuss the films. I owe my critical eye to my father. Our debates over films challenged me to look at cinema in a new way. He instilled in me an appreciation for films as not just a form of entertainment, but as a form of art.

I took up acting at the age of ten and performed in dozens of theatre productions throughout central Ohio. During my training at a performing arts high school, I was cast in several local television commercials and industrial films. I was also a featured extra in a major motion picture shot in Ohio, Arthur Hiller's *Teachers*. In the several weeks I spent on the set of *Teachers*, I absorbed a wealth of knowledge concerning film production.

After moving to New York, I followed in my father's footsteps and began writing film reviews for an online magazine. I discovered that to write intelligently about movies, one must have more than just personal opinions. One must have an understanding of film history and film theory. I began reading up on the subjects.

Throughout my self-education in cinema, I developed a great love for British film and television. The films of Alfred Hitchcock rank among my favorites. I also admire the work of Mike Leigh, Stephen Frears, and Michael Winterbottom. I love the gritty realism of Leigh's films, and appreciate his technique of developing his scripts through improvisations with his actors. With both Frears and Winterbottom, I am in awe of their ability to tackle a wide range of disparate narratives using various genres. Additionally, the films of emerging British directors Steve McQueen and Andrea Arnold have inspired me through their innovative and unique approach to storytelling, the visual poetry of their cinematography and the emotional authenticity of their narratives. And although my exposure to British television may be limited to what is available in the states, I seek out what I can find. Some of my favorites from recent years include *Shameless*, *Luther*, *Sherlock*, *Torchwood*, *State of Play*, *Bleak House*, and of course, *Downton Abbey*.

While immersing myself in film analysis, I became fascinated by the role editing plays in film production. The meaning and emotion of a film or television show can often be found in the edit from one shot to the next. Individual shots convey their own specific information, but when placed together, new perspectives arise and new information develops. Consequently, the edit has an enormous influence on the audience's emotional response to a film. It is this love for the art of editing that motivated my return to college as a film major. Having spent many years working in retail visual merchandising, I bring to my film studies a well-developed sense

of composition, balance, and structure. My merchandising and display experience gives me an eye for detail, while my background in theatre provides me with a sensitivity to actors' performances; both traits are highly useful as a film editor.

Already in the first two years of my courses, I have had the opportunity to work on projects using both Apple's Final Cut Pro and Avid's Media Composer. With Final Cut, I created a fifteen-minute documentary about the gristmills of New England from eight hours of raw footage. Given access to numerous set-ups and takes shot for an independent film starring Christina Applegate, I used Avid to edit together a five-minute scene between three characters. Both projects were very complex and extremely time-intensive. Nevertheless, I loved every second that I was allowed to craft and mold the projects. I had found my home in the editor's chair.

As an editor, I aspire to have a career that includes narrative and documentary projects for both film and television. I hope to have the opportunity to employ a variety of editing styles in my work, ranging from the time-honored continuity editing of classical Hollywood, to the intellectual montage editing of Eisenstein and the self-reflexive editing of Godard and Truffaut. I look forward to collaborating with directors to help them realize their visions and to rediscover their stories. As an editor, I work to find the perfect balance, rhythm, and relationship of shots – within individual moments and within the film as a whole – to make the audience **feel** and to create an experience that remains with them long after they have left the theatre. Similar to a carpenter or craftsman, editing requires both technical and artistic skill, and I intend to become a master craftsman.