20TH CENTURY FOX

PRODUCERS: S. PERRY, J. DeBONT
DIRECTOR: J. DeBONT

HOSPITAL: DOCTOR'S HOSPITAL.
COLLINS AVE. @ SHIRLEY ST.
NASSAU, BAHAMAS (809) 322 - 8411

NO FORCED CALLS WITHOUT
PRIOR APPROVAL OF UPM!!!

SET

* SAFETY MEETING WILL BE HELD IN MORNING BEFORE

* MAIN UNDERWATER UNIT TR

* PLATE UNIT REMAINS IN NAS

PLATE UNIT WORK: T.B.D.

EXT - UNDERWATER - STERN BARGE
- Alex has bail. Alex Pulled towards prop.   Alex struggles - CAS
- Alex has bail / Alex Pulled towards prop. - Alex struggles - STU
- The winch shoots through just missing Alex. - CAST
- The winch shoots through just missing Alex. - STUNT

This is a closed set. No visitors without prior a

2.	JASON PATRIC			
	CAST AND DAY PLAYERS			
2K.	DAVID BARRETT			
2K.	BILL SCHARPF			
HK.	JIM ROMANO			
HK.	KEVIN JACKSON			
HK.	JOHN ROTGER			
HK.	RANDY JOHNSON			

		CHARACTER		
		ALEX		
	UNDERWATER STUNT COORD.			
	STUNT DBL. ALEX			
	UTILITY STUNT > RIGGING			
	UTILITY STUNT > RIGGING			
	UTILITY STUNT > H2O SAFETY			
	UTILITY STUNT > H2O SAFETY			
	UTILITY STUNT > BOAT DRIVER			

	LEAVE		SET	REMARKS
	TRAVEL. TO NEW YORK CITY			
	TRAVEL TO LOS ANGELES, CA.			CRYSTAL PALACE
	TRAVEL TO MIAMI, FL.		7:00 AM	CRYSTAL PALACE
6:30 AM			7:00 AM	CRYSTAL PALACE
6:30 AM	TRAVEL TO LOS ANGELES, CA.		7:00 AM	CRYSTAL PALACE
6:30 AM			7:00 AM	CRYSTAL PALACE
6:30 AM			7:00 AM	CRYSTAL PALACE
6:00 AM			6:30 AM	CRYSTAL PALACE

DALIES: T.B.D

AT SEA NEAR >
STUART'S COVE
NASSAU, BAHAMAS

LOCATION

INDIVIDUAL CALL TIMES ON BACK!
SAT. DEC. 21, 1996
TRAVEL 2 OF 2

LEAVE: VARIABLE
ARRIVE: N/A
CALL: N/A

7 AM SUNSET: 5:23 PM
HOURS - 04 MINUTES

Patrick Gregston has spent his entire life in and around communication businesses.

The son of a journalist, he studied film production in college, receiving his BFA at the University of Southern California School of Cinema.

He has spent all of his professional life working in the commercial, cable, television and motion picture industries.

He has been a producer, director and most often, editor. He has also served as a vendor, developer of digital tools, and integrator of new tools and processes.

A board member of The Motion Picture Editors Guild, he has two Emmy nominations for his work as a film editor.

He has been a contributor to feature productions both grand (*Waterworld*, *The Horse Whisperer*) and small and personal (*Truth or Dare, Looking for Richard*) as well as commercials, television movies and series.

He has served stars (Henry Winkler, Robert Redford, and Kevin Costner), corporations (Kodak, Bell & Howell, Disney, Warner Brothers, 20th Century Fox), and causes (Alliance for Survival, IATSE) in their efforts to tell stories.

His expertise spans the transition from analogue (film) to digital (in production, post and distribution), and has trained hundreds of his peers in the use of new tools, as well as the application of concepts which transcend tools.

PATRICK GREGSTON

"...most productions still fail to use the tools at their disposal, both human and machine."

A Lament for the Scalpel

Technology has taken us from plasticity, to stringing up in a direct line from Moviola, to desktop computer. But most productions still fail to use the tools at their disposal, both human and machine.

When non-linear editing systems first were introduced to the film-dominated world of motion picture editing in the mid-eighties, editors grudgingly accepted them as adequate for the short schedules and video delivery of television, but considered them unnecessary for feature films. After all, who needed a system that obscured the art of editing, made the images worse than second-generation VHS tape, and turned the proud, generations-old tradition of hands-on editing into another set of buttons to push?

With the advent of digital compression in desktop computers, non-linear editing systems have become the standard technology for transforming raw footage into coherent story telling. The fact that they are widely installed, however, is not necessarily the creative milestone in the art of editing one might think it is. On the upside, most editors will agree that digital non-linear editing technology has delivered on its promise of enabling editors to work faster, more efficiently, and with greater comfort and productivity. There is no argument with either the efficacy or the artistic capability of experienced editors using these units.

Jerome Turner comments...
My equivalent came when I first started editing video (VHS) using tape-to-tape machines that again were linear. Once a cut was made there was no going back, which taught me how to make decisions at least in the same way that traditional film editing does.

These systems have radically improved on traditional techniques of editing with a blade and sticky tape. The physical act of editing has become mechanically simple for the editor. But the frustrations of lost trims and the reliance on arcane filing systems have been superseded by a reliance on digital assistants and phone support.

The principal creative benefit is the capability to see two versions of a moment, or a whole film, in the time it takes to view them. In a technical analysis, there are two criteria to the process of selecting the frames and order in which they appear in a production:

◼ Random access to the frames.

◼ Destructive or non-destructive preview.

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Random access, or non-linear, can be defined as being able to see or work on any frame any time, no matter where in the process one is. Destructive is the notion that changing the selection or order destroys the existing selection or order. Creating a new version involves destroying the existing version, or spending the time and resources to duplicate the existing version. Linear tape editing, due to spooling tape on both the source and edited versions is distinctly not random access, and the decision making process was somewhat destructive, in that subsequent edits to any change had to be performed again, either mechanically or by hand. The new tools are truly random access and non-destructive.

Film and the dominant tool – the Moviola – were perfect for creating both the craft and the craftsmen. The physical process meant that the editor had to think about the cut before committing to the blade. Any experiments were apparent for the director to see (or hear, as one can hear the splice go through the gate). Even a perfectly executed tape splice is visible on any viewing system, and any editor concerned with their creative credibility had to be concerned about the director wondering what they had been doing cutting there.

We asked Paul Hirsch, A.C.E.
Transitions aims to show all sides of the digital editing revolution. What, in your experience, are the positives and negatives now that digital has become the norm in post-production?

So, the physically destructive nature of even trying a cut meant film editors had to know why they would try a cut at a particular place. They had to know why the story factors would call for a cut. They had to know the emotional factors, the graphic factors, and they had to know what editorial concept was being served. By no means did every editor know or have the ability to articulate these concepts. Every editor did know that they would have to answer a director's question of "why?". Even when the cut wasn't in the work-print anymore, a cut tried and abandoned left its mark.

The Moviola did its part in how it lent itself to cutting with rolls of film that fit in the hand. Each moment was a little bundle that could be accessed quickly, unrolled, tried out, and set on a hook while another was auditioned. Bins with bits of film hanging out would surround the editor. This early presentation of random access was powerful in many ways. The very sloppiness of bits of film falling to the bottom of the bin constantly reminded the editor "this frame could go/be anywhere". The notion that things could and should be rearranged was the very essence of what an editor might do to make more of the material that literally confronted them. By having the editor stand, or sit-stand with a stool, the Moviola demanded a physicality that more than one editor has described as a dance.

Jerome Turner comments...
As a non-linear editor, I also have a 'dance' beautifully executed with my Mac. It's a little contemporary as it involves lots of shouting and kicking but at least usually ends with a satisfied sigh and slump.

"...the physically destructive nature of even trying a cut meant film editors had to know why they would try a cut at a particular place."

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PATRICK GREGSTON

"Today at the bottom end, anyone with a four-digit credit limit can be a post facility."

Paul Hirsch, A.C.E comments...
It might be argued that a director faced with a flawless (minimally spliced) work-print might question why an editor hadn't tried more, different places to cut.

This physical extension of the editorial concept started to be eroded with the introduction of flatbed editing machines. The very nature of the flatbed permitted a much greater amount of film to be spooled and viewed at a time. The editing environment suggested, and encouraged stringing up the film in story order and progressively deleting what wasn't desired (Oscar-winning editor Joe Hutshing has described editing as "taking out the uninteresting bits"). Wringing it out became a physically efficient approach. 'Kem rolls' meant that alternative performances or actions were often inside a spool of like angle takes. While it wasn't inconvenient to string up that roll and wind down to the take, it wasn't as random access as the hook in the bin. Chairs replaced stools. Still the nature of film editing stayed destructive and more or less random access.

By the 1980s, videotape editing had created a parallel generation of editors that had to think about the cut in advance. Linear tape editing, due to spooling tape, the degradation of image in re-recording, as well as the tedious nature of early list management, had to conceptualize their program before committing to the record button. Tape editing isn't random access, and while changing your mind wasn't as destructive as working on film, it could hardly have been healthy to the peace of mind of all concerned when the record tape had to be rewound.

One of the results of the progression of Moore's law for processors has been the increasing improvement of desktop computer performance. Picture quality and program functionality have improved dramatically to the point where uncompressed dual stream editing is a question of economic, not technical feasibility. Today at the bottom end, anyone with a four-digit credit limit can be a post facility.
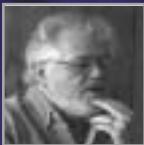
Ben Bryant comments...
There is a misconception of the new digital age upon which we are embarking. It is that just owning the latest Mac and editing program makes you an editor. It does not! Several other ingredients are required not the least of which is talent or a "gift", if you will.

Now there is a generation of editors who have never had anything but digital non-linear, non-destructive, random access editorial tools. While they grew up watching fast cutting, layers, and speed changes, they have never had the formative physical discipline of having to consider putting any frame anywhere. While their tools have made it exceptionally easy to do so, nothing within the tool environment is encouraging or demanding or asking a particular question about structure.

In fact it could be said that most tools present more questions about which trick effect to apply next than about basic storytelling. During their aesthetic gestation, most of the advances in the visual lexicon have been accidents or technical possibility. If it stuck to the

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MTV wall, then it was good. This lackadaisical progression didn't inhibit the creation of new rules (frames in a strobe sequence, flutter cut, or stop motion effect) to take up or replace the old rules (frames from muzzle flash to body jerk).

Nowadays, the editor working with scissors and sticky tape is the exception. Directors are now routinely working with editors that have never worked with sprockets, even if they are cutting images that originated on film. As there were digital specialists less than a decade ago, now there are film specialists. The generation that actually knows both straddles a moment in time when much of the experience of the past can be transferred to the future, but may not be. Like a song that must be sung by subsequent generations to survive, a number of editorial techniques, and concepts have probably been lost because no one has been able to document them. They have retired with their authors.

This is exacerbated by the technical demands upon assistants. With so much of their learning time consumed by learning the various media, tools and procedures to support the new digital process, as well as the physical separation engendered by the desk oriented NLE system, assistant editors are hard pressed to be present for the discussions between an editor and the rest of the creative team. Where in film editing, an assistant was often in the room filing the frames, handing over requested frames, and relatively close to both the action and concept,the digital age often keeps the editor's door closed more for sonic reasons than political or creative. Where on a flatbed, the film editor audio monitoring crested with the two-way mono speaker; digital sound technology enables every editing room to have enough amplification and speaker area to vibrate the furniture! Doors have to be shut just to talk on the phone or even, for those fortunate enough to have their own workstation, to do their work.

The current generation of non-linear systems allows an immediacy of seeing an idea that was but a dream to the film editor of two decades ago. Editors can have desktop projection to whatever size screen can fit in the real estate budget. Multiple channel sound with THX and subwoofers make it larger and louder than anything short of going to the theatre. With today's advances in high-bandwidth communication, you are able to get instant feedback from a director and studio head within seconds, no matter where you, or they are. It is all really pretty astounding, and like other advances, accommodated to, and taken for granted as rapidly as economics and human nature permits.

Jeffrey A. Okun comments...
Another endangered technique is the hazing of new apprentices. When I was starting out in film I was sent to find a box of perforations. And they had to be 'Fox-hole' ones at that. Now I suppose they send the apprentices out for a box of pixels?

One of my most cherished times was assisting Aaron Stell. Just being in the room with a guy like that was such a break. To see how he worked and thought. How he assembled a sequence from the random pieces of film was an education that cannot be duplicated. I also had the honor of assisting Stuart Baird and Frank Uriosity – each of which taught me so much about how to handle the politics as well as the film – another lost art.

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PATRICK GREGSTON

"More money can be spent whitening an actor's teeth than it would have cost to send them to the dentist, but it is the editorial crew that is facilitating the makeover today."

Jerome Turner comments...
I suppose by default of how NLEs work, the editor is able to make more extreme decisions about how they put a story together. It's not something that's necessarily based on 'courage' because their NLE allows them to have tried 600 different versions of a NL storyline before settling on one, but it might well appeal more challenging to the viewer in how the story unfolds (e.g. 12 Monkeys, Pulp Fiction.)

At the same time, a perusal of great sequences from the history of cinema reveals that in terms of visually communicating an idea, most of the concepts of layering, juxtaposition, parallel cutting, interwoven, or non linear storylines were all in use before digital editing arrived.

At the 2001 panel of Oscar-nominated editors (organized and produced by the ACE), one, who had not started on film, mentioned the creation of a particular effect that was used as a transition and expressed "something like that would never have been attempted in that level of complexity if it wasn't for the fact that we have this great facilitator". Dede Allen (*Serpico*, *Dog Day Afternoon*) countered that they did do them, and they didn't take much time either. She pointed to the billiards playing montage in *The Hustler* (directed by Robert Rossen). "We did that with dupes, all from the work-print. And it was quick – you did it on an overnight basis. We could do it and we did."

As many previous generations of people have done before, today's editors think they are innovating, and their 'new' idea is probably arrived at in a more complicated environment, yet it is still more a rediscovery than a breakthrough. While the complex and powerful tool makes things look more finished in the editing room, it also means that more things are put on the editors task list. Many editors today present more richly cut sound than their predecessors would ever do (Factions of editors debate the wisdom of watching a cut without score – while some say this must be done to see where the need for score is, others feel that to do so fails to use one of the most powerful tools an editor has – temp music). Tremendous numbers of small and significant tasks now occur in post. More money can be spent whitening an actor's teeth than it would have cost to send them to the dentist, but it is the editorial crew that is facilitating the makeover today.

In short, today's editors seem to fulfill the promise made at the dawn of the non-linear age; "Your time will be spent on the art of editing, not on mechanics." That's true, as far as it goes. In general that isn't all that far. For while editors can do amazing things in an editing room, they are mostly asked to do them in the service of schedules, budgets and hierarchy, not film language or art.

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*"Yet none of these changes, or the current development path
for editors can be said to restrict creativity."*

The changes due to the introduction of these systems are both human and financial. The changes in human experience that they demand are primary. The first director I worked with on non-linear complained of not having the time to make phone calls. Where, on film, he could give notes and be gone for hours or days, now the immediacy of the changes demanded that he stay focused on the editing virtually every minute. The combination of budget and schedule pressure helped propel desktop non-linear systems into professional use in spite of the initial high costs and low picture quality. Directors, with limited time in the schedule for their review of the first cut found the immediacy of non-linear editing compelling. Often, that same first NLE experience resulted in headaches and tired eyes. Editors need better chairs than they did with a Moviola, since less time is spent on their feet, and the activity doesn't demand the only aerobic exercise known to film assistants – winding. Carpal tunnel syndrome and eyestrain, back problems, these maladies of computer-based work have struck editors too.

Other costs have come from the new process that such a set of tools creates. Many productions now forego print, and the screenings of dailies. Since transfer to video means everyone gets a cassette, the logistics of a screening are removed. Separation of the editing crew and the elimination of viewing dailies on film, and the loss of the communal experience in attendance, are other human losses in the post experience. This lack of experiencing the raw material in a setting that approximates the audience's eventual experience eliminates a critical component in the collaborative process, and provides a significant opportunity for divergent evaluation of the material.

Yet none of these changes, or the current development path for editors can be said to restrict creativity.There may be many editors who lack the formative experiences that would help them stretch the boundaries, but the real failure in fulfilling the potential of these new tools lies elsewhere.

It isn't with the manufacturers, which with few exceptions have done little to make their tools easy to use. While a company might claim to make it possible for you to change your mind without losing it, it was probably likely that someone else in the workflow did lose theirs. Equipment manufactures have always been quicker to grasp the marketing possibilities of creative imperatives than to actually build tools to realize them. Why should they? Editors will take almost whatever level of cruel interface foisted on them, as long as they get the job. Assistants will figure out how to get the job done, almost because of the heroic hours and head scratching required.

The principal problem with the creation of all digital applications is that programmers can't possibly get a full understanding of what it is to its own industry, a black art. What constitutes great editing is difficult to see in the program and totally invisible to an uninformed observer in the room which is what most programmers are, when they get exposed to editing.

From Weaving Multiple Storylines by Julie Janata
I find it's essential the first time I read a script to read it straight through, to get a feel for the flow of the whole story. I also watch dailies in a quiet room without phone calls or interruptions, which is harder to arrange if you get dailies on tape rather than on film. But I think as an editor you have to insist on it.

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your mind without losing it, it was probably likely that someone else
in the workflow did lose theirs."*

PATRICK GREGSTON

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The result is that we have programs for editing which are generally feature based, emphasizing effects and completion tasks, both in screen space, and programming resources, over the essential, and most significant part of the process – looking at pictures, choosing the bits, deciding how long they should be, and in what order – what we usually say in many fewer words, (like editors should) "making a cut".

Over time these products get exposed to wider and wider user groups, who all 'edit' but all, being individuals with different production types, media, schedules, and so on, have widely divergent needs and ways to articulate them. Reflecting that divergent feedback, subsequent generations of the tools have more buttons, features, multiple ways to access those features (more buttons in more places) until the interfaces have become cluttered with menus (which change depending on 'mode') and options. We have a truly astounding set of tools presented in a manner which makes choosing any one function an adventure in training, manual reading, calling friends, and then various keystrokes, mouse clicks, and an occasional outboard joystick or slider. In general these interfaces pale in comparison with the power and simple sophistication of the blade.

More substantial impediments originate with those who employ editors. Companies are mostly concerned with getting it done fast. Creative time, which editors should be enjoying with non-linear equipment, has been eaten by the incessant requirements of modern post-production. Demands for the instant output has created a subclass of night-time assistants who generate a seemingly endless stream of cassettes for effects, sound, music, to say nothing of trailer and marketing departments. The time, once occupied by assistants searching for a trim in the bottom of a bin, or while all the mag dummies were changed over at a mix, is now gone. The conversations, the building of creative relationships, while in the eye of the needle which feature post-production has become, are mostly lost. People are not choosing to take a ten-minute walk every three hours to avoid muscle atrophy and vitamin D deficiency. Gestation of an idea is not one of the priorities on the schedule.

A critical part of every editor's professional life is sitting alone with their director, after the shoot, and before everybody else who might at some point feel they need to have input shows up. The editor sits with the person who approved of hiring the editor, if in fact didn't bring the editors in themselves. It is the first time the director will see the intended program complete, from end to end. Tremendous resources, people, money, time, were

Paul Hirsch, A.C.E comments…
I would put it that the blade only cuts, and it is the joining that makes the new systems superior. Don't forget the sticky tape part of the job. How you put it all together is just as important as choosing which frame to cut on. And that choice is made based in part on how you intend to put it together.

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"One of the difficult moments for the director comes when the editor has exceeded their vision, or had an idea which elevates the moment beyond what the director could have imagined."

expended to produce the bits the editor has put together. Whether or not an editor has shown cut scenes, sat through the dailies, and had extensive conversation about the script, the characters, or the director's interpretation, the first cut is going to reflect much interpretation by the editor. Everything the director attempted to accomplish in the finished product is seen to either work or fail. In some cases this is years of working with a property. In others, just weeks. Just as conductors only execute with orchestras, a director only fully exercises their talent and skills with their tools when production is shooting. They plan, experiment, improvise, compromise (unless they are among the few with the resources to not compromise), and run out of time (nobody stops the sunset). At last they will see the results. For many directors, judging by the literature and gossip, this is the most depressing and difficult part of the process. How an editor handles this is critical, to the production, to the editor's career (especially if the director is a working growing individual) and ultimately to the process.

Editors, as directors will say, think they know better. They know the material; they have less invested in the production, and its creative concepts. They also now have tools that give them tremendous opportunity to continue the experiment, to improvise and address the story being told. If they are aggressive, they have already seen the failures at dailies, and if they have been thinking, they have been cutting. One of the difficult moments for the director comes when the editor has totally missed the concept, or better yet, evenexceeded their vision, or had an idea which elevates the moment beyond what the director could have imagined.

Due to the needs of the editor to focus on their director, and serve the conversation, the process will follow the director's concerns. Often directors may solicit solutions, but the director will lead the conversation. Whatever timeframe is available to the director will dominate, and directors, due to their investment in their interpretations, will work to support them. In addition, any problems that are the result or cause of personal and political issues for the director will also have influence. It is the rare director (any human really) who can step into the editing room and leave all those prior experiences and concerns outside.

Whenever the director's time is up, and it will be, the lead is taken by the producer. Producers tend to view the experimenting process as money and time being burned. The generalized view of post-production is that it is like the plumbing that the product must go through to get distributed. Like any manufacturing process, it can be optimized.

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PATRICK GREGSTON

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Historically producers were generated by working up through the jobs in the administration of production, and came to know and appreciate, if not understand, each of the areas of talent and skill required. As often as not, today's producing executive is a graduate of a law school, and has come to be a producer as much as a byproduct of being present as deals are made or contracts are written. Given the black art that editing has always been it's not surprising that producers without extensive experience are surprised at the different results that can be created with the same production.All too often this is first experienced under a set of circumstances that do not allow the producer to alter their commitments to budget and schedule. The producer has to weigh and prioritize the same set of historical experiences the director had, as well as produce a result within the business proposition. While there are exceptions to this, you are far more likely to hear praise for a producer being "supportive", or "not interfering", than for their active conceptual work.

Probably the most challenged to make use of the more powerful creative qualities of the new tools are the hyphenates: writer-director, writer-producers.In addition to all the above-mentioned issues, the person who wrote the production is actually in the room, facing killing off one or more of their creations. The removal of a character, or the deletion of a sequence not only represents the loss of an actor's performance, the energy and resources expended, or a failed realization, it means abandoning a bit of their own creative self.

All in all, the forces on each of these roles in the process almost preclude adventurous experimentation with the forms and possibilities suggested. It is very difficult to conclude that failure to realize the potential of the power of digital non-linear editing belongs with any of them. These are failures of human nature. To be sure, there are examples of the big questions being asked by producers and directors:

- **Editing can be the writing.** Hal Ashby, once an editor and then director (*Harold and Maude*, *Shampoo*, and *Being There*, among others) would have actors speak the same lines with completely different readings ("do it sad, mad, and happy"). Then he would take the time in the editing room to construct the same sequence in multiple ways, mixing and matching the readings. His approach to the plasticity of the medium drove actors crazy, but produced remarkable results.

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"…the burden must be on editors, to articulate their craft, and bring light onto what is most often practiced both literally and figuratively in low light."

■ **Editing is learning patience to make scenes work.** Sheldon Kahn (*Out of Africa*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and *Six Days, Seven Nights*) tells how, on his first feature editing job, the Elaine May film *Mickey and Nicky*, they were able to completely change the tone of the film, playing the scenes on either one character or the other through editing. They worked 14 hours a day, 13 of every 14 days for eighteen months to arrive at the film released.

■ **Editing can be invention.** In the most famous episode of an editor 'saving' a picture, Elmo Williams' work on *High Noon* (directed by Fred Zinnemann) included shooting inserts, rearranging the score, and reworking story elements. Much of this was his inspiration, and was facilitated by a degree of autonomy rarely seen in today's production world. He was soon thereafter elevated to being in charge of production at the studio.

Non-linear editing would have been a godsend to those editors. In each case,such creative opportunities were a function of the circumstances presented by the producers and the production. The tools only dictated the processes demanded to realize the ideas.

So, the real problem with realizing the potential of the new tools is like editing itself – conceptual. Until these issues are discussed and addressed by the collaborators, and a conscious commitment is made to 'push around the material', the focus will remain on speed, schedule, and budget.

Much of the burden must be on editors, to articulate their craft, and bring light onto what is most often practiced both literally and figuratively in low light. Likewise it is the burden of editors to lead in making use of these tools to create the next generation of editors – giving assignments, and tasks to 'illuminate' the assistant as well as making produce for the production. Some editors do conduct screenings and aesthetic discussions among their crews, but in many circumstances, there is little time to add departmental meetings. In many others, the editor is at the service of people who would greatly benefit by asking if they are getting the most out of the editing process, in talent and tools.

"The dynamics of the editorial role are remarkably the same from the editor of the lowest budget industrial, to the highest budget commercials or feature films."

"…the editor has to sense the collective, and individual personalities in the process, and respond with the appropriate manipulations to progress the conversation."

PATRICK GREGSTON

"…the editor at the Moviola and the online suite had the same challenge. Each had mastered his tools so that very little of their human talents were absorbed by the tool. Each understood the human elements that constituted their professional success."

Alas, the very nature of the craft attracts the reflective and sensitive who are less likely to self promote and evangelize their craft to the more assertive and commanding personalities of producing and directing. The dynamics of the editorial role are remarkably the same from the editor of the lowest budget industrial, to the highest budget commercials or feature films.Beyond all other tasks incumbent on an editor is that of creating a consensus among whatever set of people have the power to decide the production is complete. Attaining that group decision inevitably falls to the editor to facilitate. Regardless of the numbers of people in that group, or employed to get them happy, the whole population pivots around the editor's ability to produce the collective 'yes'. While others may be on point in any discussion about a particular frame or sequence, the editor has to sense the collective, and individual personalities in the process, and respond with the appropriate manipulations to progress the conversation.

For this reason I like to say to people that while the mechanics of editing appear on the bench, whether it be sprockets and tape, or zeroes and ones, editing takes place in the space behind the editor's eyes, all the way to the back wall of the room.

We asked Paul Hirsch, A.C.E. Film editing seems to be a craft whose techniques are best passed on from editor to editor. Since this distillation of experience is such a fundamental part of the Transitions concept, who were your early mentors and who were the producers or directors who gave you your first big breaks in the business?

On my first assisting job, which was all film editing, but included mastering using the first telecines, the editor had a wide angle mirror, like many people have on the passenger door of their car, mounted above the viewing glass. He would stand by the upright machine, the commercial spooled in his hand, and show as many as nine people standing in a semi-circle around it the spot. He would watch the people in the mirror. Because he knew the spot, he could focus on the responses of the audience. These would be the creative team, a producer, a director, sometimes a production designer, advertising agency people, and sometimes a representative of the advertiser. He could see who was watching the spot, and who was watching the reactions of others. He could figure out better how to handle the conversation at the end of the run.

Some masters of linear editing who would do the final production of those commercials were really stage performers, who knew how to operate piles of gear that stadium rock musicians would envy. They conducted a session with their backs to their clients and had total control of their session and clients. If asked they could finish the session at a targeted billing goal. Both the editor at the Moviola and the online suite had the same challenge. Each had mastered his tools so that very little of their human talents were absorbed by the tool. Each understood the human elements that constituted their professional success.

"…while humans may have the ability to store huge numbers of operations, and sequences in their brains, it is hard to argue that it isn't preferable that these be about content, not process."

"In academic and professional circles criticism and comment on the craft and its concepts needs to be more widespread."

Today, editors mostly sit in front of the people they work with, or next to them. They have to have acute listening skills, and an ability to diplomatically work through the challenges presented. But the tools have become more and more demanding while the rooms have become more comfortable and inviting to a larger population of decision-makers. Every brain bit occupied by finding the right button on the right menu in the appropriate mode is one less devoted to picking up on the vibe of the audience in the room. Many editors will say that they are as competent on a keyboard as they were with a blade. It is a losing proposition for an editor to say anything else. And while humans may have the ability to store huge numbers of operations, and sequences in their brains, it is hard to argue that it isn't preferable that these be about content, not process.

George Lucas has said that film editing "in my opinion is the core of the cinematic art form". Yet this core is clearly not widely understood or exploited. How do we free producers, directors, and editors to use the creative potential that the non-linear editing systems facilitate? Can we redefine the process so that incubation and experiments are included in the schedules? Can we broaden the desire of commerce to explore variation?

In pre-production, use of the editorial perspective can serve many ends. Examples of good and bad execution of similar concepts can be explored like those in the photography are. Arbitrary what-ifs as a creative exercise can be useful, but the intent discussion of how to use the power of editorial tools can be a lever to creative and production cost concerns. More than a few editors have been able to point out unnecessary production tasks, or suggest ways to avoid exhaustive aspects of a shoot with an editorial solution.

In academic and professional circles criticism and comment on the craft and its concepts needs to be more widespread. Other than Walter Murch, whose lectures in the mixing theatre at Sydney's Spectrum Films in 1988 (sponsored by the Australian Film Commission in a remarkable co-operation of government and commerce) were transcribed into the book, *In the Blink of An Eye*, the literature in this area is thin, and I guess that's where this book fits in. Intellectual exploration of editorial concepts seems to have ebbed with the onset of Stalinism in Russia.

PATRICK GREGSTON

"While some answers to these questions will come from further advances in technology, the real hope is in the imagination, vision, and commitment, of all the creative humans who use them."

A return to the discussions of Lev Kuleshov's explorations of montage is probably beyond the attention span of today's students to say nothing of production executives, but a good sampling of Eisenstien and Vertov's writings, and viewing of Vorkapitch's Hollywood studio work of the 30s should definitely be made a part of every film student's introductory syllabus.

In accepting her 2002 ACE award for her work on *Moulin Rouge,* Jill Bilcock said "It is especially nice to be accepting this award in a room full of people who know just how hard this work is."

Also,.editors and directors could talk more about their work in those darkened rooms, especially to people outside editing. In a time when the average citizen knows the box office results for the weekend, and there has been an explosion of training programs, editors and the organizations which they join, need to get out and talk about the craft, and publicize their professional experiences.

Unless those people practicing this work get out into the figurative light of day, it may always be that singular room of people who understand the potential to explore the boundaries of what is possible in the dominant medium in history, and wield the incredibly powerful tools used to create its content. A global audience awaits the next breakthrough from those laboring long hours in dark rooms around the world.

"...editors and directors could talk more about their work in those darkened rooms, especially to people outside editing."

"Bring editing out of the dark. Discuss it in the light."

So, the first step with everyone, the editor, the producer, director, and manufacturer, is to consider the potential editorial could realize. Then think about what they can do to facilitate it. Bring editing out of the dark. Discuss it in the light. It won't be easy. Turning the momentum of industries, much less human nature is no small task, particularly in pursuit of a goal which can't be quantified outside that incredibly subjective experience of seeing a sequence and 'getting it'. Michael Kahn has said that sometimes the only thing he has to say to the ever standing question of "why there?" is "it feels better".

While some answers to these questions will come from further advances in technology, the real hope is in the imagination, vision, and commitment, of all the creative humans who use them. While we await a da Vinci of interface, or a Michelangelo of editorial process, or even a Marconi of bandwidth, we can wonder who will have the resources, financially, politically, artistically, and emotionally to push these tools, and the medium to their limits.

LOCATION

BARCLAY HOTEL
103 W. 4TH STREET
LOS ANGELES
213-626-5232

CNT: RAFAEL VASQUEZ

THOMAS GUIDE: 634 - F4

DIRECTIONS

FROM PRODUCTION OFFI

Go EAST on the 10 (S
to the 110 HARBOR F
EXIT at 6th St. Go
Turn LEFT. Location
of 4th & MAIN.

CREW PARKING!!!
Lot at 4th & MAIN (

MAP IS NOT TO SCALE