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Jason Ballantine

MEET YOUR INDUSTRY

Jason Ballantine: Editor

As a first assistant editor and visual effects editor, Jason has worked alongside many notable directors and editors on films such as *Mission Impossible 2*, *Moulin Rouge*, *The Quiet American* and *Star Wars* (episodes 2 and 3) in a career spanning 13 years. Having made the move to Editor with *Wolf Creek*, Jason was nominated for both an AFI Award and a Film Critics Circle of Australia (FCCA) Award in 2005 and is currently editing Greg McLean's follow up feature film *Rogue*.

AFI: Tell us what exactly a film editor does...

Jason: More than just cut off the slate boards! The role of the editor is to support and creatively collaborate with the director and producer in the interest of the film's storytelling. This mix of creative and technical skill gives consideration to all previous creative input such as performance, camera and continuity.

The editor's role holds the benefit of being the only objective crew perspective, closest to the audience's experience. That is to say, free from emotional attachment on the shooting set. If it doesn't help tell the story, it doesn't make the cut.

AFI: You've worked as an assistant editor on the *Babe* films and *Hearts in Atlantis*, but with *Wolf Creek* you made the move to editor. Is this a natural career progression or something you really wanted to do?

Jason: Certainly a combination of both over a long period of time. Assistant editing forms the basis for learning the techniques to post production and an insight to the creative power of editing in the film making process. To successfully edit is more an instinctual feeling rather than a textbook study. My assisting years developed my respect for the role of editor, yet it all still hinges on that one big elusive break.

AFI: You're working on another Greg McLean film, *Rogue*, at the moment, what stage are you at with the editing process?

Jason: Right in the middle of fine cutting, the most rewarding time. I get to be with my director full time and creatively discuss the story before us. We give great consideration to pacing and bring those over-length script assemblies down to a flying feature film.

AFI: Greg has final cut on *Rogue*; does that in turn allow you more creative control?

Jason: Greg gives me a wonderful freedom to experiment and throw ideas around. I sense his trust and feel the responsibility to deliver the best moments from his footage. He gives me the pleasure of a true collaborative edit. Of course as director he has the final say. The great thing is we're on the same page of thought and have genuine fun working the long hours together.

AFI: It must have been fun to have the *Wolf Creek* gang back together again...

Jason: It has been the greatest experience of my career so far. There is nothing like working with your mates, spending American dollars!

AFI: It's been a busy time for you; you've also edited two other Australian features, *The Caterpillar Wish* and *The Bet*...

Jason: The wonderful thing about these last two films is their differences. As much as I love the creative freedom within a genre picture, I'm excited to have these two films releasing soon to show my creative diversity. I find it odd that editors tend to be pigeonholed. My belief is any good editor can cut any style of film. The editor will adapt to the pacing requirements of the story and timing intrinsic to the genre.

AFI: You've got an American agent now, is Hollywood the next thing on your 'to do' list?

Jason: Most certainly but in good time. Australia is the greatest place to live. I work to live. I'm passionate about editing and highly ambitious which will always lead to greater things. I love to travel and will not rest until I have one of those golden statues in my sweaty palm. But in the meantime, stop to appreciate our home. As long as there are opportunities to edit in Australia, I'll be here.

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