

THE ROAD TO OSCAR SERIES



From top left, clockwise: Scenes from *Cyrano*, *Passing*, *The French Dispatch*, *King Richard*, *The Tender Bar*, and *Stillwater* | The Road To Oscar Series, Part 2, Page 4

December 2021

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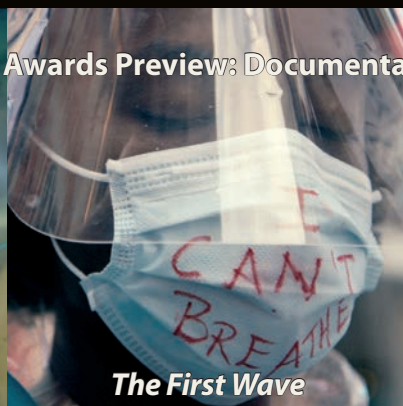
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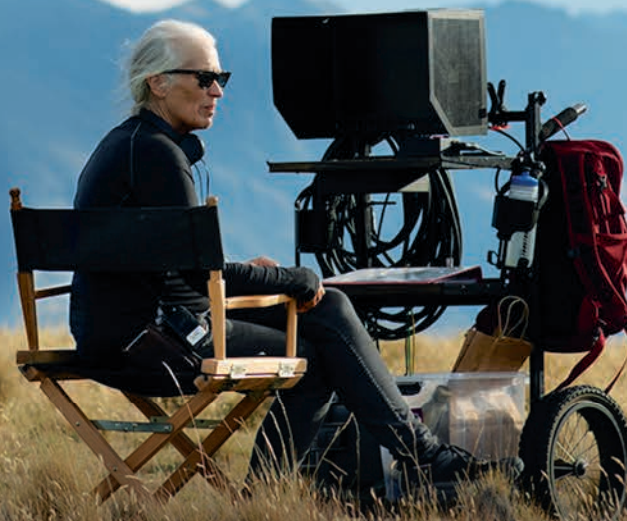
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Print Issues Subscription Service

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SHOOT (ISSN# 1055-9825) printed edition is published bimonthly for members by DCA Business Media LLC, 6615 W. Boynton Beach Blvd. #358, Boynton Beach, FL 33437. Printed periodicals postage paid at Boynton Beach, FL and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SHOOT, P.O. Box 184, Lowell, MA 01853

USPS (06-234)

SHOOT ePubs

The SHOOT > edition weekly ePub is published on Friday. The SHOOT Dailies are published daily Mon-Fri. Brand News weekly ePub is published Wednesday. www.shootonline.com/subscribe

SHOOT is printed in the U.S.A.



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By Robert Goldrich

spot.com.mentary



Come Together

The first two installments of our current The Road To Oscar Series include a theme that's in line with the holiday season spirit—namely the value of connection, particularly after often being isolated and feeling disconnected during the ongoing COVID pandemic. Writer/director Joe Wright in this week's part 2 of our Road To Oscar coverage, for example, talked of a prime force that compelled him to take on the classic tale of Cyrano de Bergerac, ultimately yielding *Cyrano* (MGM, United Artists Releasing). Wright found the story all the more relevant given today's realities.

"When I started developing the movie," Wright recalled, "Brexit had happened in Britain, Trump was in the White House. The idea of making a film about essentially compassion or a film that I

hoped would help generate compassion with an audience felt appropriate. And it became more than just appropriate when the pandemic happened, sitting in isolation for all of those months. It became urgent. I was desperate to make the film at this time because I felt like I was starved of human connection—and scared of how I might approach human connection

there could be a connection between the people in the room (movie theater).

Making such a connection also resonated for DP Greig Fraser, ASC, ACS who in the opening installment of our The Road To Oscar Series shared insights into his lensing of *Dune* (Warner Bros. Pictures). Yet with all the challenges and the ambitious vision of director Denis Villeneuve,

The importance of sitting in a theater, sharing an experience with strangers, has "absolutely cemented in my mind."

afterwards. I wanted to make a film that talked about that—the simple difficulty of human connection, how we often fail to connect through our own fears, fears of intimacy, of being seen. And maybe through the very process of making the film we might create some connection among the filmmaking cast and crew, and ultimately create a connection between us and the audience. It was important to me that this be a theatrical feature so that

what perhaps stood out most for Fraser relative to *Dune* centered on a return to the movie theater.

"Going to a circus in the round is much better than watching a special on pay per view," he said, noting that the impact of sitting in a theater with strangers, different people coming together from across town to be in a dark room and share an experience—the importance of that has been "absolutely cemented in my mind."

POV

By Angus Kneale



Color in the Cloud

We're on the brink of a revolution with the ability to virtualize almost every part of the production and post process. Color grading plays a big part in setting the look, mood and tone of content, but the process has largely remained unchanged and fairly static for many years. Historically color grading is an isolated part of the post process, usually happening right at the beginning of a project or right at the end. While many other post processes such as VFX, design and animation already have been migrating to the cloud with various degrees of success, color grading is only just now making it into the virtual space. And it couldn't happen at a more promising moment.

COVID concerns, forcing us to work from home, has accelerated the transition, but also, the faster pace of production with compressed schedules and trimmed bud-

gets has made color in the cloud a logical and pragmatic development.

It's a very efficient way of working. You can concentrate more time on the creative process, which is a key takeaway, and color in the cloud opens up your talent pool to artists based anywhere in the world. You can spend more time making things look great rather than on logistics. Otherwise, you're always sending and tracking stuff which is a time suck, especially with the schedules that we're working with these days. The schedules are very compressed so every day, actually every hour is really valuable. If you're able to cut out logistics of shipping stuff around, you can devote that time to actually doing the work.

When you finish grading, the footage is instantly available to use online. It's a very efficient forward facing way of working that is going to become the norm in the future. It's quick and secure. Once the data is in the cloud you can make du-

plicates and create secure archives easily. As more editorial, color, VFX & finishing companies move to the cloud, the whole process becomes a lot more seamless and the benefits are liberating.

Color in general is such an important part of the process and it's really exciting to look at it through a fresh lens and think about how it can be improved and modernized, because it has such a profound effect on the end result. And it's so exciting to be able to look at it holistically as part of the process and not just this thing that happens in a bubble up front or at the end. Color has been siloed for so long; to actually integrate it in a very modern workflow is groundbreaking. Color in the cloud is potentially one of the biggest revolutions to hit our industry. The quality of the work is up there. It's some of the best content that I've ever seen.

Angus Kneale is chief creative and co-founder of Preymaker

Directorial, DP, Editor & Composer POVs

Sharing insights into *Cyrano*, *King Richard*, *Stillwater*, *Passing*, *The Tender Bar* and *The French Dispatch*

By Robert Goldrich, The

Road To Oscar Series, Part 2



From top left, clockwise: Director Joe Wright on the set of *Cyrano*; Demi Singleton (l-r), Will Smith and Saniyya Sidney in a scene from *King Richard*; Matt Damon in a scene from *Stillwater*; Ruth Negga (l) and Tessa Thompson in a scene from *Passing*; Daniel Ranieri (l) and Ben Affleck in a scene from *The Tender Bar*; Bill Murray (l) and Pablo Pauly in a scene from *The French Dispatch*; *Stillwater* director and co-writer Tom McCarthy.

The classic tale of Cyrano de Bergerac from the play written by Edmond Rostand in 1897 has proven to be timeless. But perhaps the premise of a man who harbors love for a woman—all the while thinking that he was unworthy of her love due to his physical appearance—was more timely than ever as interpreted and embraced by director Joe Wright whose imagination was initially sparked when he saw Erica Schmidt's musical staging of the epic story at a theater in Connecticut in which Peter Dinklage played Cyrano opposite Haley Bennett as Roxanne. Wright was deeply moved and he enlisted Schmidt to write a bold new film adaptation, yielding *Cyrano* (MGM, United Artists Releasing) with a cast headed by Dinklage and Bennett.

The compelling relevance, though, for Wright was rooted in present-day realities. "When I started developing the movie," Wright recalled, "Brexit had happened in Britain, Trump was in the White House. The idea of making a film about essentially compassion or a film that I hoped

would help generate compassion with an audience felt appropriate. And it became more than just appropriate when the pandemic happened, sitting in isolation for all of those months. It became urgent. I was desperate to make the film at this time because I felt like I was starved of human connection—and scared of how I might approach human connection afterwards. I wanted to make a film that talked about that—the simple difficulty of human connection, how we often fail to connect through our own fears, fears of intimacy, of being seen. And maybe through the very process of making the film we might create some connection among the film-making cast and crew, and ultimately create a connection between us and the audience. It was important to me that this be a theatrical feature so that there could be a connection between the people in the room (movie theater).

While the pandemic was a driving motivator, it also carried formidable obstacles to getting a movie made. Wright related, "It was on June 28, 2020 when I

called Eric Fellner (producer and Working Title co-chair) and said, 'We've been developing this script for two years now and we're ready. I want to shoot it.' He said, 'You are absolutely crazy—in the middle of a pandemic.' I asked him to give me a likelihood of it getting financed. He said there was about a five percent chance. Okay, great. I'll take five percent. It's better than nothing. We went to various financiers, including our usual lot. Everyone was very nervous. No one wanted to make anything. Then we went to Mike De Luca at MGM. He said yes. He explained, 'If I don't, then I'm betting against the future of film.'"

Wright said that he found the perfect partners in De Luca and MGM. "The idea of doing a musical at MGM felt right," related Wright, alluding to the studio's famed heritage in musicals. However, Wright was looking to create a different kind of musical that departed from that lineage. His goal was "to do a musical that didn't feel like a musical, to make a musi-

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Directors Share Reflections On *Cyrano* and *King Richard*

Continued from page 4

cal where the songs felt natural and integrated into the drama. There wasn't any kind of fanfare. There wasn't the feeling that we would do a big song and then get back into the story." DeLuca and MGM embraced and supported that vision. The story, the drama, the characters, Wright affirmed, always took priority.

duction designer Sarah Greenwood and set decorator Katie Spencer.

McGarvey has twice been nominated for Best Cinematography Oscars—for the Wright films *Atonement* and *Anna Karenina*. Greenwood is a six time Academy Award nominee for Best Production Design—four for Wright's *Pride & Prejudice*, *Atonement*, *Anna Karenina* and *Darkest*

you get very technical editors who are not able to emotionally gauge the material. I sit next to him over four or five months editing. He pushes me and I push him. It's a very very close partnership."

For *Cyrano*, cast and crew came together during the pandemic with a deep trust which Wright said will continue to impact his filmmaking. "I set out to make a film devoid of any cynicism or irony, to make something for the here and now that was open-hearted....It feels good to have done this and I will continue to do that, to kind of lay yourself open and feel that it will be okay—to trust and not have to protect yourself." It's that trust, after all, that can lead to the most meaningful connections with others.

Reinaldo Marcus Green

King Richard (Warner Bros.) is a story that director Reinaldo Marcus Green can relate to while also marking a full circle journey for him in which mentors became collaborators. On the former score, Green and his brother were groomed by their

While that would seem at best a long-shot for two Black girls from Compton, Calif., Richard Williams trained them for success—on the tennis court, academically and personally, stressing the importance of self-respect, humility and believing in yourself. Both Venus and Serena got their initial training on dilapidated public tennis courts in Compton—often in harm's way with neighborhood gangs nearby. Yet while Richard Williams was beaten down literally and figuratively in life, he was not dissuaded from dedicating himself to helping all his kids attain excellence. The patriarch, though, was not alone in shaping and nurturing his daughters—three other sisters also provided support, love and camaraderie, as did their mom Oracene, aka Brandy (Aunjanue Ellis), who took on the role of coaching the younger Serena when professional coaches turned their attention to Venus.

"Oracene was as instrumental as Mr. Williams was. That, to me, is what is so exciting," said Green. "Yes, it's called *King Richard* but it's also *Queen Oracene*. I'm



Peter Dinklage (center) and Bashir Salahuddin in a scene from *Cyrano*

Those characters also include the powerful Duke De Guiche (Ben Mendelsohn), a wealthy, egomaniacal suitor enamored with Roxanne, and Christian (Kelvin Harrison Jr.), a King's Guard recruit who serves under Cyrano. Christian shares with Cyrano and Roxanne a common bond of failing to make a true connection. Christian's physical appearance stirs Roxanne and she pleads with Cyrano to watch over and protect him. Cyrano pledges to do so and encourages Christian to woo Roxanne with love letters. These wise and witty letters, though, are penned by Cyrano, leading Roxanne to mistakenly feel a soulful bond with her handsome suitor. But romance, real or imagined, falls by the wayside as war breaks out. Together and apart our protagonists experience happiness, despair, denial, discovery and destinies beyond what they envisioned for themselves.

Key for Wright to realizing what he hoped would be his destiny of bringing *Cyrano* to fruition in the midst of the COVID pandemic was reuniting with trusted collaborators. Their shorthand with one another over the years would be essential to clearing the many hurdles that *Cyrano* posed to them. Among those compatriots were cinematographer Seamus McGarvey, ASC, BSC, editor Valerio Bonelli, pro-

Hour. Nominated with Greenwood each time was her long-time creative partner, set decorator Spencer. And *Cyrano* marks editor Bonelli's fourth collaboration with Wright—the others having been the "Nosedive" episode of *Black Mirror*, *The Woman in the Window* and *Darkest Hour*.

Wright has known McGarvey for 25-plus years. The DP has lensed five of Wright's features. "We have a kind of trust and clear-sighted conversation that continues to this day," shared Wright. "He is a master. But there's something about Seamus' work that is always deeply humane."

The working relationship with Greenwood and Spencer dates back to Wright's very first television job. "A soon as I have an idea of what I might want to do, I talk to Sarah. We start discussing it. I show her early drafts of the script and try to develop the film with her, making it as site specific as possible. I often write into the screenplay ideas that Sarah has come up with. Our ideas are so meshed now, its difficult to tell if the ideas are hers or mine."

Wright first worked with editor Bonelli on the *Black Mirror* episode. The director said of Bonelli, "He has an extraordinary facility both technically and emotionally. It's rare to get that balance. You get editors who are deeply emotional beings but perhaps not so technically astute. And



Demi Singleton (l-r), Saniyya Sidney and Will Smith in *King Richard*

dad to be Major League Baseball players. While that didn't quite come to pass—the filmmaker to be did play college ball and got a couple of MLB tryouts—the process was one motivated by unconditional love, learning, fun and compassion. That experience gave Green a special connection to the *King Richard* script written by Zach Baylin which introduces us to a couple of talented teen sisters, Venus Williams (Saniyya Sidney) and Serena Williams (Demi Singleton), whose father, Richard (Will Smith), had a dream that they would become world class tennis players.

so excited for the world to know that this woman, whom they saw in the stands, was their coach on the courts and in life."

Green also had some "coaches"—at the Sundance Directors Lab and at NYU-Tisch Graduate Film School—who helped him develop as a filmmaker. That development was evident in his debut feature, *Monsters and Men*, which rolled out at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival where it earned a Special Jury Prize for Outstanding First Feature. Green went on to helm the first three episodes of the Netflix series *Top Boy*, and has since wrapped his

Stillwater Runs Deep For Filmmaker Tom McCarthy

sophomore feature, *Joe Bell*, which premiered at the 2020 Toronto Film Festival.

For *King Richard*, Green wound up recruiting several of those alluded to “coaches,” mentors/instructors who gave him guidance earlier in his career. Cinematographer Robert Elswit, ASC and editor Pamela Martin, ACE were Sundance Directing Lab advisors during the summer when Green was making *Monsters and Men*. Green is an unabashed fan of their work, citing Elswit’s lensing of *There Will Be Blood* and Martin’s work on such films as *The Fighter* and *Little Miss Sunshine*. At NYU graduate film school where Spike Lee was one of his instructors, Green met legendary production designer Wynn Thomas. Green is also an admirer of Thomas’ work, including his production design on Lee’s films, particularly *Malcolm X*. Thomas has made history on different fronts, credited as being the first African-American film production designer, the first Black production designer to become a member of the Art Directors Guild in Los Angeles, and the first African American nominated for the Art Directors Guild Award (for his design work on Tim Burton’s *Mars Attacks!*). Among Thomas’ many other credits are director Ron Howard’s *A Beautiful Mind*, a Best Picture Oscar winner.

Green reached out to Elswit, Martin and Thomas to work on *King Richard*. They accepted. Green described learning that they would collaborate with him as being “an incredible moment,” marking kind of a “full circle” navigation where he got to team with the masters who meant so much to him. He remembered first meeting Martin and thinking at the time he would try to lay the foundation for some future working relationship. Thankfully, that came to pass.

Green called Elswit “a genius storyteller” who “taught me a lot about hard work.” The director said that the 71-year-old Elswit “has the energy of a 15 year old.” Going location scouting with Elswit was a tremendous learning experience, related Green.

Thomas, said Green, writes everything on little index cards, walks you through a space and has a very specific way of showing what he wants to design. What Thomas did with the Williams family house in a 1990s’ setting was remarkable, assessed

Green. The house wasn’t a complete replica of their Compton residence but true to its spirit. He designed it so the camera could move freely, deploying strategically placed moving walls for flexibility. Then the pandemic hit—at which point only about a third of the film was shot. Thomas had laid much of the groundwork but had to move onto another project that got

main calm in the pocket and hit your target.” His advice to any young artist being pulled in different directions is to not lose focus on what got you there. Green added that there’s value in sticking to your “true North” which is “something that I very much hope a lot of folks do when they are marking that first leap from independent to studio film.”



Matt Damon (l) and Camille Cottin in a scene from *Stillwater*

underway prior to the resumption of *King Richard*. Production designer William Arnold took over and, continued Green, was “so thoughtful and respectful of the work (done by Thomas).”

The inherent challenge in *King Richard* was doing justice to a story about people who are real and alive—and achieving that in a film that’s in the two-and-a-half hour range. Baylin’s script was spot on, said Green, focusing on a time when we could see the sisters in their youth and how their family life shaped them. Green noted that *King Richard* really isn’t a tennis movie but rather an inspiring story about “family, belief, love and triumph.”

In terms of lessons learned from the experience of his first studio film, Green shared that trusting one’s instincts is important. “That’s kind of what has gotten me to where I am. I’m happy that I stuck to my guns on this movie.” He observed that there are a lot of voices to listen to, including the studio, the family, producers. But ultimately, he affirmed, “You need one voice to make it feel like one movie.” Choosing a sports analogy—in this case the responsibilities of a football quarterback—Green observed, “You have to stay in the pocket and not get sacked. You feel pressure from all these places but you re-

Tom McCarthy

Getting an ovation at the Cannes Film Festival is gratifying for any director. But it took on an extra special dimension for Tom McCarthy to witness that response earlier this year to *Stillwater* (Focus Features), a film he directed and co-wrote. A predominantly French audience embraced a movie by an American filmmaker where cultures—seemingly destined to clash—somehow come together as Bill Baker (Matt Damon), an unemployed oil-rig worker from Oklahoma, befriends a French actress (Camille Cottin) and her eight-year-old daughter Maya (Lilou Siauvaud). Their relationship is one of discovery, love and liberation as Bill finds and forms a new family while on an extended visit from the U.S. to Marseille to try to repair a tattered family tie to his own daughter, Allison (Abigail Breslin), who’s imprisoned there for a murder she insists she didn’t commit.

Cannes is known, in some circles notorious, for being a place that’s quick to let you know if they don’t like a movie. Instead the French reaction was that this love story and quest for family rang true—that they too had connected with a story about an improbable connection between

people from vastly different countries, walks of life, political and social orientations. Similarly initial screenings in Oklahoma and America’s heartland were well received. Moviegoers bought into and felt a measure of empathy for the unlikely bond that evolved.

These early audience reactions meant the world to McCarthy who felt the challenge of being a U.S. director looking to make a movie set in France feel realistic to the French. “That Cannes screening is something I’ll never forget,” related McCarthy who brought in French co-writers Thomas Bidegain and Noé Debré to help attain that desired authenticity.

Furthermore, audience response played on another significant level given today’s state of disconcerting affairs. In an era in which we are profoundly divided because of our differences—exacerbated further by isolation during the pandemic, and related contentiousness—*Stillwater* runs deep as a soulful relatable piece. “It’s a really tricky time to be putting art out into the world,” observed McCarthy who views *Stillwater* as “a unique reflection of the time it was released in.”

The story contains other twists and turns, along with the suspense of Bill making progress, through startling means, towards exonerating his daughter when a lead on a male murder suspect emerges. The casting of Damon was key, assessed McCarthy, citing the star’s built-in hero persona that could then be subverted during the course of the film, challenging audiences and altering perceptions as the story sojourns into unexpected places. Damon steps into Bill’s shoes and in turn viewers step into his evolving world—not just in a foreign country but in terms of a new emotional and human landscape.

McCarthy turned to some trusted collaborators—including from the Best Picture Oscar winner *Spotlight* which he directed and co-wrote—to help bring *Stillwater* to life, including cinematographer Masanobu Takayanagi, ASC and editor Tom McArdle. The latter, who earned a Best Editing Oscar nomination for *Spotlight*, has cut all of director McCarthy’s features. McCarthy said that he has come to rely on McArdle to “start reading early drafts and start thinking of the movie in terms of the edit. I think of him as the

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DP Ruhe Visits The Tender Bar; Hoffman Edits Passing

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third or fourth writer on a movie.” McCarthy added that McArdle “understands my tempo” and his “superpower” is the ability “to be reductive with emotional and intellectual moments, and make them clear. He brings clarity and resonance to the moments.”

McCarthy cited DP Takayanagi’s “work ethic and attention to detail,” describing him as “a master of his craft, incredibly thoughtful” and constantly pressing on the story and what the scene is about, striving to understand the essence of the scene.” The DP, continued McCarthy, was instrumental in getting viewers “to be with Bill and feel him in his space and his place. You can smell and sense the difference in different locations.”

Another collaborator on *Spotlight* whom McCarthy turned to for *Stillwater* was venerable producer Steve Golin, the CEO and founder of Anonymous Content, who passed away in April 2019 at the age of 64. “When you lose people in your life creatively and professionally, you don’t realize how huge they are until they’re gone. He was a seminal character who got stuff done and made,” said McCarthy of Golin. McCarthy recalled that *Stillwater* came to pass because Golin believed in it. “In a hotel over lunch one day I pitched him *Stillwater*,” related McCarthy. “He said, ‘I’m in. Figure it out, whatever you need.’ I told him I wanted to hire these French writers. ‘Let’s do it,’ Steve said. He freed you up to tell the stories you were passionate about and believed in. Even when we didn’t agree on things, he was pushing for what was best for the movie. There was no other agenda. He was a special filmmaker and a special guy.”

Golin earned three Best Picture nominations, winning for *Spotlight* in 2016. The other two nods were for *The Revenger*, also in 2016, and *Babel* in 2007.

Martin Ruhe, ASC

The opportunity to collaborate again with director George Clooney was among the prime factors drawing cinematographer Martin Ruhe, ASC to *The Tender Bar* (Amazon Studios). Ruhe first worked with Clooney as an actor, lensing him in *The Americans*, and then teamed with the director/producer/actor and his producing partner Grant Heslov on the TV

miniseries *Catch 22*. Ruhe shot episodes directed by Clooney, Ellen Kuras and Heslov—one for the latter earned the DP his second ASC Award nomination last year. The first nod came in 2012 for what turned out to be an ASC Award-winning effort on the telefilm *Page Eight*.

After *Catch-22*, Clooney and Heslov sought out Ruhe for *The Midnight Sky*, an apocalyptic sci-fi drama which brought an empathy and deep pathos uncharacteristic of that genre generally. The collaborative relationship with Clooney and Heslov now resumes with *The Tender Bar*, based on Pulitzer Prize-winning author J. R. Moehringer’s memoir of the same title. The film introduces us to J.R. Sheridan (played by Daniel Ranieri as a boy, Tye Sheridan as a young man) who—in the general absence of his abusive father—grows up in the glow of a bar under the aegis of its proprietor/bartender, J.R.’s Uncle Charlie (Ben Affleck). Charlie leads a band of colorful characters at the bar who all have caring father figure qualities. They collectively fill a void in J.R.’s life as his mom (Lily Rabe) struggles to provide him with opportunities denied her. We are privy to witnessing J.R. grow up, pursuing his dreams—with one foot planted in Uncle Charlie’s bar for guidance and support.

For Ruhe, perhaps the biggest challenge was having to shoot *The Tender Bar* during the pandemic. He noted that there were crew members “whose faces I never saw” yet the masks didn’t prevent them from collaborating to help create “a warmth and intimacy” that the story required. “The trick with smaller films is to get the tone right, to provide room for the actors,” said Ruhe who added, “To pull through and be able to make this film and tell a story in this environment, a lockdown, felt like a little miracle to me.”

Ruhe deployed the ARRI Alexa Mini, sometimes two of those small cameras, to get close and personal with the cast, not disrupting performances with big heavy gear. Lenses included Cooke S4 and Augenicux Optimo Lightweight Zooms. The bar set that was constructed has a lived-in charm akin to the real thing.

For the most part, though, Ruhe said, “There wasn’t much trickery” as the focus was simply on the actors while realizing Clooney’s desire to pay homage to

1970s and ‘80s films. “It’s a warmhearted story and he loved the characters,” shared the DP who conjectured that Clooney was attracted to the project in part for its 180 degree turn from *Midnight Sky*: “After *Midnight Sky*, a dystopian film, he wanted to do something warm and heartfelt.”

At press time, Ruhe was set to embark on *The Boys in the Boat*—co-directed by Clooney and Heslov—centered on the



Sabine Hoffman, ACE

University of Washington’s men rowing team. This underdog crew is chronicled from their Depression-era beginnings to winning the Gold Medal at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin where they beat Nazi Germany’s rowing contingent of so-called “Master Race” athletes.

Sabine Hoffman

Actor Rebecca Hall makes her directorial debut with *Passing* (Netflix), fashioning a screenplay adapted from Nella Larsen’s 1929 novel of the same title which carries themes of colorism alongside sexism, race, class and gender. The story centers on two Black women, Irene (portrayed by Tessa Thompson) and Clare (Ruth Negga), who can “pass” as white women. While Clare decides to pose as white, Irene maintains her heritage. The two women, who grew up in the same community, lost touch with one another until by chance their paths crossed. This sparked an unexpectedly longer term reunion in which Clare returns to her roots—unbeknownst to her racist white husband (Alexander Skarsgård)—setting off ripple effects, subtle and not-so-subtle, on the women and their families.

Hall entrusted the editing of this story-shot in painterly, impressionistic black

and white by Eduard Grau, ASC, AEC—to Sabine Hoffman, ACE, marking their first collaboration. Editor Hoffman was familiar with Larsen’s novel, having read it years ago, and in her initial meeting with Hall they shared their enthusiasm for the story, talking in depth about the characters. After being offered the gig, she met a couple more times with Hall before the shoot to talk more in depth about the protagonists. Hoffman valued that early dialogue, benefiting from a sense of Hall’s vision, also reflected of course in the script penned by the director.

Hoffman described Hall as “an incredible director and writer, wonderful to work with.” The editor credited Hall with authoring an insightful adaptation, leading to a film where both the words—and what’s unsaid—are essential. “What is between the lines, what is not being said, what’s being left out” becomes key, said Hoffman. “The story has so many layers, a lot of complexity.” Editing that complexity was a challenge marked, said Hoffman, by conveying “the ambivalence of the whole story but at the same time providing the audience with a relatable emotional experience.”

That relatability is critical to evoking empathy for the characters, principally Irene and Clare as we see their impact on each other—and those around them. Things start to at first slowly unravel for Irene when Clare re-enters her life. While this unhinges Irene, she is also attracted to the dangerousness of what Clare seems compelled to do.

Part of the journey involves trusting the audience as there’s even ambiguity in the ending, which preserves the spirit of the story. “People seem to be able to see it in all different ways,” said Hoffman, leaving the viewer to complete the story based on his/her/their perceptions.

This is conducive to sparking conversations among people—and within each person as individual perceptions are subject to exploration. That’s a lingering dynamic which Hoffman embraces, noting that she loves watching the film and hearing audiences afterwards.

The process of teaming with Hall to help make this film, observed Hoffman, was akin in some respects to that exploration. Hoffman praised Hall for leaving room for such exploration creatively.

Alexandre Desplat Reflects On Working With Wes Anderson

While Hall was thoroughly prepared and had much already storyboarded up front, Hoffman said that she and her colleagues on *Passing* felt they had safe space in which to play, to try something else on occasion, helping the film get to a place which reflected the spirit and vision that Hall had for the story. Hoffman assessed that she's extremely happy with the end result, particularly as a film which can be watched multiple times and continue to engage someone on a deep level.

Passing is part of a growing filmography for Hoffman which includes *Queen Bees*, *Maggie's Plan* and *The Glorias*.

Alexandre Desplat

Eleven-time Academy Award-nominated composer Alexandre Desplat—who won Best Original Score Oscars for *The Grand Budapest Hotel* in 2015 and *The Shape of Water* in 2018—knew that *The French Dispatch* (Searchlight Pictures), his latest collaboration with director Wes Anderson, would pose its share of challenges, including one inherent in the film's structure. In *The French Dispatch*, we find out about the death of Arthur Howitzer, Jr. (portrayed by Bill Murray), editor of the widely circulated American magazine in the film's title, an international offshoot of a Kansas newspaper. The Dispatch staff convenes at the publication's headquarters in France to write his obituary. Memories of Howitzer flow into the creation of four stories: a travelogue of the seediest sections of the city itself; "The Concrete Masterpiece," about a criminally insane painter, his guard and muse, and his art dealers; "Revisions to a

Manifesto," a chronicle of love and death at the height of a student revolt; and "The Private Dining Room of the Police Commissioner," a suspenseful tale of drugs, kidnapping and fine dining.

Taking on "a film in four parts," explained Desplat, meant that he "had to find a way of underlying each story with a specific sound and at the same time being able to connect with the other sections." Desplat said that achieving distinctive scores for each part while maintaining continuity between them throughout the entire film represented the biggest challenge that *The French Dispatch* posed to him as a composer. "I had to find a continuity even though everything is discontinued," he said. Helping him be equal to the task was his strong collaborative bond with Anderson spanning such prior films as *Isle of Dogs*, *Moonrise Kingdom*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* and the aforementioned *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.

Also helpful was the fact that *The French Dispatch* is Anderson's love letter to his adopted country, France—and Desplat is French. Desplat could relate to Anderson's passion for French cinema, French actors and French cuisine. This lent itself to the composer creating a score with that feel of appreciation while being true to Anderson's request that the music be provocative, unpredictable, fun but at the same time minimalist. The music never grows huge or bombastic, observed Desplat. Rather it stays "near the characters and tries to expand the feelings of those characters" who are portrayed by a cast which includes Benecio del Toro, Adrien Brody, Tilda Swinton, Lea Seydoux, Frances McDormand, Chalamet,

Lyna Khoudri, Jeffrey Wright, Mathieu Amalric, Stephen Park and Owen Wilson.

"Wes' world is a world of imagination," said Desplat who shared that being plugged into that imagination as a composer is a creatively fulfilling experience.

That imaginative dimension helps immeasurably in terms of avoiding the obvious. For *The French Dispatch*, Desplat explained that the goal was in large part



Alexandre Desplat

"to write a French score for a film set in France without any of the clichés of what would be considered French. There's no accordion, no waltz, nothing of what would be typical France." This is a France born out of Anderson's imagination—with no clichés. The French town where *The French Dispatch* is based, Ennui-sur-Blaise, is fictional. Still the score, continued Desplat, is "very French," with a mix of humor, love, joy and varied emotions.

Working with Anderson over the years, Desplat also sees a maturity in the director's use of animation and how it's weaved into his live-action films. *The French Dispatch* reflects that virtuosity as animation plays a key role in telling

"The Private Dining Room of the Police Commissioner" portion of the film. "The subtlety of the way he uses the technique he's learned in animation is impressive," said Desplat who added that his approach to the music doesn't change when animation comes into play in a live-action film. Desplat's process remains the same—simply striving to compose in a manner that's right for the story.

Desplat's first career Oscar nomination came in 2007 for *The Queen*. Two years later, Desplat scored a nod for *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. In 2010 the composer garnered his third nomination for Anderson's *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. A year later Desplat was again an Oscar nominee, this time for *The King's Speech*. In 2013, Desplat was nominated for *Argo*. Then came another Best Original Score nomination in 2014 for *Philomena*. And the same year (2015) Desplat won the Oscar for *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, he was also nominated for *The Imitation Game*. Then came the win for *The Shape of Water* in 2018. The next year Desplat was a nominee for Anderson's *Isle of Dogs*. And the composer's most recent Oscar nod came in 2020 for *Little Women*.

This is the second installment of a 16-part series with future installments of *The Road To Oscar* slated to run in the weekly *SHOOT>e.dition*, *The SHOOT Dailies* and on *SHOOTonline.com*, with select installments also in print issues. The series will appear weekly through the Academy Awards gala ceremony. Nominations for the 94th Academy Awards will be announced on Tuesday, February 8, 2022. The 94th Oscars will be held on Sunday, March 27, 2022.



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FINISH

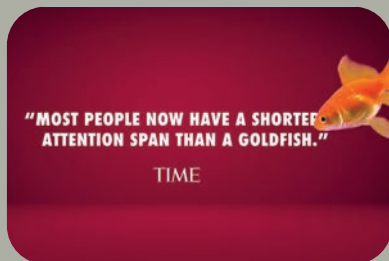


CHARLIE
UNIFORM
TANGO

GOLDFISH, ZULU ALPHA KILO TEST ATTENTION SPANS

With attention spans declining to unprecedented levels, the best way to somehow gain the interest of teenagers is to challenge them to a game. So to launch their new Kravin' Ketchup Goldfish flavor, Campbell's built the Goldfish Focus Faceoff Lens on Snapchat.

Developed by agency Zulu Alpha Kilo and its production arm Zulubot, the augmented reality experience is simple. Players must keep their attention on the Goldfish cracker for more than 9 seconds to unlock a promo code for a discount. Why 9 seconds? That's the attention span of a real Goldfish and players are challenged to see how their focus measures up. The longer players can concentrate on the cracker, the better their score. The game uses Snap's eye-tracking technology to measure focus amidst all types of notifications and distractions designed to disrupt them.



ACADEMY LAUNCHES DIGITAL PRESERVATION FORUM

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has announced the launch of the Academy Digital Preservation Forum (ADPF), a global online gathering place dedicated to exploring the latest issues surrounding digital preservation of motion pictures. An initiative of the Academy's Science and Technology Council, the forum—at academydigitalpreservationforum.org—hosts original content and resources and will serve as an ongoing discussion place for stakeholders and practitioners within the field and those interested in learning more.

Andy Maltz, SVP, Science and Technology Council, said, "As long as digital motion picture technologies evolve, there will be a need for collaboration between archivists, technologists and filmmakers. The ADPF provides a foundation for productive communication and problem-solving to ensure future generations can access the movies we enjoy today and those yet to come."

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE....

Christina Augustinos has been named head of content production for Hero4Hire Creative. Her experience with Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network yielded accolades including Promax, Annie, Webby, and BDA awards as well as an Emmy nomination for *Blues Clues & You* interactive episodes. Augustinos spent five years at Cartoon Network. She then climbed the ranks at Nickelodeon to VP of production for the brand creative team. There she oversaw production of Nickelodeon brand and promotional marketing campaigns for properties including *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *iCarly*, and *Big Time Rush*.



Fede Garcia

She eventually segued to VP of creative operations for the Noggin video streaming service where she oversaw workflow for interactive content production and the Noggin marketing team.After two years of a global pandemic, the New York Festivals International Advertising Awards will resume in-person judging with an all NYC-based international executive jury. Fede Garcia, BCW's global CCO, will helm the live judging which is scheduled for two consecutive days in June 2022. Garcia's 27-year career has spanned advertising roles in Buenos Aires, Tokyo, and New York. A native of Argentina, Garcia previously spent four years with Huge, most recently as global ECD. He also served as group creative director at Translation in New York, where he worked on the NFL, History Channel and HBO. Garcia worked with Ogilvy Tokyo for four years where he oversaw the creative development of campaigns for clients including Coca-Cola, American Express, IBM and Citizen.....

Welcome to the Special *SHOOT* 19th Annual New Directors Showcase profile section. It's hard to believe this is the 19th year of the Showcase. We love conducting the New Directors Search and producing the annual Showcase because it gives us the opportunity to introduce and celebrate new talent, complementing our coverage of up-and-coming directors in *SHOOT* Magazine and on *SHOOT*online year-round.



Each year we conduct the official NDS Search and receive hundreds of entries consisting of a great variety of short and long-form advertising and entertainment content. Once the field is narrowed down to the final Showcase, each director who has long-form work selected provides an up-to-two-minute excerpt or trailer for the Showcase Reel. Since the shortened versions don't do justice to the work, we encourage you to seek out the directors to see the full versions via contact info on each director's profile page on the special *SHOOT* NDS website: <https://nds.shootonline.com>.

The following section in this print issue contains thumbnail sketches of the Showcase directors with their responses to select questions. Additional Q&As with each director appear on the NDS site along with the Showcase Reel. We hope you take a look at each director's profile page, view the reel and spread the word to your colleagues to check out the work.

As you know, the pandemic has altered many plans, including those for our in-person *SHOOT* NDS Event which didn't take place this year or last. Prior to the COVID crisis, *SHOOT* had a string of 15 consecutive years presenting its NDS event to an audience at the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Theatre in New York City. But given the prudence of a safety-first mindset prioritizing everyone's health and well-being, we decided not to convene in person in 2020 and 2021.

Although we miss getting together, sharing insights and points of view during the daytime Directors/Producers Forum, then debuting the NDS Reel on the big screen that same evening followed by an afterparty at DGA, the reel on its own remains a major means of exposure for new worthwhile talent and will go on being scrutinized by the advertising and entertainment communities which continue to become increasingly interconnected. Networking and dialogue persist—albeit remote and virtual—with the work of Showcase directors serving as a catalyst given the industry's insatiable need for new talent.

The NDS Reel remains a force for drawing people closer as agencies seek new collaborators, and production companies reach out to directors who can enhance their rosters. The reel also is a platform for new voices to be heard as diverse storytelling perspectives are more valuable and relevant than ever in helping to better society through fostering more empathy and deeper understanding of others, including those often underrepresented in the media landscape.

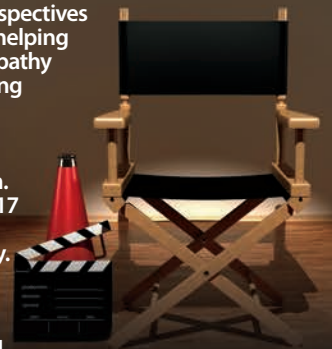
Fifteen of the Showcase directors are women. The overall lineup of 31 directors consists of 17 who are represented by a production house and 14 who are not affiliated with a company. NDS filmmaker backgrounds are far ranging from acting to photography to an advertising agency pedigree, work in the art department on theatrical movies, film school educated and self-taught, even feature film producing.

An example of the latter is NDS director Oge Egbuonu who earlier this year joined the roster of production studio m s s n g p e c e s for commercials, branded content and music videos. Her experience includes serving on the producing team for acclaimed feature films such as *Loving* (directed by Jeff Nichols and starring Joel Edgerton and Ruth Negga in a story about the U.S. Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia* which legalized interracial marriage), and *Eye In The Sky* (directed by Gavin Hood) through independent production company Raindog Films.

Helping to enable new voices to be heard is most gratifying for us at *SHOOT*. We wish all the NDS filmmakers a long and successful career, and we are excited to play some small part in bringing them to your attention. We hope you enjoy the NDS Profiles and Reel—with the goal of our seeing everyone in person next year!

—Roberta Grier

Publisher & Editorial Director
rgrier@shootonline.com



31 Individual Directors Earn Slots In *SHOOT* Showcase

Lineup includes 14 directors sans production company affiliations; 15 women make the final cut

A *SHOOT* Staff Report

SHOOT's 19th Annual New Directors Showcase offers a total of 31 up-and-coming directors. The field includes 15 women and 14 directors who are unaffiliated with a production company. The work spans commercials, PSAs, spec and promo fare, short films, music videos, documentary shorts and features, thesis films, a TV pilot, comedy, drama and dramedy, among other disciplines and genres.

This year marks the rare occurrence of a Showcase lineup sans a directorial team—all are solo helmers this time around. However, two of our 2021 Showcase talents, Isabel Bethencourt and Parker Hill, are no strangers to co-directing as they came together on *Cusp*, which earlier this year won a U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Emerging Filmmakers at the Sundance Film Festival. Bethencourt and Hill now have individual directorial careers. Bethencourt is repped in

the ad arena by Independent Media while Hill is on the roster of production house Tomorrow.

Unaffiliated

Fourteen of the Showcase directors this year are unaffiliated with a production company: Eric Almond for the short film *Requiem For Black Love*; Zeke Anders for the public service film "When the Motor Stops"; Josh Banks with the short titled *M*; Henry Behel for Reyka Vodka's "Made of Iceland" spot; Paige Compton for the AFI thesis film *Guide On*; Mario Garza for the MeUndies "Love Every Flaw" spec commercial; Utsab Giri for Tesla's "SpaceX" spec spot; John Connor Hammond for the short *Protest Photography*; Julia Kennelly for the short film *Marcy Learns Something New*; Natasha Lee for the short film *In The Visible*; Leah Loftin for the short



film *The Wolf*; Drew Pollins for the "Is It Over?" PSA; Khalid Sena for the short titled *Concrete Rose*; and Jane Stephens Rosenthal for AFI thesis film *The Hideaway*.

Company ties

Seventeen of the Showcase directors are affiliated with production companies. Besides Bethencourt and Hill, the NDS filmmakers affiliated with production houses are: Tyler Davis of Tessa Films, recognized for the Images Med Spa spot "So What?"; Ewurakua Dawson-Amoah of Greenpoint Pictures for the short film *To the Girl that Looks Like Me*; Oge Egbuonu of m s s n g p e c e s for Levi's "Beauty of Becoming" branded content; Abraham Felix of Curfew, recognized for the Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation's "The Unspoken Curriculum" PSA; Devon Ferguson of Cortez Brothers (U.S.),

Birth (U.K.) and Suneeva (Canada) for the Monster.com spec spot "Stare"; Chloe Hayward of Knucklehead for the short film *Staying*; LJ Johnson of Current Resident for her TV series pilot *Breakdowns*; Dave Maruchniak of 1stAveMachine Buenos Aires for The New Yorker's "The Right Question Changes Everything" spot; Jabu Nadia Newman of Park Pictures for Nowness, the British Council and BFI's *The Dream That Refused Me* short; Amber Park of Believe Media, selected for Lil Yachty's "Love Music" music video; Bianca Poletti of Epoch Films for the short film *Fertile*; Zack Sedler of Station Film for State Farm's commercial "Everyone's Unique"; Ben Strang of Sarofsky for Afgenx's *A Mystery To Me: Vanetta* short form documentary; Emily Elizabeth Thomas of Sibling/Rivalry for ESPN/Disney's "The Mandalorian" branded tie-in promo; and Grayson Whitehurst of Los York for Purple's "Life-Changing Sleep" spec commercial.

The following pages contain thumbnail sketches of the Showcase directors with their responses to select questions. Additional Q&As with each director—as well as the Showcase reel—can be accessed on nds.shootonline.com.

Continued on page 12

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Showcase Directors Almond, Anders, Banks, Behel

Continued from page 11



Eric Almond

Unaffiliated

Requiem For Black Love
(excerpt from short film)

2) How did you get into directing?

I've always been interested in directing. When I was growing up I would read the booklets that came in the CD packages. While reading, I would visualize scenarios to go along with the music. Then I started to write these scenarios out. I initially wanted to direct music videos but through my journey I eventually realized that I had a stronger passion for narrative directing.

3) What is your most recent project?

My most recent project, *Requiem for Black Love*, is a soul-stirring story about the plight of Blacks in America. The short film follows the journey of two fugitive slaves in search of freedom. Although the two must come to terms with their own mortality, they are convinced that true love can never die. Desperately, they cling to the hope of being able to love again in another lifetime only to find that the future is parallel to the past.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

The best part of directing is collaborating with other crew members and creating a story that can be viewed from multiple perspectives.

5) What is the worst part of being a director?

I appreciate and learn from every opportunity. I truly have never been in a directing situation that I disliked.



Josh Banks

Unaffiliated

M (excerpt from short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

In 2018, I was hired to direct the animated pilot for *Cape Kids*, a children's educational TV show about kid superheroes. I was lucky to work with some talented and experienced actors on that project including David Faustino (*Married With Children*, *The Legend of Korra*) Keith Powell (*30 Rock*) Carolina Ravassa (*Overwatch*) and Suzy Nakamura (*Avenue 5*). Since then, I have directed several corporate videos and PSAs for national brands, and *M* was my narrative directorial debut.

2) How did you get into directing?

I have been a professional actor for 30+ years, and I'm fortunate to have worked on some amazing productions. By being on set (with professionals who were generous enough to answer my many questions,) I learned about lighting, sound, cinematography, editing and directing. Every film and TV set has been a new opportunity to learn how all the pieces of the industry fit together. I've always had a strong desire to tell stories, and directing naturally evolved from there.

8) Who is your favorite director and why?

I have many favorites: David Fincher for his style and pacing, Steven Spielberg's grand storytelling, Tim Burton's appreciation of the weird, Ridley Scott's command of suspense, Denis Villeneuve's composition...I'm cheating by answering too many (and too few) instead of one favorite, and I'm okay with this.



Zeke Anders

Unaffiliated

"When the Motor Stops"
(commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first professionally directed commercial was for a Detroit-based hospital system in June 2018. It was originally scoped as just filming pick-up shots for a revised edit, however the agency was so pleased with the additional scenes that they turned it into a brand new spot. Up to this point, I had a few docu-style/humanity films under my belt and an evolving collection of black and white street photography featuring candid shots of people from around the world. I think the agency Creative Director and Producer saw the potential with my ability to connect with people and gave me the opportunity to helm their project.

2) How did you get into directing?

I have always been keenly interested in directing ever since high school. A handful of my student-films won some prestigious awards, including the top honors from the Los Angeles International Student Film Festival. Movies and television were (and still are) a huge influence in my education... but so is theatre. I did theatre all through college which helped shape my perspective as an aspiring director - not only did it teach me how to work with actors, crew, upper management, but how to effectively and efficiently tell a story: the narrative. It was during this era where I also experimented with short films, cinematography and editing. It was an incredibly creative time for DIY filmmaking.



Henry Behel

Unaffiliated

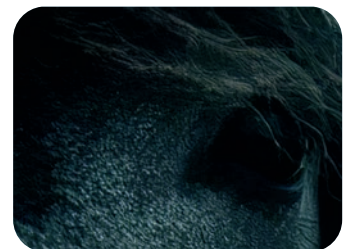
Reyka Vodka's *"Made of Iceland"*
(commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

An airshow commercial for the Central Coast Airfest in October 2018—a job I'm still pinching myself about, just in case it wasn't real. I got called up randomly by the airshow director, who found me on Instagram... only problem was that he thought I was someone else! When I told him I wasn't who he thought I was, he was nice enough to let me pitch on the job anyway, and the rest is history. It was an incredibly complicated and technical shoot. We were working with about 30 airplanes and pilots—often during an active airshow environment. The best part was directing the Cinejet, the airplane that recently shot on *Top Gun: Maverick*, in capturing aerials of the Canadian Snowbird Aerobatic team and a WW2-era P-38 over the Pacific Ocean. The film went on to win a Clio and a big award in the airshow community.

3) What is your most recent project?

I did the launch campaign for a limited edition Air, Land, and Sea run of watches made by the Italian watchmaker Unimatic in collaboration with Hodinkee. Another wild ride—I personally flew the camera plane in formation with another plane as it raced a classic car - a 1979 Datsun 280zx - out in the desert. When we were sailing out to the Channel Islands for the "Sea" portion, a pod of two hundred dolphins were kind enough to show up to set. The best moments are always the things you can't plan.



Continued on page 14

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Helmers Bethencourt, Compton, Davis, Dawson-Amoah

Continued from page 12



Isabel Bethencourt

Independent Media

Cusp (co-director; excerpt from feature documentary)

My feature documentary *Cusp* is my first directed work! I also shot the film, and it premiered at Sundance this year. We were picked up by Showtime for distribution, and it opened on their "screens" November 26th.

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My feature documentary *Cusp* is my first directed work! I also shot the film, and it premiered at Sundance this year. We were picked up by Showtime for distribution, and it opened on their "screens" November 26th.

2) How did you get into directing?

I naturally got into directing through cinematography and still photography. Looking through a lens made me realize that everything I was capturing had its own story. I was able to work on so many different types of narrative and documentary projects, that I found myself itching to direct my own projects.

3) What is your most recent project?

Cusp, my feature documentary.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

I love directing because I get to work with different people and collaborate in new ways on every project. I genuinely enjoy the unique and intense creative problem solving that comes with making films, and figuring out the best way to bring an audience into a story. Most of all, it's incredible to get to do a job that encourages exploration, curiosity, and empathy.



Paige Compton

Unaffiliated

Guide On (excerpt from short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

The most professional thing I have done to date is my thesis film with AFI. I am currently looking for professional opportunities to direct.

2) How did you get into directing?

I have always wanted to make movies. So after trying all the different positions in filmmaking I found during my undergrad that directing is where I really shine.

10) Tell us about your background (i.e., where did you grow up? Past jobs?)

I grew up in Manteca, CA. In the middle of farm country. Until I signed up to join the Army. I spent my 20's serving in the military and when I got out I pursued my education in film. And the rest is history.

11) How has the pandemic impacted your career, art, craft, shaped your attitudes and reflections on life which in turn may influence your work, approach, spirit, mindset?

I graduated from AFI in 2020. And with the lull of no work and no promise of it anytime in the near future, I made a commitment to myself to only focus on directing. Focusing on my knowledge and skills to become a more well-rounded director. And also only taking gigs that will help me to learn more and apply more skills to my directing tool belt. I committed to not wasting time on anything else.



Tyler Davis

Tessa Films

Images Med Spa's "So What?" (commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

"So What?" - Images Med Spa - September, 2020

2) How did you get into directing?

I've been filming and directing videos and shorts with my friends and colleagues since college, but during the pandemic I was a part of a from home sketch comedy show on the streaming service TOPIC. I wrote, self produced and directed weekly sketches that eventually got me on the radar of Tessa Films and CBS.

3) What is your most recent project?

I'm currently serving as associate director of the ViacomCBS 2022 Sketch Comedy Showcase: A yearly outreach and diversity initiative that gives up and coming talent from across the country a platform to be seen by the industry. It's dope, check it out!

4) What is the best part of being a director?

The energy of everyone on set! It takes so much planning and hours to get something produced, and walking on set feels like the payoff of all that work. I'm the most awake on the day, even if I'm tired from the aforementioned planning and man hours. When I'm excited on the day then I can't wait to show the finished product to the team that helped bring it all together.



Ewurakua Dawson-Amoah

Greenpoint Pictures

To the Girl that Looks Like Me (short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

Cricket Wireless HBCU campaign, July 2021.

2) How did you get into directing?

When I was younger my mum would take my brother and I to "Reading Wednesdays" each week without fail. Both of my parents pressed the importance of reading and expanding our knowledge so books were everywhere in our house. I became entranced with fantasy novels and loved that books gave me the freedom to imagine my own visuals. However, when my favorite novels were developed into films, I realized that none of the characters I'd connected with so strongly looked like me. I started to re-write my favorite stories to change this, where each lead character looked, sounded, smelled and dressed like myself and my family. Where the protagonist slept in her bonnet before waking up to save the world. Where there was fufu on the table and banku cooking on the stove. This started my journey into screenwriting. Once I realized that I could change these narratives by being the one who called the shots, I put all my energy into becoming a director.

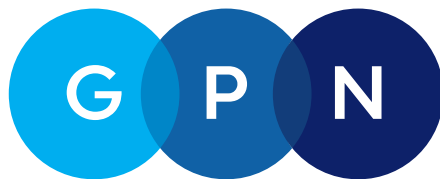
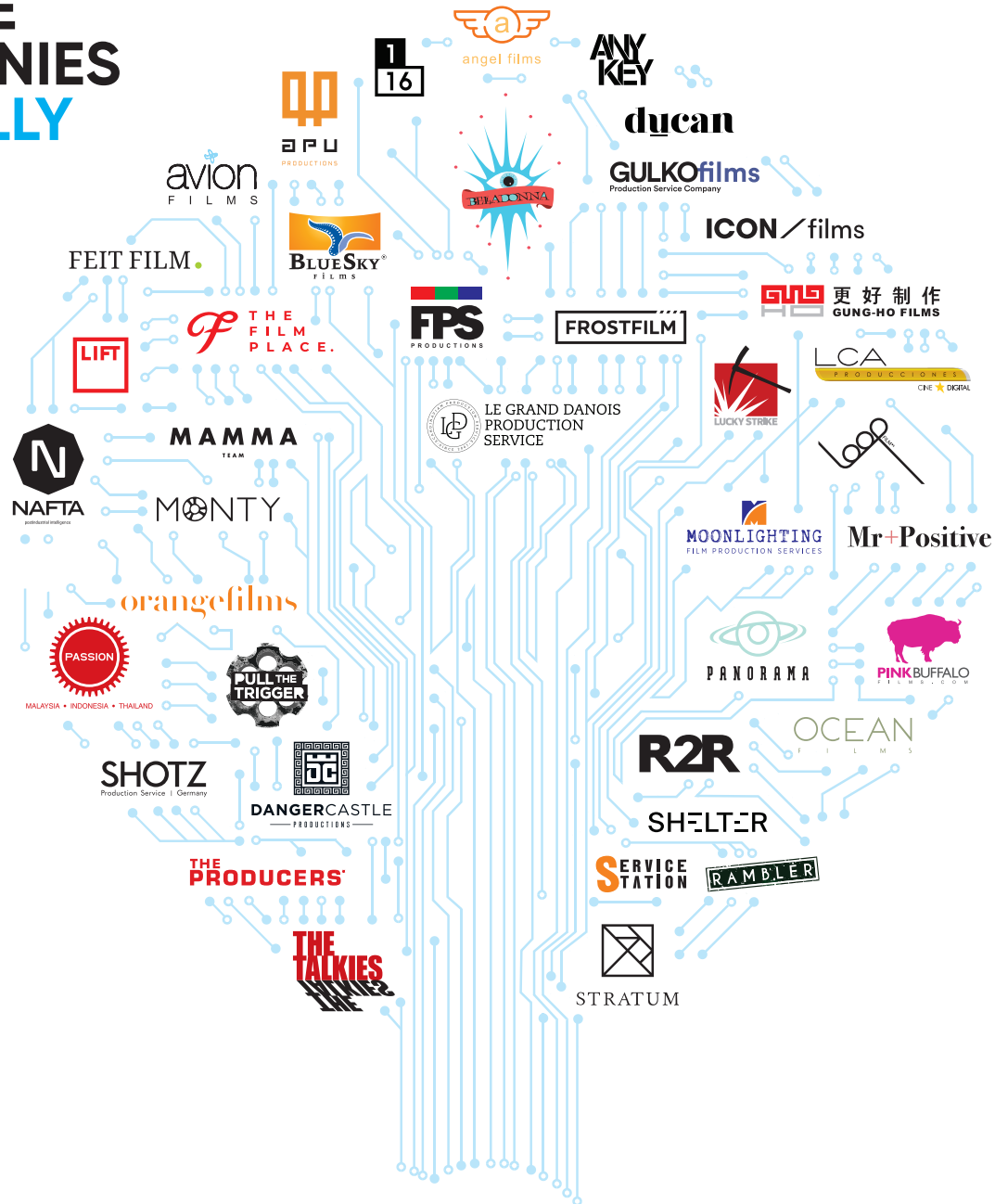
4) What is the best part of being a director?

Taking a tiny idea from the page and transforming it to the screen. I love overseeing the journey from pre production, into production and finally post. The magic of gathering a stellar team to bring a vision to life is the best thrill in the world. Each morning I wake up and remember I do this for my career I get goosebumps.



Continued on page 16

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Showcase Directors Egbuonu, Felix, Ferguson, Garza

Continued from page 14



Oge Egbuonu
 ms ng p eces
 Levi's "Beauty of Becoming"
 (branded content)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

Levi's Voting commercial. Last year in August

2) How did you get into directing?

I was offered the chance to direct a documentary and I went for it!

3) What is your most recent project?

Levi's "Beauty of Becoming" global campaign.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

Being able to tell stories that aren't often told and collaborating with amazing folks.



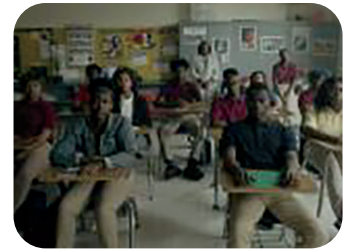
Abraham Felix
 Curfew
 The Boris Lawrence Henson
 Foundation's "The Unspoken
 Curriculum" (PSA)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

In 2018 I directed a branded doc film for my hometown chapter of the YWCA. We told the story of a Black mother, Penny, who at the age of 34 gave birth to her third child and shortly thereafter had a heart attack. She survived, but her road to recovery was incredibly difficult. She struggled in every aspect of her life and deeply despaired at her inability to live the radiant independent life she lived before the heart attack. Then the YWCA stepped up and gave her the tools and support she needed to become whole again. It was a beautiful story. And for me it was the first time in my independent filmmaking journey that a production company approached me and said "Hey we think you're the perfect person to tell this story." And I've been fortunate to just keep going ever since.

9) What is your favorite movie? Your favorite television/online program? Your favorite commercial or branded content?

Another difficult choice! Hard to say. But if I happen to walk past a TV and *There Will be Blood*, *Training Day*, *Beau Travail*, *Moonlight*, or *The Two Towers* happens to be playing... I'm probably dropping everything to watch.



Devon Ferguson
 Cortez Brothers (U.S.); Birth (U.K.);
 Suneeva (Canada)
 Monster.com's "Stare"
 (spec commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

Most of my experience comes from winning commercial contests and directing spec spots. I only started getting attention from reps this past year after winning a Young Directors Award for my Monster.com spot "Stare."

3) What is your most recent project?

I just finished shooting a Geico spec spot that I also wrote called "Accent." We had a blast shooting it. I could've cut it five different ways because we had so many different alt. versions that all worked, which is really a testament to the great actors that were a part of the shoot.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

Getting to collaborate with people more talented than me. (Muahahaha!)



Mario Garza
 Unaffiliated
 MeUndies "Love Every Flaw"
 (spec commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

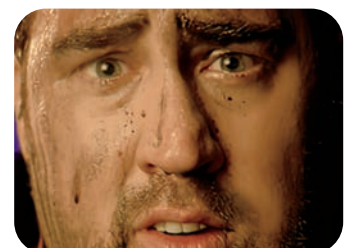
If by professionally you mean paid, it was 2019 when I worked full-time at Honey, a tech company that saves you money.

2) How did you get into directing?

I've worked as an advertising copywriter for a while now, and every time I'd go to shoot a commercial I want to direct it. So I started creating my own projects, investing in myself to define my style.

3) What is your most recent project?

The latest projects I've directed are two commercials and a short-form web series. I do have several narrative projects in development at the moment.



NDS Filmmakers Utsab Giri, John Connor Hammond



Utsab Giri

Unaffiliated

Tesla's "Space X" (spec commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first professionally directed work was a short documentary-style video for a cemetery in early 2019.

11) How has the pandemic impacted your career, art, craft, shaped your attitudes and reflections on life which in turn may influence your work, approach, spirit, mindset?

Before the pandemic, I was working full time at Panavision New York, and shooting passion projects on the side, which kept me very busy.

and shooting passion projects on the side, which kept me very busy.

Once everything shut down, I used the time to shoot all kinds of videos (including a talk show) in my apartment.

It allowed me the freedom to explore and develop my craft in ways that I never could've imagined. While people around the country were desperate to be free, I found freedom in creativity.

And isn't that, to a large extent, what we do? We're constantly faced with obstacles, from pre-production, through production and into postproduction. But we roll with the punches, we work with the challenges, and do our best work despite the limitations.



John Connor Hammond

Unaffiliated

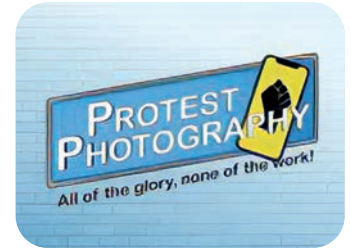
Protest Photography (short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first professionally directed work was for a small cannabis grower and distributor called Private Stock Veterans. This was a pretty cool experience because I was sort of new to directing. We drove out into the middle of the desert somewhere outside of Los Angeles to this massive weed farm. Being from New York, I had never seen anything like this before. Also, the business was owned and operated by veterans and a portion of the proceeds went towards helping veterans in need - so it was quite rewarding as well.

3) What is your most recent project?

I recently directed a comedic 30-second television spot for Nations Lending with Boathouse Agency. The spot featured, of all things, Dennis Rodman and a super cute pug. It was an awesome experience to work with Dennis Rodman, especially in a comedic capacity—the guy has great timing!

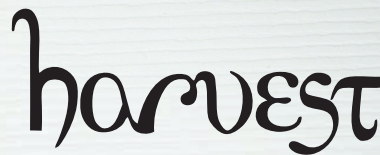


Continued on page 18

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Showcase Filmmakers Chloe Hayward, Parker Hill

Continued from page 17



Chloe Hayward
Knucklehead Films
Staying (short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

I grabbed a camera and shot my pregnant best friend and her son, it got picked up by lingerie brand Cuup as one of their first campaign films.

2) How did you get into directing?

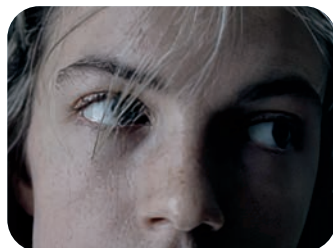
I had a career in modeling and trained as an actress in London and New York, but I think I ultimately wanted to be the creator rather than the canvas. I became interested in challenging conventional roles of women in cinema which led me to pursue writing and directing.

3) What is your most recent project?

Staying is my most recent project, a passion project stemming from the staggering statistics of domestic abuse over lockdown.

8) Who is your favorite director and why?

I can't choose!



Parker Hill

Tomorrow

Cusp (co-director; excerpt from feature documentary)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first directing job was a commercial for ESPN's SEC network called "We Love It Here" in November 2019. We went to a bunch of schools in the SEC and filmed traditions each of them has around football, tailgating, and school spirit. It was a blast getting to go to games and being immersed in the passion and distinct culture of each university.

2) How did you get into directing?

I've always known I wanted to be a filmmaker, and I went to NYU's film school at Tisch.

While there I spent more time writing and producing. It was once I graduated that I discovered photography and that really propelled me into directing.

It was like it all clicked for me—the writing now paired with visuals and I understood and connected with storytelling on a new level.



PARKER HILL

CONGRATULATIONS ON ALL OF YOUR SUCCESS WITH CUSP & 2021 SHOOT NEW DIRECTORS SHOWCASE! WE THINK YOU'RE **RAD.**

tomorrow.tv

TOMORROW

LJ Johnson, Julia Kennelly



LJ Johnson

Current Resident

Breakdowns (excerpt from TV series pilot)

and was about adults who run a lemonade stand in Los Angeles.

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

I did two spec spots for YouTheFan in November of 2020, the brand loved them so much they bought them! They then hired me to direct a bunch more spots for them!

2) How did you get into directing?

My first foray into directing was after I spent a year pitching a TV pilot to networks and was met with a whole lot of rejection. I decided to write and direct a web series that made ME laugh. It was called *Life's Lemonade*

3) What is your most recent project?

I just wrote and directed two comedy spots for Gutter Helmet. The ad agency and client let me get super weird with them, and I mean weird in the best way! It's always super exciting when you get to make ads that look and feel like something that hasn't been done before! I also have been shopping around my indie pilot *Breakdowns*, which is a mockumentary style show about a Minneapolis commercial casting office.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

Oh man, that's hard. I think for me it's world building, creating a universe that feels authentic to the viewer, even if it's super bizarre.



Julia Kennelly

Unaffiliated

Marcy Learns Something New (excerpt from short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

I have not yet professionally directed, although I have been professionally producing and line producing for the better part of a decade. I have written and directed two short films, and I have a television show in development that I hope to direct someday!

6) What is your current career focus: commercials and branded content, television, movies? Do you plan to specialize in a particular genre—comedy, drama, visual effects, etc.?

I am most passionate about narrative film, whether movies or television.

I'm generally drawn to comedy, as it allows me to explore uncomfortable topics in an approachable way—but I often find myself in more of a dramedy space than broad comedy. Although I have yet to direct a commercial, I've done a lot of work as a commercial line producer and find the short-form world very exciting creatively as well.

7) Have you a mentor and if so, who is that person (or persons) and what has been the lesson learned from that mentoring which resonates with you?

I don't have a mentor, but I do have a close-knit group of peers that I love and respect. Daisy Zhou, Karine Benzaria and Will Mayo are all dear friends and long-time collaborators—I have learned so much from them, and trust them with the earliest and most moronic drafts of my ideas. It's very exciting to be at a place where you start to see success for your friends who you've been rooting for since the beginning.



CONGRATS LJ JOHNSON

SHOOT New Directors Showcase

(write something funny here)



#hireafunnywoman

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Continued on page 20

Showcase Helmers Lee, Loftin, Maruchniak, Newman

Continued from page 19



Natasha Lee
Unaffiliated
In The Visible
(trailer for her short film)

7) Have you a mentor and if so, who is that person (or persons) and what has been the lesson learned from that mentoring which resonates with you?

Commercial director Jordan Brady has been very supportive of my pursuit of directing while also demystifying a lot the workings behind building a directing career. His emphasis on the craft and process behind filmmaking is one of the lessons that resonates with me the most.

8) Who is your favorite director and why?

There are a handful of directors I feel are masters of creating mood and place...who are able to make a setting feel like character in their films- like Sofia Coppola with Tokyo in *Lost in Translation*, Wong Kar Wai with Hong Kong, especially in *Chungking Express*, and Alfonso Cuarón with Mexico City in *Roma*. With all these films, the heartbeat and energy of a place is such an indelible part of the story and characters.



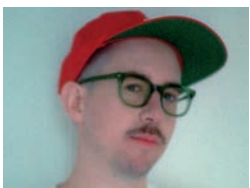
Leah Loftin
Unaffiliated
The Wolf (short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

Earlier this year, I directed an experimental short film entitled *North South Eve* that was commissioned by an international luxury chocolate brand. The film was recently invited to have its world premiere this November at the BAFTA-qualifying Aesthetica Short Film Festival in the UK.

8) Who is your favorite director and why?

Some of my favorite directors are Yorgos Lanthimos (I thought about *Dogtooth* constantly for years after first seeing it), Celine Sciamma, Federico Fellini, Agnes Varda, Todd Haynes, Catherine Breillat, Pawell Pawlikowski, Joanna Hogg—all who create beautifully stylized, subversive films, often about the female experience. I am especially inspired by the work of Rainer Werner Fassbinder. I adore the potent worlds he creates, meticulously framing his flawed characters in such vivid, stylized compositions that are flush with humanity. The influence of his extensive background in the theatre is evident in the elevated worlds he creates.



Dave Maruchniak
1stAveMachine Buenos Aires
The New Yorker's "The Right Question Changes Everything"
(commercial)

9) What is your favorite movie? Your favorite television/online program? Your favorite commercial or branded content?

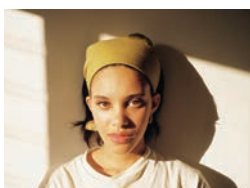
Let me turn this into a Top 5...

—Movies: *Finisterrae* by Sergio Caballero / *Rubber* by Quentin Dupieux / *Post Tenebras Lux* by Carlos Reygadas / *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch...* by Roy Andersson / *Waking Life* by Richard Linklater

—Shows: *The Shivering Truth* by Vernon Chatman & Cat Solen / *Primal* by Genndy Tartakovsky / *Tarantula* by Carson Mell / *Too Old to Die Young* by Nicolas Winding Refn / *Undone* by Hisko Hulsing

—Commercials: I love Juan Cabral's compelling way of telling stories. Martin Kalina's sense of humor. The craziness of directors like Keith Schofield, Oscar Hudson or MeatDept. Pablo Maestres' world building... but one of my favorite recent commercials has to be Nalle Sjöblad's work for Etisalat, "Moonwalk".

—I also recently became obsessed with Kasper Haggström music videos.



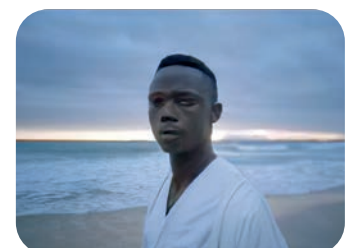
Jabu Nadia Newman
Park Pictures
The Dream That Refused Me (short)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

I think my first professionally directed work was my first music video called "Queenie" for FAKA feat. Angel-ho in September 2018. I co-directed and co-produced with a friend of mine Luvuyo Nyawose and we were fresh out of film school. We were all friends and it was just so much fun so it's hard to see it as "professionally" but we did have a tiny budget, crew and multiple locations. We shot at my old primary school, my grandmothers house and worked with all our friends. The first work where I had a client and was commissioned to direct a project only came in 2020 and 2021.

3) What is your most recent project?

I just recently completed two Nando's commercials, one for TV and one for online. At the same time I worked on an online and TV campaign for Adidas Open Forum. Both projects were so different and so much fun. I got to learn different aspects of directing from each brand and tell completely different stories.



NDS Filmmakers Amber Park, Bianca Poletti



1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

Olivia O'Brien x Asos—"Now" Music Video and Back to school product featuring of August 2020. I had creative directed for a couple years prior, but this was my first proper debut in terms of directing a music video.

Amber Park

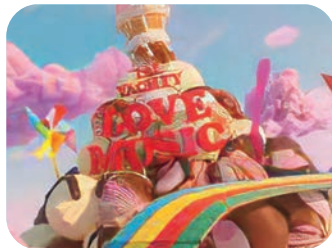
Believe Media
Lil Yachty's "Love Music"
(music video)

3) What is your most recent project?

Lennon Stella's "Fancy" music video and CHLOE at the 2021 MTV Video Music Awards performance. I have also finished shooting a couple projects that will be releasing early next year in 2022.

10) Tell us about your background (i.e., where did you grow up? Past jobs?)

I grew up in Los Angeles. I am Korean American.



3) What is your most recent project?

Commercially I just wrapped directing four spots for a Starbucks holiday campaign. It was an incredible, unmatched experience. The creative team was so kind and actively encouraged my ideas, truly a wonderful team to collab with. As far as narrative work, I've recently finished directing a dark comedy short about two Millennials on a date.

Bianca Poletti

Epoch Films
Fertile (short film)

8) Who is your favorite director and why?

I have a lot of favorites, a few being Paul Thomas Anderson, Agnès Varda, Andrea Arnold,

Xavier Dolan, and John Cassavetes. I love all of their work for so many different reasons. Xavier Dolan's films are incredibly beautiful, every frame is so rich in color and emotion. I've seen *Mommy* at least 10 times! Paul Thomas Anderson is the ultimate filmmaker to me. His characters are always so rich with personality, and he has such a classic but consistently unique way of building his characters' worlds.



Continued on page 22



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Drew Pollins, Zack Seckler

Continued from page 21



Drew Pollins

Unaffiliated

"Is It Over?" (PSA)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

"Bring Gaming to Life" for AMD Processors in 2019. We shot it as if the camera were exploring a scene that was frozen in time. We used some tried and true camera trickery and then elevated it with 3D modeled props floating in mid-air.

That same year I also was hired to direct the feature film, *Ice Cream in the Cupboard*. It premiered at Rhode Island International Film Festival, where it won a Best Feature and Audience Choice award. It's now available to stream on Amazon Prime.

3) What is your most recent project?

I just wrapped an American Express commercial with one of my favorite production companies, The Heist. I wrote and directed the spot, featuring a fictional family of miniature horse haulers who rise up to the new challenge of hauling standard-sized horses. Getting laughs from the client, agency, and producers all throughout the process made every day of working on it feel like play.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

Weaving together the talent of agencies, production companies, artists, and film crews is a magical process. We are all creatives in separate disciplines, but when we join together, we become filmmakers. Just like Megatron. I love that.



Zack Seckler

Station Film

State Farm's "Everyone's Unique" (commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My directing career was birthed from the womb of hard cider. You can't choose your parents but in this case I was fortunate to have the responsible drinkers at Strongbow take a chance on me back in 2018.

5) What is the worst part of being a director?

Losing a bid. It's like being slapped in the face with a large wet fish. It hurts and it stinks. But it's part of the experience of working in commercials and I try to learn from each impact.

10) Tell us about your background (i.e., where did you grow up? Past jobs?)

I was raised in Massachusetts by quirky intellectual parents and an emotionally vacant cat. My love for comedy emerged during elementary school with a fascination for New Yorker cartoons, George Carlin and SNL. I studied psychology at Syracuse University and followed the next logical step: freelance photography.

After a few years my photography career took off. I developed an award-winning portfolio of print advertising, editorial and fine art photography, including several major solo exhibitions praised by Architectural Digest, CNN and Wired.

In 2018 after a decade working in stills, I began to direct. Working in the motion medium quickly became fertile ground for my interests as a comedic storyteller. My sense of humor combined with a highly visual aesthetic seemed to strike a unique tone with creatives.



Hot Locations

Bruised Makes Mark On New Jersey

Halle Berry's directorial debut *Bruised* (Netflix) was shot entirely in New Jersey, largely at Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City and Elite Heat Boxing Gym in Newark. The story of a former mixed-martial arts fighter struggling to regain custody of her son and rekindle her athletic career, *Bruised* spent nearly \$10 million in New Jersey and hired hundreds of local cast and crew members. The *Bruised* cast includes Berry, Shamier Anderson, Adam Canto, Sheila Atim,



A scene from *Bruised*

Stephen McKinley Henderson, Lela Loren and UFC women's flyweight champion Valentina Shevchenko.

Other recent New Jersey projects include *The Many Saints of Newark*, *Wu-Tang: An American Saga*, and Steven Spielberg's remake of *West Side Story*. Helping to draw these and other projects into the Garden State is the New Jersey Film and Digital Media Tax Credit Program which offers eligible production companies a 30-35% transferable tax credit on qualified film production expenses, and an additional 2% diversity bonus for qualified productions.

Shand Named Cherokee Nation Film Commissioner

Cherokee Nation has named Kevin Shand as the tribe's new film commissioner and film office manager. Shand previously served as the Colorado state film commissioner and director of the Colorado Office of Film, Television and Media, a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade. Shand also served as executive director of the state's nonprofit Colorado Film Commission, as well as a film commissioner for Stanislaus County in California.

"Kevin has every skill set we were looking for in filling this opening. He has helped create and manage the Colorado film incentive program and wrote much of the early film legislation for the state," said Jennifer Loren, director of Cherokee Nation Film Office and Original Content. "His experience working with industry partners, Hollywood directors and filmmakers, location scouting, and much more will help Cherokee Nation Film Office champion the advancement of Oklahoma's film industry, but most importantly will help further our mission of advancing the presence of more Native Americans in both film and television."



Kevin Shand

Shand has also served as a member of the Association of Film Commissioners (AFCI) board of directors, as well as a chair and member of several of the association's key committees.

Shand said, "Oklahoma is poised to be the next major destination for filmmaking, and the Cherokee Nation has positioned itself ahead of the curve in preparing for a major economic expansion in the film industry. The Cherokee Nation is well prepared to be a leader in the content creation field for years to come, and I'm glad to be a small part of that."

Additionally Brettlyn Bevenue is also joining the film office staff and will serve under Shand as an outreach specialist.

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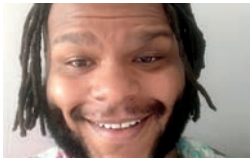
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Continued on page 23

Khalid Sena, Jane Stephens Rosenthal, Ben Strang

Continued from page 22



Khalid Sena
Unaffiliated
Concrete Rose
(excerpt from short film)

10) Tell us about your background (i.e., where did you grow up? Past jobs?)

I grew up in the Lower East Side New York City, I love my neighborhood because of the various different ethnicities I was exposed to as a kid. It allowed me to interact with others from different walks of life and viewpoints different from mine. This is something I carried with me in my previous jobs working as a production assistant on many sets throughout NYC.

11) How has the pandemic impacted your career, art, craft, shaped your attitudes and reflections on life which in turn may influence your work, approach, spirit, mindset?

Entering the world as a filmmaker has been difficult post pandemic, Getting my film into festivals has been fun but where things get frustrating is getting the facetime as a filmmaker at these festivals. The majority of festivals *Concrete Rose* has gotten into have been virtual. So while my film has been getting seen all over the country, me as the director and co-writer haven't gotten any facetime. With everything being virtual you miss those Q and A's and those mixers to network.



Jane Stephens Rosenthal
Unaffiliated
The Hideaway
(excerpt from short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

Everything I had made so far has been out of love and desire to create. I would say my most professional project would be my latest *The Hideaway*, which was my thesis film from the American Film Institute.

2) How did you get into directing?

I've always been a director, I just didn't know I was. I grew up on movies, I've always loved movies, I've always been in awe of movies, movies have always been a part of saving my life, but I never considered directing. Editing, sure, that was like writing poetry, but it wasn't until I had written a project for myself to act in called *No One Ever Said* in 2016 that I considered directing. I did a test shoot, and realized, with the encouragement of an incredible producer that if I wanted to see the very personal story I had written on screen the way I intended it, I was going to have to direct it. And I was sold. Here was a chance to mix everything I loved—words, the body, music, image, sound, composition and get to point/place/move and swirl them all together. I've never looked back.



Ben Strang
Sarofsky
Argenx's A Mystery To Me: Vanetta
(excerpt from short film documentary series)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first film was a digital series pilot called *Beast* that was completed in 2019. We shot the project on a remote island in the Chesapeake Bay and the story followed a teenage boy setting out to figure out what happened to his father after a mysterious disappearance at sea.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

Being in the field shooting a documentary has always been my favorite part of directing. I've never really been a sit behind the monitor type of filmmaker and the process of living and breathing with a subject and experiencing their life through the camera is just an absolute thrill to me—it feels like jazz improvisation whereas scripted filmmaking feels more like classical music to me.



Continued on page 24

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Directors Emily Elizabeth Thomas, Grayson Whitehurst

Continued from page 23



Emily Elizabeth Thomas

Sibling/Rivalry

ESPN/Disney+'s "The Mandalorian" (branded tie-in promo)

4) What is the best part of being a director?

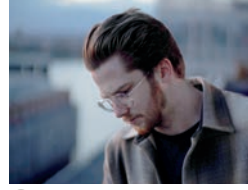
Telling stories for a living. Working with actors. Seeing your visions come to life on the monitor. Collaborating with incredible crew, talent and artists. Dreaming. Playing. Being on set. Watching movies all the time. Writing all the time. Going back to the drawing board when things aren't working and figuring out an even better way forward. Those magic moments where you know you got it. I could go on... there's so much I love about what I do.



3) What is your most recent project?

A short experimental Western on 16mm film titled *Cowboy Truths*. I make a Western-leaning film about every year. I'm from Texas so the Southern influence is very strong in my work. Not just in the way of cowboys and sunsets, but in a very holistic sense. I like underdogs, the ragtag spirit, colors that look like they've been left out in the sun, grit. *Cowboy Truths* was this year's nod to the Wild West.

I am always working on the ongoing project of my feature film script. It's a very important story to me that's been many years in the making. I'm looking forward to finding the right producing team to support it.



Grayson Whitehurst

Los York

Purple's "Life-Changing Sleep" (spec commercial)

8) Who is your favorite director and why?

Choosing one is really difficult. Michael Haneke is up there; his work is exceptionally polarizing and he has no problem waging war on your psyche. I love Paul Schrader's dialogue, he's one of the best writer/directors of all time in my mind. Yorgos and Bergman, too—I love morality plays. I also wish that Sylvia Plath could've dipped her toes into filmmaking while she was here.

7) Have you a mentor and if so, who is that person (or persons) and what has been the lesson learned from that mentoring which resonates with you?

Regarding my foray into commercials, director Jackson Tisi (who's also my best friend) has been a great mentor. He dove into commercial work both immediately and fearlessly after we graduated from NYU, and he's been instrumental in helping me navigate the course thus far.

Seth Epstein (founder of Los York) has also taught me quite a bit about the nature of the beast in a very short amount of time. He's invigorated by the process of fostering and guiding budding talent, and I'm beyond thankful for the guidance that he's provided me since I've met him.



Congrats — Emily Elizabeth 2021 SHOOT New Directors Showcase

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ADVICE FOR NEW DIRECTORS



DJay Brawner

Executive Producer/Partner, Tuff Contender

DO NOT GIVE UP. If you have talent, drive, and ambition, you have a shot at making it as a “professional” director. It’s really easy for new directors to look at their peers or others on Instagram and feel like they are succeeding quicker than they are. Which could be true, but it doesn’t mean that you cannot still succeed, and even surpass others. Sometimes you have to just grind it out to get noticed. To have work that speaks to new audiences, it takes time to find and develop your voice — don’t expect it to happen overnight. It didn’t for me, it didn’t for many of the directors we work with at Tuff Contender.



Kira Carstensen

Global Managing Partner, Merman

I think the most important thing for new directors is to not wait for the perfect opportunities to come along; you have to create your opportunities. That means making things that move you, that show the audience how you see the world. In the beginning of your career, this is the time to establish your voice and vision. There will be plenty of time for compromise later. But in the beginning, you have the great privilege of deciding what stories you want to tell. With the ability to self-distribute on YouTube or Vimeo channels, your work will get noticed. The right people will find you if you are true to your voice and vision. The second thing to note is that film is a collaborative medium — you need others to realize your vision. So, if you don’t come from a film school, seek out groups like Women in Film or Film Independent, where you can find support and crew to help you make things.



Hal Dantzler

Executive Producer/Creative Content, charlieuniformtango

To be successful, a director’s reel must show creative range, but it must also present a cohesive directorial style that ties everything together and tells people who that director is. These days, we’re seeing how important it is to include short-form commercial work—not just music videos or shorts. Agency creatives and their clients need to know that a director can tell their story in a :15, :30, or a :60. And I encourage our directors to find a balance between their love of storytelling and current marketing trends. It’s not news that every campaign needs a social component with shorter bits of content. The days of agency creatives rolling their eyes at the idea of doing :15s and :06s are long gone. These elements should be embraced as opportunities to deliver powerful little messages. If long-form is the “comedy special,” :06s are the sharp one-liners you’ll remember long after the laughter dies down.



Jesse Dylan

Founder/CEO, Wondros

Always practice your craft. Everybody has an iPhone, so you can make things yourself easily while trying to get that break in the business. You’d be surprised how creative you can be on your phone and what you can edit on your own computer. Just continue to make things. Be innovative. Work with the people in your life — family and friends, your pets, your neighbors. You’ll probably do some of your most inspired work when you’re not getting paid. Have your work ready to go and be prepared to show it if you have the chance. And do your homework. Find out what companies are out there, and have fun when introducing yourself to new people.



Shannon Lords-Houghton

Executive Producer/Owner, Mutt Film

I think the most important thing for a new director is to have a distinct point of view and that’s a very difficult thing to have really though it sounds simple. It’s about knowing what you want to say or show and knowing how best to do that so it helps define who you are and what you want to achieve. Right. Not easy. We see so much work that lacks this element and so when we see someone who has thought about the direction they want to go in, they really stand out. We always say don’t follow trends because by the time you notice them, they are already gone. The best thing to remember is that yes, every story has been told, probably a million times in a million ways, but not by you.



Rebecca Niles

Managing Director, Live Action, ArtClass

Enjoy the process! Take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way in the early days, and strive to make it the absolute best. Research production companies of all sizes, and find fellow directors’ work you love, and reach out to them to share your work, even if just one piece. Remember you are emailing a human on the other side and be personable!

Don’t rush to get on a roster too quickly, develop your style, and ask for advice from those you admire. Eventually, you will find the right team and EP who will help you foster your directorial style and push you in new ways. Getting on a roster won’t guarantee a windfall of work, especially at the beginning of your career. Keep going after opportunities to shoot; you never know which small job will get you your first big one.



Hani Selim

Executive Producer/Managing Director, Durable Goods

The saturation and competition of directors in the advertising space is the highest I have ever seen, but directors shouldn’t feel discouraged. Rather, they should find their voice within the noise and hone their specific style. I know directors hate to be pegged into one genre, but understand that creative directors and clients are looking for a specific skill set and genre when choosing a director, so one must specialize. Always be creating; don’t wait for a job.

Also, while the trend to stay freelance is so appealing these days, make sure you understand the pros and cons. Being freelance appears, at the surface, as a way to get as many leads as possible. However, when agencies see more and more that you are being presented from so many production companies, it does lessen your value.

Editor’s Note: SHOOT thanks the above executives for sharing their advice for new directors. See article with their complete comments on SHOOTonline and in the SHOOT>e.dition.

Delving Into A Documentary State of Mind

Shedding light on *The Rescue*, *The First Wave* and *Becoming Cousteau*

A SHOOT Staff Report



The guild awards season is on the horizon. And among the marquee competitions is the DGA Awards within which lurks a hot documentary race. The contenders include a mix that runs the gamut from first-time feature documentarians to seasoned filmmakers, a number of whom have been past DGA nominees and/or winners.

Prime examples of first-time solo directors of a feature documentary—who have already registered on the current awards show circuit—are: Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson for *Summer of Soul (... Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)* (Searchlight Pictures/Hulu); Jessica Beshir for *Faya Dayi* (Janus Films) and Jessica Kingdon for *Ascension* (MTV Documentary Films).

There’s also a hybrid new/veteran director in the discussion-lauded narrative filmmaker Todd Haynes (*Far From Heaven*, *Carol*) who’s made an auspicious documentary directorial debut with *The Velvet Underground* (Apple TV+).

The Velvet Underground was recently

nominated for Best Music Documentary at the IDA Documentary Awards. Up for that same honor is *Summer of Soul*, one of four IDA noms it received, the others spanning Best Feature Documentary, Best Director and Best Editing.

Meanwhile *Ascension* tied with *Summer of Soul* for the most nominations, six, in the Critics Choice Documentary Awards. *Summer of Soul* wound up winning all six of the categories in which it received a nod—for Best Documentary Feature, as well as Best First Documentary Feature, Editing, Archival Documentary, Music Documentary, and attaining a tie for Best Director (with Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin for *The Rescue*).

Summer of Soul topped the Critics Choice Best First Documentary Feature category which also included *Faya Dayi*, *The Velvet Underground*, *Ascension*, and Kristine Stolaskis’ *Pray Away* (Netflix).

On the other end of the documentary experience continuum are the likes of: Vasarhelyi and Chin, Oscar winners and

DGA nominees for *Free Solo* in 2019, who are now being recognized for *The Rescue* (National Geographic Documentary Films); Julie Cohen and Betsy West, Oscar and DGA nominees in 2019 for *RBG* and now in the running for *My Name is Pauli Murray* (Amazon Studios) and *Julia* (CNN Films); Liz Garbus, Oscar and DGA-nominated for *What Happened, Miss Simone?* in 2016 and today once again in the awards season conversation for *Becoming Cousteau* (National Geographic and Disney+); Orlando von Einsiedel, Oscar and DGA-nominated for *Virunga* in 2015 (and winner of the Best Documentary Oscar for *White Helmets* in 2017) who now is generating buzz for heading a collective of filmmakers behind *Convergence: Courage In A Crisis* (Netflix); and Matthew Heineman, an Oscar nominee and DGA winner for *Cartel Land* in 2016 (and two years later winning his second DGA Award for *City of Ghosts*), who once more is front and center in the awards landscape for *The First Wave* (National Geographic,

From top left, clockwise: A scene from *Summer of Soul*; a scene from *The First Wave*; filmmaker Matthew Heineman; a scene from *The Rescue*; documentarian Chai Vasarhelyi; documentarian Jimmy Chin; documentary filmmaker Liz Garbus

GUILD AWARDS PREVIEW

Neon), which last month won the IDA's coveted Pare Lorentz Award.

Matthew Heineman

Whereas Haynes diversified from narrative features to make his first documentary, Heineman went the opposite route. A two-time DGA nominee as a documentarian, Heineman moved into narrative film with *A Private War* which in 2019 earned him a third DGA nomination—for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in First-Time Feature Film. Heineman thus joined Martin Scorsese as the only directors ever to be nominated for both narrative and documentary DGA Awards. *A Private War* starred Rosamund Pike as the late great war correspondent Marie Colvin.

Heineman's recently released documentary *The First Wave* takes us inside Long Island Jewish Medical Center, one of NY's hardest hit hospitals, during the harrowing first four months of the pandemic. Heineman's signature approach of character-driven cinema verite casts light on the everyday heroes at the epicenter of COVID-19, including Dr. Nathalie Dougé and ICU nurse Kellie Wunsch who put their own lives at risk to save the lives of others. The patients and their families are also heroic as Heineman introduces us to COVID-stricken Ahmed Ellis and Brussels Jabon who are fighting to survive.

Finding these people to tell their stories, serving as a microcosm through which audiences could view the emotional and societal impacts of the pandemic, was key. "People don't like talking about casting for documentaries. But that is what happens. They are the storytellers," said Heineman who cited Dr. Dougé as an example, willing to share what she was going through, possessing an electric personality and whose caring shone through despite the horror of it all.

"This was the most terrifying film I've ever made on almost every level—logistically, emotionally, physically," affirmed Heineman. "What drove us every single day was the amazing fortitude, courage, love and humanity that we witnessed. Yet I didn't go to bed feeling sad. Instead I felt deeply inspired. Those two realities can co-exist—fear and danger, the terror of it all, along with perseverance, love and humanity." To hear Heineman describe *The First Wave* as "the most terrifying film"

he's taken on carries considerable weight given that he received the International Documentary Association's Courage Under Fire Award in 2015 for *Cartel Land*, a remarkable and startling film exposing the world of vigilante groups in Mexico and its border towns, and their formidable opponent, the drug cartels.

Heineman explained that in conflict zones around the world, including in *Cartel Land*, there were times when you could detach yourself, take a breather. But for *The First Wave*, the feelings of concern were constant. He explained. "In *The First Wave*, we were living what we were documenting. There was no sort of turning things off. During those early months, even when we weren't filming, we felt danger—just going to get groceries. Every human being was living with uncertainty that didn't go away as people were getting sick and dying. Isolation, lack of human connection all obviously existed for us as a film crew."

Heineman said that "first and foremost" on his mind was "the safety of our crew and our participants. We knew so little about the disease at that time, how it was transmitted. It was terrifying in those early days. Every single aspect of making a documentary carried a potential weapon that could kill us—things as mundane as putting a camera down on a counter, walking into someone's home. All these things had ramifications that you had to figure out. This was a full-on experience that lasted 24/7 for months."

Sharing what was going on in the hospitals, what frontline workers, the patients, and the families of those frontline workers and patients were going through is profoundly important—and the world might have been better served if these realities were fully evident from the outset. Heineman observed, "One of the greatest tragedies of COVID is that this pandemic that could have brought the country together but instead it further divided us. It didn't have to happen this way. We as an American public were so shielded from the realities happening in hospitals. Looking back at Vietnam, the images of casualties, cities being bombed helped to inform public discourse. Here in the early weeks of COVID we didn't have all the images which is what allowed it to be politicized, leading to disinformation and distrust of basic sci-

ence and facts."

Heineman described *The First Wave* as being about so much more than COVID—including the disproportionate impact on people of color, the related topic of national reckoning over racism after the killing of George Floyd, the power of human connection, the experiences of trauma and isolation, and quite simply a love letter to New York City. If pressed, though, to distill the film to what resonated most for him, Heineman shared that it would be "how human beings come together in the face of crisis," as evident from what we saw from the likes of Dr. Dougé, nurse Wunsch, patients Ellis and Jabon.

Vasarhelyi and Chin

From the summit in their 2019 Oscar-winning *Free Solo* to the depths of a flooded subterranean cave in *The Rescue*—which opened theatrically in October—documentarians Vasarhelyi and Chin have navigated a wide range of filmmaking terrain. But in covering what appears to be new ground this time around, there are some familiar themes which connect the two narratives as masterfully told by the wife-and-husband directing team—one being a story which suspends us alongside free solo rock climber Alex Honnold on the Yosemite granite monolith of El Capitan while the other retraces the rescue of the youth soccer team from Northern Thailand's Tham Luang Nang Non cave in 2018, detailing the miraculous work of an international group of elite cave divers and members of the Thai Navy Seals.

Chin touched upon the parallels, observing, "These are very obscure, what I would call lifestyle sports (alpine climbing and underwater cave diving). These aren't things you can dabble in. Lives are constructed around these lifestyles—and the spaces of exploration are extraordinary. There's not a lot of room for error. It takes a certain type of personality and mind that enjoys connecting with these high stakes. Similarities exist among people who are seeking a very deep experience."

Both stories also reflect that human will and sense of purpose can help achieve the seemingly impossible, noted Vasarhelyi.

Still, while there are similarities, a major difference resided in how to go about telling each story. While *Free Solo* entailed death defying photography, there was no

event to shoot for *The Rescue*. Instead Chin and Vasarhelyi had to track down footage—including volumes of news coverage from outside the cave with very little from within—and somehow cobble together and do justice to a compelling real-life tale that captivated the world but could not be clearly seen as the rescue took place in pitch-black waters.

Chin related that Vasarhelyi was persistent, for example, in her efforts to access Thai Navy Seal footage—a time consuming quest that had her meeting virtually, often via Zoom, with the powers that be over an extended stretch but to no avail. It wasn't until she went to an admiral's house, knocked on the door and connected face to face that permission was granted for her and Chin to use this invaluable footage.

The pandemic also took its toll on the process. Not being able to spend much in-person time with the participants, having to rely on virtual encounters precluded the happy discoveries that could normally be made during the course of casual conversations or over a lunch or dinner. Without those kind of opportunities, it became a more difficult proposition to get to know somebody, to establish a trust and rapport.

Nonetheless, Vasarhelyi and Chin did just that, connecting well enough to shed light on the rescuers in particular. Consider John Volanthen and Rick Stanton, a pair of middle-aged British underwater cave diver enthusiasts whose expertise made them integral to getting a rescue attempt off the ground. The highly trained Navy Seals could not perform in the dark cave depths at the level of these weekend civilian hobbyists who had years of experience. *The Rescue* helps us gain insights into Volanthen and Stanton, two unassuming men who share a love of going it alone in muddy, dark, underwater recesses. Their loner orientation, they acknowledge, was born in part by their lack of success in team sports as youths. While most would panic in dark isolation, they each seem to find a sense of peace, solace and refuge in this environment.

Vasarhelyi shared that she still gets emotional when discussing the story. "It's raw for me," she shared, citing "the absolute morality" of the story, an affirmation of the idea that "you can be your best self." The Navy Seals, the divers, she observed,

Continued on page 28

Liz Garbus Takes A Deep Dive Into Jacques Cousteau's World

Continued from page 27

“only had everything to lose by participating.” But they rose to the challenge, embraced the idea of being their best selves, to make selfless decisions. She hopes that this carries lessons for us all, including in how we respond to the COVID pandemic.

Vasarhelyi added that the story of *The Rescue* was one of “people coming together and achieving the impossible.” It reflects how if we all just unite, things can be better. For this rescue mission some 5,000 people, a diverse cross-section of humanity, came together for the greater good. “When you cooperate, you can achieve,” she concluded.

Liz Garbus

In making *Becoming Cousteau*, Liz Garbus found a kindred filmmaking spirit in Jacques Cousteau, the late, great explorer known for shedding light on the underwater universe. Cousteau was also well ahead of his time with his dedication to raising

awareness of the pressing need to protect our oceans from climate change.

While Garbus has two Oscar nominations—for *The Farm: Angola, USA* and

Silent World in 1957, which he and Louis Malle directed; the live-action short *The Golden Fish* in 1960, which Cousteau produced; and *World Without Sun* in 1965, a

tary in 2015, was gaining the trust of the Cousteau family. It took years for her to gain approval from the Cousteau Society and his estate for access to much needed archives, key people and other resources. Cousteau’s second wife, Francine Cousteau, and their two children, Pierre Yves and Dianne, are executive producers on *Becoming Cousteau*. Besides the late Philippe, Jacques Cousteau had another son, Jean-Michel, from his first marriage.

While Cousteau’s TV work—which garnered assorted Emmy nominations, earning a Primetime Award win and induction for him into the Television Academy Hall of Fame—became darker, more stark and serious in his later years, these efforts today are regarded as being on the informed cutting edge as he expressed concern for our environment, noting that many countries seem to believe the myth that the seas are inexhaustible resources. At a famed 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro—in which he was the star attraction among world leaders—Cousteau affirmed that we cannot jeopardize future generations, our children and their children, by ignoring environmental crises, including the impact of climate change.

Fast forward to today with the recently wrapped 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, aka COP26, in Glasgow and Cousteau’s message takes on even greater urgency. “How ardent he was, how clear his expression of urgency was,” said Garbus. “He talked about throwing blank checks at future generations—that was directed at my generation and we failed. Here we are with more blank checks for our children. To push the metaphor further, Earth cannot withstand all these withdrawals. It is time to replenish.”

Garbus observed that in listening to Cousteau’s words in 1992, he seemed to feel somewhat hopeful that we could preserve and protect our environment. He had faith in our capacity to problem solve and innovate. Now, though, we have drawn much closer to the 11th hour. Cousteau’s warning is even more alarming today and it remains to be seen if his faith will prove well founded.

Garbus observed that “the future of our species, and the survival of huge swaths of biodiversity on the planet will depend on innovation in the spirit of Cousteau.”



Photo courtesy of The Cousteau Society

Jacques Cousteau aboard The Calypso in *Becoming Cousteau*

the aforementioned *What Happened Miss Simone?*—Cousteau is a three-time Oscar winner for the feature documentary *The*

Cousteau directed feature doc.

Garbus strongly identified with what she described as Cousteau’s “desire to push boundaries” while continuing “to innovate and expand his filmmaking language.” Additionally Cousteau did some home movies over the years, capturing personal moments of significance—which Garbus incorporated into her documentary—including the first time he saw Simone Melchior whom he married in 1937.

Garbus applied her own innate curiosity, akin to that of Cousteau, to unearth insights into the man, his sense of purpose, coping with personal tragedy (the death of a son, oceanographer Philippe, in a seaplane crash) and being sustained by an all-consuming and abiding love of Mother Nature. Garbus also brings to the fore an unsung hero, Cousteau’s first wife, the aluded to Simone Melchior Cousteau, who served in many respects as the co-captain of the Calypso, a former Royal Navy minesweeper that was converted into a mobile oceanography lab. The ship became a hub of discovery and adventure that contributed significantly to the Cousteau legacy.

Melchior Cousteau loved the sea but couldn’t follow in her family lineage that included sailors and Naval officers. During that era, such opportunities weren’t open to women. So she wound up marrying into an ocean life, playing a pivotal role in her husband’s exploration and innovation.

Among the challenges faced by Garbus, who began developing the documen-

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION: 1.) Publication Title: SHOOT 2.) Publication Number: 006-234 3.) Filing Date: October 1, 2021 4.) Issue Frequency: Bi-Monthly 5.) No. of Issues Published Annually: 6 6.) Annual Subscription Price: \$75. Complete Mailing Address of General Business Office of the Publisher: DCA Business Media LLC, 6615 W Boynton Beach Blvd, Ste 358, Boynton Beach, FL 33437 9.) Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher, Roberta Grier, 6615 W Boynton Beach Blvd Ste 358, Boynton Beach, FL 33437; Editor: Robert Goldrich, 6615 W Boynton Beach Blvd Ste 358, Boynton Beach, FL 33437; Managing Editor: Jim Theodora, 6615 W Boynton Beach Blvd Ste 358, Boynton Beach, FL 33437 10.) Owner: DCA Business Media LLC, 6615 W Boynton Beach Blvd Ste 358, Boynton Beach, FL 33437; Roberta Grier, 6615 W Boynton Beach Blvd Ste 358, Boynton Beach, FL 33437; Gerald Giannone, 6615 W Boynton Beach Blvd Ste 358, Boynton Beach, FL 33437 11.) Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None 14.) Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: August 15, 2021 15.) Extent and Nature of Circulation: B-to-B News/Info - Motion Picture Production & Post Ind 16. Publication of Statement of Ownership and will be printed in the December, 2021 issue of this publication.

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	6,869	6,547
b. Paid or Requested Circulation		
1. Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. (Include direct written request from recipient, telemarketing and Internet requests from recipient, paid subscriptions including nominal rate subscriptions, employer requests, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies.)	4,438	4,222
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c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))	4,540	4,324
d. Nonrequested Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		
1. Outside County Nonrequested Copies Stated on PS Form 3541 (include Sample copies, Requests Over 3 years old, Requests induced by a Premium, Bulk Sales and Requests including Association Requests, Names obtained from Business Directories, Lists, and other sources)	2,221	2,136
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f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and e)	6,761	6,460
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4, (page #3))	108	87
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	6,869	6,547
i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by f times 100)	67.15%	66.93%
Requested and Paid Electronic Copies	3,546	3,885
Total Requested and Paid Print Copies + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies	8,086	8,209
Total Requested/Paid Print + Requested/Paid Electronic Distribution	10,307	10,345
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Both Print & Electronic Copies)	78.00%	79.00%

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete.

Gerald Giannone, Managing Member

"Ghostbusters: Afterlife" Veteran Sound Team Recreate and Reinvent The Sounds of a Classic Sony Pictures' *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* invites audiences to experience a thrilling new chapter in the Ghostbusters universe. Directed by Jason Reitman and produced by Ivan Reitman. Sound editorial and mixing was based at Sony Pictures Post Production Services where a veteran crew led by Supervising Sound Editor/Re-Recording Mixer Will Files, Supervising Sound Editor Perry Robertson and Re-Recording Mixer Mark Paterson faced the formidable challenge of following in the footsteps of a legend.

Netflix's "Tick, Tick... Boom!": PNYA Members Help Recreate The New York of Jonathan Larson *Tick, Tick... Boom!* is Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winner Lin-Manuel Miranda's magical adaptation of the autobiographical musical by Jonathan Larson, who revolutionized theater as the creator of *Rent*. Fittingly for a film rooted in Broadway, post-production was largely completed in New York City by members of the Post New York Alliance (PNYA).

Editor Erik Tobeler Joins 11 Dollar Bill 11 Dollar Bill has added editor Erik Tobeler to its growing team. Tobeler will be based out of the company's Boulder office and assume the post of Creative Lead.

Award Winning Composer Fred Story Sells Studio To Vocal Ink Production, and, Re-Brands His Business as Storyline Music + Mix Multi-award-winning composer Fred Story sold his Charlotte-based recording studio to Tim Campbell, owner of the Vocal Ink Production, and, concurrently has re-branded his longtime company Concentrix Music & Sound Design, which will now be known as "Storyline Music + Mix."

Labelium Recruits Havas International Executive as It Builds on Consistent Growth in The Americas Digital performance agency Labelium, which specializes in e-retail, media, and consumer performance, has tapped Diana de la Torre, former SVP Client Services at Havas Media International, as its Senior VP Talent Development, Americas, a new position at the agency.

Motion Picture Sound Editors To Honor Ron Howard with Filmmaker Award The Motion Picture Sound Editors (MPSE) announced that it will honor Ron Howard with its annual Filmmaker Award.

New Cineware For Unreal Plugin Now Available

Maxon announced the immediate availability of an update to the Cineware for Unreal plugin.

OTOY Adds Redshift Support To The Render Network OTOY and Maxon announced that Redshift will be coming to the Render Network, providing Redshift users the ability to scale GPU rendering jobs to millions of distributed GPUs on the Render Network.

One at Optimus Signs Directors ONE, the production arm of Optimus, has signed Ashley C. Battle and Chris Vanderwall to its directorial roster. **Sonic Union Crafts Soundscape For Adam Pendleton's "Who Is Queen?" on Display at MoMA** Adam Pendleton: *Who Is Queen?* at MoMA now through February 21, 2022- transforms MoMA's Marron Family Atrium into a monumental multi-story, dynamic installation exploring identity, abstraction, and Black Dada.

Creamsource Expands Its Vortex Lighting Series with The Vortex4 Creamsource, announced the incredibly versatile Vortex4 1'x1' 325W high-powered LED for film production.

31st Annual 2021 Gotham Awards Winners Announced

The Gotham Film & Media Institute (The Gotham) announced the winners of the 31st Annual Gotham Awards at a ceremony held at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City.

Pace Pictures Edits/Finishes Crime Thriller "For the Love of Money" Pace Pictures provided editorial and post-production services for *For the Love of Money*, the new crime drama from executive producer Melvin Childs, director Leslie Small and Freestyle Releasing.

EditShare Q4 Release Optimizes Media Technology Stack and Enhances

Creative Remote Workflow Experience EditShare announced significant updates to its FLOW media asset management (MAM) and EFS shared storage systems.

Jonathan Frakes, Todd Masters and the Visual Effects Society Reunite Cast and Crew Members For Special 25th Anniversary Screening of "Star Trek: First Contact" Acclaimed Director and "Star Trek" icon Jonathan Frakes, multi-Emmy Award winner and FX artist Todd Masters, founder of MASTERSFX (MFx) and the Visual Effects Society presented a special 25th anniversary screening of "Star Trek: First Contact" at Hollywood's Harmony Gold Theater. The event was a private reunion for cast, crew and invited guests, along with members of the Visual Effects Society - with a print generously provided by Paramount Studios.

Stephen Arnold Music Elevates Noelle Alanis To VP

Stephen Arnold Music has promoted Noelle Alanis to Vice President, Sales & Licensing.

Special "Passage" Oscar Consideration Screenings Are Well-Received in New York and Los Angeles David Massey, the first African American Filmmaker ever Oscar-Nominated for "Best Live Action Short Film" (for 1992's "Last Breeze of Summer" which he Produced,) along with Producer Sandra Evers-Manly, have presented Massey's newest Short Film Project: "Passage" at two very recent events: The first screening was held at the Museum of the Moving Image in NYC, the second screening took place at Raleigh Studios, Hollywood. **Ruff Mercy Joins Bunker** BUNKER announced that Director/Film-Artist Russ Murphy - a.k.a. Ruff Mercy - has joined our roster for exclusive U.S. representation.

Conspiracy Theory - A Minority-Owned and Woman-Led Network - Launched Seasoned advertising and marketing executives Zihla Salinas, Daniel Weisinger and Brick Rucker have founded Conspiracy Theory, a solutions-oriented network of agencies and businesses to provide hands-on digital and media solutions for clients.

E-Commerce Shoe Company Kizik Launches First Brand Campaign Kizik debuted its first brand campaign. The campaign was created by Little Big Engine, which won the assignment after a review.

ALIBI's Newest Production Music Dishes Up Helping of Modern Pop ALIBI Music is serving up the modern pop in its newest release of production music. The library has added six fresh albums, each with an inspiring, high-energy vibe and structured to sync with a wide range of film, TV, streaming, commercial and game projects, including trailers, promos. **Hula Post Supports "King Richard" Editorial Team and More** Hula Post supplied editing systems for *King Richard* and supplied editing systems for *The Sex Lives of College Girls*. **The Roster's Kiki Gomez Keeps His Cool, For K-Swiss and More** As holding companies - and larger independents - do combat in the talent wars, The Roster is finding that clients big and small are waging a battle of their own: to put out effective advertising without the fuss, bureaucracy and overhead attached to "the majors."

Boris FX Unveils Fall Releases of Award-Winning Visual Effects Plugins Boris FX announced significant updates to two of its flagship collections. Sapphire 2022...

Cap Gun Signs Global Director Amit Gupta Gupta is adept at weaving the stories of

life, inspiration, and capturing the small moments that speak to the authenticity of the human experience, this dynamic visual storytelling has been put on display for top brands including Nike, Adidas, Google, Airbnb, Samsung, Honda, Johnnie Walker, and LG, among many others...

11 Dollar Bill Takes Home Awards at ONE Club Denver

11 Dollar Bill had a big night at The ONE Club for Creativity, Denver's annual awards competition, honoring best work in advertising in the Rocky Mountain region. The post studio picked

up six awards including a Gold.

Maxon Adds Unreal Engine Support for Magic Bullet Looks Hot on the heels of its Version 15 release of Magic Bullet, a collection of tools for color correction, finishing and film looks, Maxon announced a feature-rich Service Pack release of Magic Bullet Version 15.1. **Frame.io Expands Camera To Cloud Workflows** Frame.io released a major update to Camera to Cloud (C2C) with hardware support for the latest Aaton Cantar X3 sound recorders, along with new methods to authenticate C2C connections...

Yacht Club Sets Sales and Expands Production Team Yacht Club has announced its new US sales lineup: Sharon Lew of Lew & Co handles East Coast; Dave Campbell of Rogue Rep covers the West Coast; and Jack Reed of Jack Reed Reps covers the South and Texas.

Whitehouse Post London Welcomes Editor Ben Canny Whitehouse Post has enhanced its roster with the addition of prolific narrative storyteller Ben Canny. With clients ranging from Ikea to Nike, and Macy's to Black Mirror, Canny has solidified himself as a go-to for surreal and visual work.

Film Insurance: Why You Need to Take Action Before The Credits Roll

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Kramer Morgenthau

Reflections on lensing Respect for director Liesl Tommy, The Many Saints of Newark for Alan Taylor



By Robert Goldrich

With five ASC Award nominations, including a win in 2013 for “The North Remembers” episode of *Game of Thrones*, and six primetime Emmy nods for cinematography, Kramer Morgenthau, ASC finds himself once again in the awards season conversation, this time for two films, *Respect* (MGM, United Artists Releasing) directed by Liesl Tommy, and *The Many Saints of Newark* (Warner Bros.) from director Alan Taylor. Morgenthau has already earned a Camerimage Golden Frog nomination for *Respect*, a moving biopic about “Queen of Soul” Aretha Franklin.

Meanwhile *The Many Saints of Newark*, a mob drama about Tony Soprano’s coming of age—a feature prequel to the seminal HBO television hit *The Sopranos*—reunited Morgenthau with Taylor. The two have collaborated on such features as *Thor: The Dark World* and *Terminator Genisys* as well as the *Game of Thrones* series, including the aforementioned ASC-winning “The North Remembers” episode.

While Morgenthau has had a long-time working relationship with Taylor, *Respect* marked the cinematographer’s first go-around with director Tommy. The feature was also the first directed by Tommy whose

helming pedigree had been in TV (*Queen Sugar*, *The Walking Dead*, *Insecure*) as well as on Broadway. Morgenthau discovered he had much in common with South African Tommy who like him grew up in Cambridge, Mass. “We knew some of the same people from there, were in the same circle. She was almost like an old friend,” said the DP who also shared with the director a great love of music and specifically Franklin.

As for what’s next, Morgenthau recently wrapped *Spirited*, a Christmas musical dance comedy loosely based on Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.” The Apple TV+ film is slated to bow come Christmas 2022. And at press time Morgenthau was headed to Atlanta to shoot *Creed III*, with Michael B. Jordan directing.

All this adds to an extensive credits list for Morgenthau. His other ASC Award noms also came in TV categories for *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* in 2005, *Life on Mars* in 2009, *Family Limitation* in 2011 and the *Sleepy Hollow* pilot (2014). His nominations were for *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* in 2005, episodes of *Life on Mars* in 2009, *Flash Forward* in 2009, *Boardwalk Empire* in 2011, the telefilm *Too Big to Fail*, also in 2011, and *Fahrenheit 451* in 2018.

SHOOT: What was (were) the biggest challenge(s) that *Respect* and *The Many Saints of Newark* posed to you?

Morgenthau: The music sequences (for *Respect*). In some ways a dialogue sequence kind of directs you to certain camera angles, certain ways of presenting an ensemble or two people on the screen. A song, though, is almost like shooting a piece of poetry, a piece of performance. We did songs almost in their entirety which is somewhat rare in a biopic, designing them visually, how to best cover them. It’s a bigger challenge than shooting a straight drama—creating for instance Aretha Franklin at Madison Square Garden in an epic concert, with thousand of extras, figuring out what resources we did and didn’t have.

At the same time, it’s one thing to shoot a concert and quite another to make it

an intimate experience putting viewers inside the heads of the people in and behind the concert. We did that different times in different ways with a large number of songs....Of course Jennifer Hudson was brilliant (as Franklin).

Morgenthau: Filling (with *The Many Saints of Newark*) the legacy of an incredible series that took place over 96 episodes in six years where a tremendous character and story arc could be built out in a serialized way. How are we going to do that—a prequel to the whole thing—in just two hours or so, adapting the language of TV to a cinematic experience? And then there’s the pressure of the show itself, the high bar it set, paying homage to it while doing something different and cinematic in that same world.

SHOOT: What was your choice of cam-

era for each picture?

Morgenthau: For *The Many Saints of Newark*, we wanted to honor the TV series yet open the story for wide-screen cinema by shooting anamorphic. We went with the ARRI Alexa LF with Panavision T Series lenses.

For *Respect*, it was also ARRI Alexa LF cameras with Panavision T Series lenses. Dan Sasaki, the lens guru there (at Panavision), optimized the glass for the project. That’s why I love this guy and that place. You used to be able to do things on film, manipulate it photochemically at the lab, push it, pull it, different chemical baths. You can’t do that with a sensor. But one of the places you can be expressive is through the glass, optimized for these large concerts we were going to be shooting. It helps let you kind of feel what Aretha was feeling, what Jennifer’s character as Aretha was going through. With different LUTs, color science, the camera is a vessel you can steer the way you want.

SHOOT: What was the biggest takeaway or lessons learned from your experience on each film?

Morgenthau: One would be a broad

push towards minimalism, a more ambient and environmental approach where you’re creating for lack of a better word a “vibe” for a world where these characters can exist and be believable. This (*The Many Saints of Newark*) existed in the North Ward and Central Ward of New Jersey. The North Ward is Italian, the Central Ward the Black neighborhood of Newark during a post-war era where lots of change is happening. The takeaway was to keep it simple and be expressive—not through broad gestures with shafts of light and making big statements photographically but through texture, color, realism, camera angles that really say something about the characters.

Similar to *The Many Saints of Newark*, we had very big shoes to fill for *Respect*, doing a biopic of an icon. We wanted to honor her legacy, to have viewers walk away feeling like they got to know this person, that they got to be part of an incredible experience. Photographically you want to do everything you can for that. I can’t believe I got to shoot this film. My biggest takeaway is that I am so grateful to have been a part of Liesl’s film, shooting Aretha’s legacy—talk about your dream job. Making this film is something I feel I worked towards my whole life.

“For *The Many Saints of Newark*, we wanted to honor the TV series yet open the story for wide-screen cinema by shooting anamorphic.”



Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

street talk

Chuck Studios, an Amsterdam-based food brand production specialist, is accelerating its presence in the U.S. The company, known for its "Culinary Identity" branding programs that develop distinctly appetizing brand imagery for Unilever, KFC, McDonald's, Heineken and others, will bring this approach to the U.S. market led by newly named managing director Daryl Devlin. Olaf van Gerwen, Chuck's global creative director, has collaborated with Devlin for years, including during Devlin's stretch heading up U.S. sales for the company. In addition to its Amsterdam headquarters, Chuck maintains offices in Los Angeles, London, Berlin and Moscow.....

Havas Media Group (HMG) has named Sarah Ivey as its chief strategy officer, North America. Her appointment comes on the heels of her predecessor in that role, Meghan Grant, being elevated to president of HMG U.S. and chief experience officer for North America last month. Based in Toronto, Ivey will report directly to HMG North America CEO Greg Walsh and serve on the agency's North American executive leadership team. Ivey spent four years consulting with HMG, working with the global team on the agency's unique Mx, or Media Experience, system. She also consulted on key growth opportunities, working on high-profile pitches such as Hyundai Kia, and Facebook. Most recently, Ivey served as founder and head strategist for Agents of Necessity, a global strategy agency... London-headquartered global creative agency Amplify, which also maintains hubs in Sydney and L.A., has hired Bonnie O'Hara as EVP heading up the Live arm of its L.A. office, becoming a member of the sr. management team and working alongside Mark McDermott, EVP, clients, and Marcus Childs, president. This marks a return to the agency for O'Hara, who was Amplify's third employee when it launched in 2008. O'Hara brings years of transatlantic experience with a focus on culture shaping work for brands such as adidas, Converse, Samsung, Barclaycard and Google....

report

Pink Sparrow—a design and fabrication shop for experiential event marketing, retail environments and art installations, creating environments for global brands like Google, Nike and Target, as well as agencies like Droga5—has hired Corey Smith as its business director. Smith most recently served as director of business development for Mirror NYC. He will work with leadership and business development teams at Pink Sparrow—which maintains offices in Brooklyn, NY, and Los Angeles—to drive growth via new client acquisition, awareness building, strategic partnerships and physical expansion. He previously worked as production director with events firm 6UP Productions and producer with creative agency MKG.... Light Iron, a provider of innovative postproduction creative services and part of Panavision's end-to-end offerings for content creators, has promoted co-founder Katie Fellion to sr. VP, business development and postproduction strategy. Fellion has been with the company since it began operations in 2009 and was instrumental in establishing Light Iron's Outpost mobile dailies systems. In her time with Light Iron, Fellion has also produced several firsts in file-based finishing, including the first 6K DI, the first studio feature cut on Final Cut Pro X, and Amazon's first HDR series. In her new role, she is responsible for global sales and business development, new market strategies, and strategic alignment with Panavision so clients can maximize the value proposition of the companies' shared production-to-post offerings.... Bazaarvoice, Inc.—an Austin, Texas-headquartered company deploying technology, services and expertise to enable brands and retailers to tap into the full potential of user-generated content—has named Zarina Lam Stanford as its chief marketing officer. Stanford was previously chief communication and marketing officer of Rackspace Technology and held sr. sales and marketing exec positions at IBM and SAP....



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