

Sarah Taylor:

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Did you both anticipate the show to be as big as it was?

Timothy Good, ACE:

Okay. So, no, but it was funny because Craig's like, "You guys, it's good. And I know." And we go, okay. The moment where I knew it would be a little bit bigger than I thought it would be was at the premiere when we were all together in this ridiculously huge tent. At midnight, the review embargo ended and all of the reviews could be released and we were still there. I remember being right next to Craig and Bella Ramsey and all the reviews started piling in and they were looking at them and they're reading them and they were like, oh my God.

Sarah Taylor:

Also fan art started coming out more every week. That to me has just been awesome.

Hello and welcome to The Editor's Cut. I'm your host Sarah Taylor. We would like to point out that the lands on which we have created this podcast and that many of you may be listening to us from, are part of ancestral territory. It is important for all of us to deeply acknowledge that we are on ancestral territory that has long served as a place where indigenous peoples have lived, met, and interacted. We honour, respect and recognize these nations that have never relinquished their rights or sovereign authority over the lands and waters on which we stand today.

We encourage you to reflect on the history of the land, the rich culture, the many contributions and the concerns that impact indigenous individuals and communities. Land acknowledgements are the start to a deeper action.

Today I bring to you an interview with the editors of the series that broke record after record and the service I used to stream it here in Canada - The Last of Us. Timothy Good, ACE and Emily Mendez share their favorite episodes, how they co-edited together and what it felt like to work on such a popular series.

And action. Action. This is the Editor's Cut.

Speaker 3:

A CCE podcast.

Sarah Taylor:

Exploring, exploring, exploring the art-

Speaker 5:

Of picture editing.

Sarah Taylor:

Tim and Emily, thank you so much for joining us on The Editor's Cut. I am very excited and I think so are our listeners to talk all things The Last of Us, but also learn a little bit about the both of you and how you

got into the world of post-production. So I think just to start things off, I'm curious about how you each became part of this epic record-breaking series, *The Last of Us*.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Well, thank you again, Sarah, so much for inviting us to be a part of this. We're so excited to talk to everyone. We came as a package deal because originally Emily came as my assistant editor, and during the process of season one, she was elevated to co-editor alongside me, which was a tremendous experience for both me and I know for her. So we came together through a very strange happenstance way, which is I happen to be married to a screenwriter, and he is very good friends with Craig Maison, Craig Maison being the showrunner of *The Last of Us*. So I actually hung out with Craig in social situations where he and his wife and other writers would come over to our house and have little dinner parties and game nights. So at the time I was just sort of like the guy serving drinks and the husband in the corner who's just making things happen for them.

Then one time Craig showed everyone the trailer for *Chernobyl*, his previous series, and I was floored. So I said to him, "I know I may just be the guy who's helping being cool here, but I'm also a really great editor who I think I would love to work with you if the chance ever happened again." And he says, "Oh yeah, I've seen your work. I've watched *The Umbrella Academy*. My kids are fans. Maybe that can happen." I said, "Okay, well I'll keep in touch then." And over the next three years or so, while that all happened, I kept in touch and things weren't going to work out at the time. There was some scheduling issues, blah da da da as usual. But then one of the directors from *The Umbrella Academy*, which we were just previously working on, said, "Hey, I just got hired on *The Last of Us* and I would love it if you guys could come and be a part of the team that works on my episodes."

I said, "Well, I've been trying to get on this as well, so maybe there's an opening here." He went to them and they said, "Oh, unfortunately we've already hired everyone." And we're like, oh, no, disaster! So we said, all right, well that is what it is. But then as luck would have it, one of the editors had a scheduling issue themselves and they had to drop out and then suddenly there was a spot available. I get this call saying, "If you can be in Calgary in four weeks, we think you can get you in here."

Of course, I had to meet with everyone. I had to have the interviews. Then they said, "Well, who's the assistant editor you want to bring?" I said, "Well, Emily is the assistant editor I've been working with and she's been co-editing with me. She's really fantastic. You will not regret this choice." They said, "Okay." And so we got the job and then next thing we knew, I was in Calgary working alongside the production. Emily was working remotely in Los Angeles as the assistant editor, and the first episode they gave us was episode three.

Sarah Taylor:

That's an amazing first episode to work on. Holy moly.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yes. No pressure.

Sarah Taylor:

No pressure whatsoever. Again, breaking records. So Emily, what was your journey? You're assisting with Tim, you're hearing about this *Last of Us* show. What were your thought processes when all of this was going on?

Emily:

When I first heard from Tim that he was in the talks of potentially going onto the show called The Last of Us, I was super excited because I played the games, I loved the games, and so I was like, "Tim, we have to do this." So for me it was really just excitement and just feeling lucky that Tim wanted to take me on to the show with him. We'd been working for several years together at this point, so we're kind of like a duo. So it just made sense for us to go together onto the show, and I'm really glad that he took me with him.

Sarah Taylor:

That's wonderful. Tim, were you a fan of the game?

Timothy Good, ACE:

I have never played the game, nor have I since played the game. It was an odd - it wasn't an odd decision. It was what turned out to be a really good decision. Because we were so sort of late to the hiring process, I didn't really have time and I didn't know anything much about the video game. Whereas Emily was like, "Tim, come on. We got to do this thing." She's like, "You don't understand." And I'm like, "I don't understand." But that's kind of what made it interesting. When we were about to do it, I said, "Well, what if I decide not to play it?" Then everything that's coming into the room, I will approach from the perspective of someone who knows nothing. Then along the way, what organically happened is that Emily would point things out to me that really helped me in terms of her knowledge of the game and what was important from the game's perspective.

So suddenly there were, even when I was using certain techniques, she said, "That's like the game." Then I remember as I'm going through dailies and I see this red shirt that's being lifted up out of a suitcase, I'm like, ahhh. And she goes, "No, no, no, no, no. That shirt is really important and you have to use it because it's going to be a wonderful tease because it's the most iconic shirt from the game of what Ellie wears. And if you show it a little bit earlier, I think it's going to make the game folk go crazy. Meanwhile it still tells the story of what you're doing at the moment, which is them packing up the truck."

So having that kind of dynamic between the two of us was just a wonderful way to approach it because we were kind of satisfying both sides of the audience, the audience that knows nothing about it, and then the audience that is very much looking forward to seeing how the game is adapted. Emily, do you have anything else to add to that?

Emily:

Yeah, these are details that Craig and Neil would've eventually gotten into the cuts if we'd missed them, but I think it was very helpful because Tim and I were able to get those details in at an early stage for the cuts, so they were just ready to go. So there were things, even in that episode three where Ellie and Joel are in a gas station, she runs up to an arcade game and she's like, "Oh, I used to have a friend that knew everything about this game." I said to Tim, I was like, "You know who she's talking about, right? This is an important character that, you know, she's talking about Riley." So we would have discussions like that just to get those details in early on, and I think that really helped our process a lot.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. Well, I feel like that was the big commentary that I heard is that there were so many great moments in the series that were from the game that people just were so excited about. So -

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yep.

Sarah Taylor:

Good job, both of you.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Thank you.

Sarah Taylor:

What were the episodes that you cut? You cut episode three.

Timothy Good, ACE:

I did the pilot and then episode three, episode four. Then Emily and I started teaming up on five, six, seven and nine.

Sarah Taylor:

Wow, so you basically did almost all of them.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah. What was crazy is I did episode three and episode three was a beautiful script, the most beautiful script. They had hired Peter Hoar, who's an amazing director from the UK who did this series *It's a Sin*. He also did *The Umbrella Academy* pilot. So I kind of knew him sort of tangentially through that. So we did this episode and Craig was like, "This - You guys have unlocked what I'm trying to do, and I didn't even really give you a roadmap, and I really am trying to figure out what the series is, and if it's okay with you, I really kind of want to put you guys in front of as many episodes as possible. I think you guys get it." That was a blessing, and it was also terrifying because then it's like, oh gosh. So now we have to do all of these things, as many as we could.

And of course, we had some fantastic editors who would pinch hit and do an episode here or there to help us out. But in general, Craig wanted me to be doing as many as I could. Ultimately what I said to him is, at a certain point when I was juggling three episodes at once, and then we were about to start a fourth, I said, "There's really no way to do this without losing the quality of what we've been putting into all of the episodes. So here's an episode we're about to start filming, and it's the Riley episode." So it's something that Emily is so fond of, and she's already proven to Craig through her sound design sort of amazing work. Also, I've been giving her scenes to edit along the way because that's what I've always been doing with every assistant I work with, but specifically with Emily, because she has such a talent, such an eye, and such a fantastic sense of editing that I've been mentoring her along the way.

So Craig was aware of her talent. So I said to him, "Wouldn't it be great if Emily can do this with me? Because number one, it's another gay love story." I did the gay love story between Bill and Frank, and that was between two men. It's something I understand very intimately. And Emily is lesbian and understands very clearly what it would be like between two girls at a certain age. I said, "That's going to really help the storytelling here. As much as I can do a good job with it, I bet you that she's going to find things that other people will not." And specifically me, I didn't think I could find the details as much as

she could. Craig said, "You know what? That's a really good idea." So he's very open to giving chances to young artists, and I was just so excited about that, that I believe Emily, didn't I call you, was it Christmas?

Emily:

It was around Christmas, yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

Little present for you.

Emily:

Yeah, it was the best present ever. So yeah, it was Christmas and then we went back after the break, and then we basically got started on Left Behind very soon after that.

Sarah Taylor:

So how did it feel for you, Emily, going through this process working - how long did you and Tim work together as assistant editor?

Emily:

We had been working together for a few years, right, Tim?

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah, like three years.

Emily:

Yeah, like around three years.

Timothy Good, ACE:

We co-edited before as well. That was the thing. It was really easy. I had known her through, she used to be the assistant to another editor, so I knew her even more than that. I actually knew her probably five years.

Emily:

Yeah.

Timothy Good, ACE:

And therefore I was very aware of her talent.

Sarah Taylor:

What did you feel like when you found out, okay, this is my episode now and I'm taking the reins? Was there pressure? Were you excited?

Emily:

It was really surreal. The good thing is I had been with Tim for three years at that point working with him, and Tim is so great as a mentor. He'll let his assistants come in and just sit and he'll talk through

everything he's doing. So up to this point, I had really taken advantage of that. So whenever I'd finish my work for the day, I would almost always go to Tim and be like, "Can I sit with you for a bit?" And stay in his room and just watch him edit, learn from him. I've been lucky enough to adapt a lot of the things Tim does in his work, because I think a lot of his approaches are really fantastic. So luckily for me, what Tim was doing for *The Last of Us* was really working for Craig.

So a lot of how I edit is very similar to him. So I felt that if I stayed that course, things were going to go well. There was a little bit of pressure, but ultimately I was co-editing with Tim, and so I had him to work with, and I just decided, I was like, well, this is it. I always kind of tell myself, you can sink or swim and this is my time to swim. So that was kinda how I approached it, and it really worked out, and it was so exciting. Honestly, I was mostly just excited.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, and what a great episode too to work on. One of the things that I reflected when I was thinking about chatting with both of you was how all these episodes we meet these characters that you fall in love with. I fell in love with Riley, I fell in love with Bill and his partner. We have not even an hour, maybe some of them are a little longer, but how are you creating these amazing characters that your audience is devastated, but already knowing that they're probably going to die because it's a zombie show.

Emily:

Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

So you're editing, and I'm sure the writing and everything else too, it all comes together. But what was your process going into these episodes knowing that these characters needed to be impactful, but also that it was just kind of like one episode they're done?

Timothy Good, ACE:

So number one, it's Craig and the scripts that he writes are really detailed, and the things that he values are very much about building characters. The other thing that I think that we did very well as editors is we didn't just rush through the openings. The openings were critical in terms of the audience sort of attaching themselves to these characters. A lot of what I believe as an editor is that if people are talking while they're being introduced, it's hard to really get a sense of them because you're not really getting a chance to study them without also simultaneously digesting what they're saying. So a lot of the stuff that we would do is we would start things in a more silent fashion, either because they were scripted like that, or because it helped us like that, or I would find ways to slow scenes down when they became about character development so that you could actually focus on the faces of the characters without any dialogue.

So there's an uninterrupted portion of time where you as the audience really get to think about who they are and wonder about their intentions and see their transitions. So it was about building the idea of the story from these characters' point of views. I can give you a good example. In the very first episode, the pilot, Sarah is the daughter, and you have to love her. The plan, the strategy that we employed here was I wanted to tell every scene from her point of view and always focus on her transitions, her perspectives more than anyone else's. Even when Joel was in the scene, even when Tommy was in the scene, it was all about how she experienced things. So she got a majority of the closeups, usually way more than the other characters, because at the time, I was hoping the audience would say, this is who ...

And again, not the gamers, because the gamers know what's going to happen with her, but the audience that doesn't know the game is going to think that this is the person they're going to follow this story with. When she dies at the 35 minute mark or so, it's hopefully horrifying. You realize at that point, the point of view is about to shift to Joel, and you have now had an entirely formed character of Joel based on how he interacted with Sarah. So a lot of it was about building the character through sort of surreptitious means. Specifically with Bill, you don't meet Frank until Bill has a whole life that he performs. You show what satisfies him, what makes him happy. What makes him happy is a nice steak and a booby trap that works and that's incredibly satisfying. Then you go, okay, this is what this guy is. He's okay being alone, but is that a life?

That was the question and that's the conflict that Frank brings into it. With the two brothers, Henry and Sam, it was about finding sort of silent moments with them. It was much easier because of course they're using ASL to communicate to begin with that you had this sort of cinematic language between the two of them. I'm just really aware that allowing people to have moments where they can study the characters allows them to be more connected, and to see the transitions that they're making really gives you a sense of why they're doing what they're doing. So by the time you get to the point where the plot kicks in at the very end, and if they die or whatnot, you feel like that's not fair to you because you've really grown to love these characters. I think that's one of the ways that we do it. Anything I'm forgetting, Emily?

Emily:

I also just think it's a testament to how great our cast is. We have incredible actors playing these roles. So Tim and I, were always just supporting them in the way that we watch through everything. So we're watching through footage, we're throwing down markers, we're like, oh, I like this look that Ellie's giving at this moment, or I like this look that Riley's giving. So we're marking down things that we think feel real for the characters from what we've gotten from the script, and then when we're watching the dailies and how that's feeling. So it's great when you have these actors that are just incredible. So you have lots of options for those things.

So really, I also think that's a reason why these characters are sticking with people. We have great people that we're working with. We have a great script we're working off of, and then it's just Tim and I are going through and just finding all those moments and putting them together. One thing Tim always talks about is it's like preparing your ingredients for a recipe. It's like you're going through and you're taking all this time at the beginning to find everything that is correct and right for the characters. So I think that really helps us too.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, that's a good analogy. I like that idea. You kind of started talking about workflow, so I'm curious how you typically both work. You're watching all the dailies, you're putting markers down. What is it exactly that you're looking for? Anything that strikes your fancy, any look? What are you looking for when you're watching dailies?

Timothy Good, ACE:

What are we looking for? What I love about being an editor is that you just get to be an armchair psychologist.

Sarah Taylor:

Yes.

Timothy Good, ACE:

It's fantastic to be ... and also as someone who I really, truly believe in the architecture of building scenes and sequences, I love to create sort of moments of, oh, this can be used for a moment where someone is feeling vulnerable. This can be used for a moment when they're feeling strength. So all these little building blocks are accumulating. As I'm watching things, as Emily's watching things, we go, this can be used to create this, this can be used to do this. All of these things are possibilities. So we just sort of have this wonderful amount of possibilities. And more than anything, when we watch something is I just try and react in the moment instinctually to what I feel is emotionally real and tells a really good story.

Any time I watch an actor in that character doing multiple things, I always go, this is a really great moment because this is A) really hard, I know for anyone to do. And for an actor and being in a character, I'm thinking specifically of when Ellie is being taught how to use the gun. She goes from crying in one moment to fascinated because she's about to get the gun, to smiling about the gun, to then being like, I'm so cool with the gun.

Sarah Taylor:

Wow.

Timothy Good, ACE:

So she goes from four different emotions in one shot. I said, well, isn't this how you connect to a character? You see how they can shift from one thing to the next. So those are the kind of things I am looking out for. It's about finding those little tiny nuances. Sometimes the actors don't even know they're doing them, and the director doesn't even see them because they're running... everything is a take and then the next take. As editors, we have the luxury of watching again and again and again.

Emily:

I think all the little details that we can incorporate, each one that works towards making the character feel more real is helpful. So the example that I'm thinking of is, I was lucky enough to cut Riley and Ellie's dance and kiss in episode seven. There was a little piece, and there was a take and a wide shot after they kiss. Bella was holding onto the werewolf mask the entire time and then dropped it at the very end. I thought to myself, how cute is this that she was so nervous that she doesn't want to drop this ... She doesn't drop the mask, she doesn't even think about it, because that's not what she's thinking about. Then she drops it at the end after they've kissed, and it's kind of like this release of this tension and this fear and first love and all this stuff.

I just thought to myself when I was watching the dailies, I felt something when I watched that. I was like, that just felt so real to me, like a teenager. So I kept that little ... I marked that piece, and I made sure to get it in my cut. It's still in there now in the scene. It's actually one of my favorite little moments in that whole scene. I think it's incorporating those little things that make us feel, we hope that the audience will also feel the same. So that's where I think that kind of helps in that way.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh, even you describing that makes me all misty.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Good.

Sarah Taylor:

So good. Yeah. I'm curious on the technical side of things, how many cameras were shooting for most of your scene? Was it 4K? Were you having to reframe anything? What were you getting on it?

Timothy Good, ACE:

Generally, we didn't reframe much. I have to say the cinematographers were pretty incredible with their framing, as were the directors. I don't remember if it was 4K or not.

Emily:

We're working in Avid, we don't get the 4K stuff because it's-

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah, for sure not.

Emily:

Yeah, I'm not sure about that either. But it was generally around three cameras sometimes, sometimes less. I'd say on average though, three cameras, right? Sometimes two.

Timothy Good, ACE:

It was mostly, I would say more early on, it was more like two. Then later on it was a little more like three. When we did the battle sequences, it was four, at least four, and sometimes they would have what we would call in the past IMO cameras, small little stunt cameras here and there for little pieces. But yeah, they were very smart in terms of getting really sharp, really good A cameras work. So that's a majority of, they had a really great operator, Neil Bryant, who is just a really good artist when it comes to working with the camera.

The approach of *The Last of Us* was always this grounded approach where you're with these characters from their level, and more than not, you're experiencing the world from their perspective as opposed to very rarely would we go outside of their perspectives and show the world. Obviously we would once in a while because sometimes it's just too claustrophobic to be that close with them. But more often than not, that was the strategy to bring you into that world. So a lot of times that A camera had this sort of lyrical movement that was more often than not the thing that we would go for.

Sarah Taylor:

Well, it's great to hear that you didn't have to battle any sort of technical issues.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Didn't seem to be, no.

Sarah Taylor:

That's great.

Timothy Good, ACE:

We always think about the creative aspect of it anyway. It's like, what does this shot even mean from a psychological and emotional perspective? Do we need it? There may be three cameras, but the other

two, even they'll say, we had to get these other two because they were sitting around and we had to cover ourselves, but we don't necessarily need them unless we need them.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. Well, that's so great. Okay, I want to dive into episode three and then episode seven since you two both worked on those.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Sure, yeah. Of course.

Sarah Taylor:

So when you read the script for episode three, Tim, were you instantly taken into that world of them as a ... how did you feel when you read that script knowing that this was your episode?

Timothy Good, ACE:

This was the only opportunity I had as the editor to experience this episode. It was insanely moving to me, A, because I felt like I understood these characters. I truly am a Frank, and I am married to a Bill, which is really kind of weird.

Sarah Taylor:

Perfect.

Timothy Good, ACE:

We do have a little place on the East Coast, which I'm at right now actually, and it does have a fence. Craig's writing was so just incredibly vivid in terms of the relationship he was building about a couple over time. I think that as someone who's been together with my husband for 20 years now, I understood those scenes, those relationships. But I also very much remember the experience of when you first meet people and how you're trying to ... and especially 20 some years ago when it was a little bit harder and you weren't sure if you would be safe by talking to people and trying to connect with them, you just weren't sure. A lot of those scenes, to me felt so real and so just beautiful that I was like, I know I can make a difference in this episode. I feel these feelings myself. So when we started doing it, I just was determined to make sure that the episode reached its full potential.

Sarah Taylor:

Well, I think you were successful on that.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Thank you. It was a pure - just a wonderful opportunity to add nuance to what I felt was just a beautifully drawn script to begin with.

Sarah Taylor:

And something that we don't always see on screen. I think that was pretty remarkable. Did you read the feedback coming out after it came out?

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yes.

Sarah Taylor:

How did you feel about all that? That must have felt pretty good.

Timothy Good, ACE:

I loved it. And here's the thing, this is what I love. I loved the positive and I loved the negatives. The positive was amazing to me because A) I didn't understand the extent to which this would be felt by so many. I knew it was good. I knew that it would have an impact. I didn't know the extent of it. For me, the best thing was to have people call me or write me and say, I talked to my mom the day after and she wanted to talk to me about this. I was connecting with my family more. My dad called me and said, oh, I kind of understand, and that those guys were great, and this is okay. I'm like, well, this is good. Because ultimately that was my goal personally, was to show not necessarily like, look, we're equal people, blah, blah, blah.

These are - love is the same no matter who's in it. A lot of people said, I recognize myself in these characters, which is again, what I was going for as an editor and what I think they were going for as on a story base as well. So for me, it was wonderful. Then the negative response was awesome because it meant to me that it worked and it meant that it was wildly successful and they recognized it was wildly successful. So they did their very best to try and say, this isn't good, this isn't good. So they tried to review bomb it, they tried to say, no, this is wrong, blah, blah, blah. I'm like, great, because this means that the loudest people are the ones that are losing. And therefore, I feel, I felt really good about it because I knew that they knew that it was showing a universal human condition.

Earlier today, I just spoke to students in Denmark because they were obsessed with how the episode made them feel. These are people far, far away, half way across the world. So I just love the fact that it has done that for so many, and it's always going to have some people who hate you, and that's okay.

Sarah Taylor:

Yep. I think I remember too, the numbers went up the next ... the numbers progressively got higher and higher after that episode. So it's like, success.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yes. It's like, sorry guys, we can't do that.

Sarah Taylor:

You're wrong.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

Emily, what was it like cutting episode seven? Your description of just that one dropping of the mask was, what a beautiful thing to capture. Also I know that feeling as a teenager, or even just anybody kissing somebody for the first time, right?

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

So tell me what it was like for you to cut this.

Emily:

It was so meaningful getting to cut it. I have experienced that same thing of falling in love with your best friend as a teenager. Does she like me? Does she not? So I just felt like I just understood what those feelings were. So to be able to visually get those up on screen, it's really great. I think that the Left Behind episode is so interesting because it's a very unique episode and it just felt so different from everything else. So to get to work on that just alone I think was awesome. But the character of Riley is very special to me. The Left Behind portion of the game was always my favorite.

So getting to work on scenes with them, it was really kind of a dream come true for me. The mall is so cool. Just the fact that they're in a mall, I just think that's cool. That's just a detail that I just personally love. I've always loved things set in malls. I don't know why, but for me, I loved it.

Sarah Taylor:

Did you grow up in the mall? Because I spent a lot of my youth at the mall.

Emily:

Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

It's nostalgic, right?

Emily:

Nostalgic, really cool. Then you have the arcades. So we have all these really cool scenes in that episode that are just fun to work on. I'm just watching the dailies, and I'm just like, this is just fun to watch. So that episode for me was just a blast. I had the best time.

Sarah Taylor:

So my daughter, who's seven, I don't know if it's appropriate for her to be watching the show or not, but she did. She watched with us and I was like, "Hey, I'm going to talk to the editors today. Do you have anything you want to say or any questions?" She said, "In season two, if there's another mall thing, tell them not to include too much American Girl dolls because they're really scary." The clip you put in was really scary. She was more scared of American Girl dolls than the zombies.

Emily:

Oh my gosh, that's so funny.

Sarah Taylor:

Good detail.

Emily:

I agree. They are pretty creepy. I love it.

Sarah Taylor:

Anyway, I think episode seven and episode three were probably, I'm going to guess your favorite episodes. I could be wrong, but what was the favorite scene that you got to edit and why?

Emily:

My favorite scene has to be the dance and the kiss for Ellie and Riley. That scene to me, just 'cause since that was first episode that I was co-editing. When I got to that scene and I was able to cut that scene, and then I showed it to Tim and I got to hear his reaction. We were still remote when we were working on that scene, but he called me on the phone and he was freaking out, so excited. I was like, I got this. That was the scene where I kind of was like, okay, I can do this kind of in a way since I had been moving up and all this pressure. I think that that scene means so much to me on so many different levels of my life, and I am very, very proud of it.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Oh, yeah, she destroyed it. Then for me, it could be one or the other. One of my favorite sequences is the Bill and Frank meet cute in the dining room, which I just love because it has so many instances where timing was so critical that editorially, I had to make sure that when he bumps... he runs through the door of the kitchen, Frank has to be suitably like, oh, I was caught. But then Bill's like, was I caught though looking too excited? Then there's this sort of dance between the two of them throughout that dinner sequence where they're trying to figure out ... Frank's like, "I think you might be..." and Bill's like, "I hope he doesn't think that he knows who I am." So those two dynamics butting up against each other made for a really fascinating dynamic at first. And then when it goes into the piano sequence, Frank makes this really beautiful transition.

At first, he's sort of playing with Bill and going, "I know who you are." He's like, "Oh, I think you are the kind of person who knows exactly what wine to put with these things." And he's like, ah, what is all this piano stuff? But then by the end of it, Bill shows who he is in this, using the piano song, a Linda Ronstadt song, and Frank has this beautiful transition where he realizes, oh, I was just playing with him and now he's opened up and I recognize him as someone so beautiful and so worthy, and I never intended to feel this way.

So that sequence ends on Frank and it didn't have to. It could have ended when Bill left and we could have cut right upstairs. But I said, no, no, no, no. It has to end with Frank because he's now recognizing that I just came in for a couple of lunches, but I don't think I'm leaving because I think I'm falling in love with this person that I did not anticipate.

For me to be able to take a scene from that beginning to that end from one character's perspective, I don't know. As a gay man, being able to show the meeting of these two people together and able to show how that feels when you first meet, to be able to bring my own experiences into it, that's going to have to be the most important one for me, just to think about what Emily just said, from a pure emotional standpoint from my own life. My other one is when Joel teaches her how to use a gun, but that's because that was a really cool scene too. But emotionally speaking, it's got to be the dining table.

Sarah Taylor:

For sure.

Emily:

Yeah. My second one, I have a second one too, by the way, Tim. It's Ellie's birth. That's my second.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh, that was so good.

Emily:

So I was able to cut that whole sequence of Anna running through the woods and into the house. Then she has Ellie. That is a close second for me. That was a very fun sequence to work on.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah, once again, because I knew that she was such a big Ashley fan from the game. So I'm like, "Emily, I think you're doing the opening." And she was like, "Yes."

Sarah Taylor:

Yes, I am.

Emily:

It was so much fun. That opening has ... you're scared because she's running. There's a horror element, and then she's giving birth, and then you've got the whole thing once she gets in the house and gets upstairs. You have the infected breaking in, and so you hear the infected. So we got to play with sound a lot. Everything about that sequence was so much fun to work on.

Sarah Taylor:

This is awesome. Were you referring to them as the infected and not zombies?

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah, we were pretty good about that.

Emily:

We pretty much did. Yeah, yeah.

Timothy Good, ACE:

It was kind of like, once we understood from an early point, because in episode three, we had the sequence where Ellie has to kill an infected underneath the Cumberland Farms. Craig's directive was, "I don't want him to be scary. I want him to be sad. This used to be a person that is no longer there, and I want it to not be this thing that's trying to get you. I want it to be this thing to be mourned." So when I understood that, it was easier to think of them as infected, as opposed to zombies, because the way Craig was thinking about them himself was as these sort of ... yes, they're obstacles, but they're obstacles because they're behaving in a way that nature has made them. So they're not necessarily zombie enemies. They are just obstacles and they once were human.

Sarah Taylor:

Well, that's special. I like that.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

What would you say was the most challenging aspect of working on this show?

Timothy Good, ACE:

Ooh, challenging. That's a really good question. I would want to say that it was time, but it wasn't because I felt like once we had this rhythm going, Emily and I just were in a flow this whole time. And yes, there were times when we had to move a little faster than others, but not much. I think that overall, the biggest sort of challenge was making sure that we were consistent across episodes because there's different directors who will come in and they'll have different cinematographers who come in. So our biggest challenge was to make sure that everything was still feeling like it was connected to the same authorship. Craig had a really strong feeling of how everything was going to come together. So for us, it was making sure that everything, despite having multiple different creative people at different times, felt of the same cloth.

Emily:

I totally agree. Time is the first thing that came to my mind too, which is interesting because you're right, we sometimes had a lot of time, but also sometimes didn't. So time was one of those things that... it was a back and forth. But what is interesting is when we were co-editing, we were putting our scenes together and they were fitting together very well. Tim always says, you cannot tell which scenes are his or mine, which is I think always a nice compliment. But that would be something that you would think would've been a challenge. Although I'd say that it ended up working out really well.

Timothy Good, ACE:

A lot of that is because we would talk back and forth with each other's scenes. So I will give Emily all the credit in the world for pushing me to make sure I'm finding character beats that I might have been missing. Then I would say, "Hey, what about if you did it like this?" So by feeding back with each other, we were heading towards the same goals.

Emily:

Always pushing each other and in a good way. Also, we have similar approaches, so we're always focusing on story and character. I think when you're doing that from the beginning, then all those things start to work together anyways. So yeah, I think that that process was really fun. It was just always so much fun.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah, it really was. Craig Maison creates a whole feeling of a family. He's really good to his crews. We would have Dungeons and Dragons nights that he would host, and he's like, "If you'd like to stay and play some Dungeons and Dragons with me, feel free. If not, please go home and have a night off."

Emily:

And 13 people would show up for Dungeons and Dragons on a Tuesday at six. We would all stop working and go and play in the kitchen, and it was the best thing ever. So much fun.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah. So we were all very, very connected together. And he wanted that. He wanted everyone as close to each other as possible. We became very close with the visual effects team who are all Canadian. It was awesome. They were so fantastic, and we were very close to the sound team. We would go to the sound mixes and make sure that they understood all of the things that we knew from the picture editing side. So he just wanted to make the sort of creative interconnections between all these characters, all of us together. It worked out really well because there was never any sort of miscommunication per se, because we were right next to each other and we would always say, oh, no, no, not that, this. As opposed to, oh my gosh, you did three hours of work, and that's not what we asked for at all. No, it was always 10 seconds later, we'd be on the right direction.

Sarah Taylor:

That's amazing. I think that's a huge thing that I've noticed in my career too. When you're working with a team that you truly feel like you can collaborate with, it just takes the projects to the next level. It's always going to end up getting better if you can just be on the same page and feel that comradery that you're describing.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Hundred percent.

Emily:

Definitely. Then Craig loves puzzles, and Tim and I love puzzles, and so sometimes it's just us sitting there trying to figure out puzzles. Editing is kind of a puzzle.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, totally.

Emily:

That's always changing, always evolving. So it's the ultimate puzzle. So I feel like all of us kind of geek out and love it, so that also kind of connects us.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah, for sure.

Sarah Taylor:

There's been other editors who've mentioned that that's something that they do as well. They'll have a puzzle going on at the same time as editing.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Oh, wow.

Sarah Taylor:

So they could go and sit back at the table and work on the puzzle if they're stuck in an edit. I was like-

Timothy Good, ACE:

Ooh, I love that.

Sarah Taylor:

Another person mentioned something about Lego, having a Lego set to build. So anyway.

Timothy Good, ACE:

I can see that. Totally.

Sarah Taylor:

Okay. So you mentioned that, Tim, you came to Alberta, which I'm from Alberta, so of course I want to talk a little bit about the landscape and where you got to shoot, but you also got to be here to cut. So tell me about your experience.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Well, it was so spectacular because they graciously set us up in the production offices just outside Calgary. So I had an editing room there, but then I also had, because we were still in the COVID era, I had an editing room in the apartment that we were in the BeltLine area.

Sarah Taylor:

Nice.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Oh, it was beautiful. I loved the BeltLine. I loved all of Calgary, actually. The first day I was there, I just went to the Beau River and I'm like, oh my God, this is absolutely beautiful. I just loved how easy it was to get around, how friendly everyone was. It was just a uniquely wonderful place to work and be. And having the Canadian Rockies just in your backyard is stunning. So on weekends, I would just go, I'm going to go up there. So I would go to Lake Louise and Banff, all those fantastic places. And of course the locals would say, "Oh, you have really go out further if you want to see the real deal." And I go, well I'm not going to risk that one.

Sarah Taylor:

You're like, I do have to work still.

Timothy Good, ACE:

I want to come back. So you guys can probably do that. But it was really great. All of us were there as a team, and the visual effects team was there. Like I said, they were all either from Vancouver or Calgary. So they really took me under their wing and showed me around and showed me all about what's the best kind of poutine, the very best of this. Oh, don't have that. Have this. If you're going to go here, go there. So I really had a wonderful experience there. They were filming all over Alberta. They would go as far as Olds up north and Fort McLeod in the south, and then up to, oh gosh, in the mountains before Banff. It's called Canmore.

Sarah Taylor:

Canmore, yeah.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah. Canmore was where they filmed the fort in episode six where Tommy is with Maria. So all of that was absolutely stunning. Then, oh gosh, the eighth episode was filmed in this really cold area. It's a national park. I forget what it's called, but I remember the very first shot. I'm like, "That is a visual effects shot, right?" They're like, "Nope, that's real. That's a real shot. That's a really cold, cold, cold place."

Sarah Taylor:

That's a winter.

Timothy Good, ACE:

I think they had to add something in visual effects just to make sure people knew it was real, which was ironic, is that they literally were like, this looks too much like a visual effect. How can we make it look more real? Oh my gosh. I'm like, but it is real. So that was a strange thing. But I absolutely loved being in Canada. It was a uniquely wonderful experience to be around. The crew was all Canadian, Calgary based, wonderful individuals.

I remember walking down a street in the BeltLine and the art department's having a party in one of the bar houses. I forget what it's called. It's a really cool little house bar. They said, "Hey, we're having a party. Come in. We saw you outside." I'm like, oh my gosh. So next thing you know, we're all hanging out together. Again, this whole idea of your crew is all together and everyone is in the same place so that you can collaborate in the most efficient and creative way possible. So from that perspective, I was so excited about being in Calgary, and I look forward to season two when unfortunately we're going to Vancouver, but I will always want to come back to Calgary. I know it so intimately at this point, and I really want to return as often as I can.

Sarah Taylor:

Well, we will welcome you with open arms.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Thank you.

Sarah Taylor:

What is something that you will take away from this experience that you'll take to your projects going forward? Any techniques you learned or a way of being?

Emily:

One thing that Tim and I started using on ... this is more technical Avid thing, but one thing that we started using was real time de verb in our tracks, which we had never really used before, but helps with things for transitions and music that you want to end. You just have this track that anything you throw down, you get a long de verb tail. And so that was one thing that we were using a lot and I think we'll probably continue to use that.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Oh, we'll continue to use that. That was a great, wonderful thing because a lot of times, and especially with the way Gustavo ... I'm going to screw up the name, Santoaya. It'll be close enough. How he scores is he doesn't score necessarily to the pictures. He just creates themes and thematics and relies on you as the editors of the piece or the music editors to create the structure of the cues. So when we were trying to find endings for things, we would say, well, this will be the last note of the piece. Then if we just throw that note on the bottom track, it can ring out and then they can fix that on the mixing stage. So that's why we use that quite a bit. It was easier to create score that way. That was a lot of fun.

From my perspective, what I've learned a lot, and a lot of it was from what I call ... not what I call, what is the brilliance of Craig Maison in my opinion, is that he just understands how not to push too hard on an emotion. He says it's going to be better if you allow the audience to experience the emotion versus telling them how to feel in this moment. So what I learned from him was restraint and the ability to not try to force things. I always tell Emily, I don't stop learning. I've been doing this for 20 years, but I'm never going to stop learning. Because every time you work with someone else, you get their entire lifetime of knowledge, their entire creative life, and they're going to start exposing what they have learned. Then that can be osmasized into your own processes. I find that that's always the case. In this specific instance, that was the thing I really, really, truly felt like I learned so much from Craig was how to just really allow the audience to do a lot of the work.

Emily:

And not only just restraint in picture, but also I was learning a lot of restraint in sound design too. That was something that I think we used with Craig a lot. I think that was also a really awesome tool, was to make things feel a little more real, sometimes it is about holding back and not doing it too much or too loud. Sometimes it's leaning into the silence. That was something we also worked on a lot with Craig that I definitely will use in the future.

Sarah Taylor:

Did you both anticipate the show to be as big as it was?

Timothy Good, ACE:

Okay. No, but it was funny because Craig's like, "You guys, it's good. And I know." We go, okay. I said, "Well, we hope it's good." He goes, "Yeah, me too. Obviously we all hope it's good." I think the moment where I knew it would be a little bit bigger than I thought it would be was at the premiere when we were all together in this ridiculously huge tent. It was pouring rain outside in Los Angeles, which makes no sense, but that's what it was. At midnight, the review embargo ended and all of the reviews could be released. We were still there at that moment.

I remember being right next to Craig and Bella Ramsey and all the reviews started piling in and they were looking at them and they're reading them, and they were like, "Oh my God." They were just going, "This is really good." Bella Ramsey is a revelation. And they're like, "Wow, you guys, this is going to be something." And I was like, okay, maybe this will work. That's when I knew it would be something. But when it really came out of the gate like that, and then when I saw that every week it was gaining viewers, that just doesn't happen.

Sarah Taylor:

No.

Timothy Good, ACE:

That's why I was like, wow, okay, this is really something.

Emily:

Yeah. Then like, also fan art started coming out more every week. We would be playing Dungeons and Dragons, and then everyone would be sharing the fan art from the week that they'd been seeing posted. We'd all be looking at it and be like, oh my God, that's so cool. So it's like, as the episodes were coming out, we were still working. That was really fun to see the fan ... some of the fan art is just incredible.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Oh yeah.

Emily:

The scenes, how they touched people and what it means to them, like a specific scene. That to me has just been awesome.

Sarah Taylor:

Wow. Did it shift how you were working after all of the hype was happening, you were still finishing things. Did it shift any feelings when you were working?

Timothy Good, ACE:

No, we were really close to the end. We were mostly doing sound mixes at that point. What was great, and I don't think we would ever change how we worked, I hope. But it was a very detailed process the whole time to the sound mixes are, Craig processes things through sound. He loves sound so much. So all of our sound mixes were big detail fests and again, best about - do we need this sound or should we remove this sound? So it was always, everything was picked over to the point where he was really happy with it. So near the end, we were just finishing those sound mixes and it was great to know that the last episode, as we were putting the last little touches on it, we're like, I think it's going to work. I think people are going to like it.

Sarah Taylor:

And they did.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

My last question, what's the next thing for both of you, other than season two, but is there anything coming in between that we should keep our eyes open for?

Timothy Good, ACE:

Oh my goodness, I have nothing. It's the weirdest thing because I was working kind of straight through for three years once COVID hit. So I was doing multiple things with overlaps, and I told myself this year, you need to take for yourself and to return to the wild, as I like to call it, and become a human being again, and re-experiencing life. Not only that, but because of the enormous success of the show, we've been so lucky and grateful that we've been able to sort of go to places and talk about the work we've

done. We were just in Las Vegas altogether for NAB. We were on a panel there. And tomorrow I will be flying to Norway to be part of a panel in Bergen about Nordic Media Days, where again, they have invited me as the editor of episode three because they really want to discuss the processes of how editing helped make it a wonderful episode.

I'm so excited about doing that. So I'm trying to keep myself open to these opportunities because one never knows when these things are ever going to happen again in their lives. So I might as well just enjoy it while I have it, and luckily I can do that right now and so I can be ready for a season two when it comes.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh, love it. What about you, Emily? Anything on the horizon?

Emily:

I'm in the same boat as Tim. I am also taking a break. I was also working all that time that he was working, and so I'm mostly just spending time with family, like my wife, my dogs, working on some house projects, getting caught up on all those things that I wasn't able to do when we were working before.

Timothy Good, ACE:

And not only that, but she was working harder than I was because she was sometimes doing two jobs on those times.

Emily:

Yes, right.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah, she gets all the benefits.

Sarah Taylor:

I think that it's really great to hear this, that you're choosing to take a break. I think often we forget that we are human and we're allowed to stop.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Yeah, and also how can we have any kind of insight into experiences without experiencing things ourselves.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, and I think your conversation about episode three and episode seven is a reminder that who we have behind screen, who we have in our crew in the writer's room really makes a difference to the quality of the messaging, the story, everything. So I think that's something to remember, that we need to fill all of the spaces with diverse individuals who have different lived experience than the dominant culture. So I'm really glad to hear that was the case.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Wonderful. Thank you.

Sarah Taylor:

Well, thank you for taking time to sit with us and chat with us and answer all of our questions. The season was a joy to watch, and I'm excited to follow both of your careers going forward, and I can't wait for season two.

Emily:

Oh, thank you so much.

Timothy Good, ACE:

Thank you so much, Sarah. Thank you.

Sarah Taylor:

Thank you so much for joining us today, and a big thanks goes to Tim and Emily for taking the time to sit with me. This episode wraps up our fifth season of The Editor's Cut. If there are any editors that you would love to hear from, please let us know. You can reach us at podcast@cceditors.ca. In the meantime, have a listen to some of our past episodes or our French podcast, LA Art de Montage. We have lots of gems. We'll be back in September. I hope you all can take some time, like Tim and Emily are to live life and bring new experiences to your edit suites.

A special thanks goes to Kim McTaggart CCE, Alison Dowler and Catie Disabato. The main title sound design was created by Jane Tattersall, additional ADR recording by Andrea Rush. Original music created by Chad Blaine and sound straight. This episode was mixed and mastered by Tony Bao. The CCE is proud to support HireBIPOC. HireBIPOC is the definitive and ubiquitous industry-wide roster of Canadian bipoc creatives and crew working in screen-based industries. Check out hirebipoc.ca to hire your next crew or create a profile and get hired.

Speaker 5:

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