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The Editor's Cut - Episode 040 - Interview with Liza Cardinale

Sarah Taylor:

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 honor, 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.

Sarah Taylor:

Before we begin today's episode, I have a message from the Vancouver short Film Festival. The Vancouver Short Film festival is committed to celebrating the vibrant community of short film, video, and animation artists in British Columbia. Watching together while staying apart, this year, VSFF will take place January 22nd to 24th, 2021 in an online format. Visit vsff.com for more information.

Sarah Taylor:

Today, I bring to you an interview with Liza Cardinale, ACE. Liza is a television editor based in Los Angeles, California. Her work spans many genres, from comedy to fantasy, and often features stories with complex female characters. Some of her credits include *Outlander*, *Dead to Me*, which earned her an Eddie nomination, and the upcoming dramedy, *On the Verge*. We chat about Liza's editing journey from New York to LA and what life is like during the pandemic. I hope you enjoy getting to know Liza as much as I did.

[show open]

Sarah Taylor:

Liza, thank you so much for joining me today on The Editor's Cut. I'm really excited to sit down and pick your brain about all things editing.

Liza Cardinale:

Sure. My pleasure to be here.

Sarah Taylor:

Excellent. Where I like to start is, where are you from and what led you to the world of editing?

Liza Cardinale:

Well, I grew up in the Bay Area, which is around San Francisco in California. I think it all began because I was a latchkey kid, which in generation X, where the people who like I had a single mom who was working, so a lot of times I'd get home and I would just watch TV. That was part of my routine. So, I watched a lot of shows like *Three's Company* and *Laverne & Shirley*, and I mean, tons of really fun eighties sitcoms.



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Sarah Taylor:

Excellent.

Liza Cardinale:

If they weren't appropriate for children, a lot of things were definitely going over my head, but I think I just got caught with the bug of entertainment really young because of that. Because that was like my friend, my companion, my TV, my joy, my entertainment, so much fun. Then my dad, he moved to LA to become a writer on Family Ties, because he was never a writer when I was a kid. He was an accountant and then he built houses.

Sarah Taylor:

That's a big shift. That's awesome.

Liza Cardinale:

Huge shift, yeah. The way he kept changing careers, I think showed me that wow, anything's possible. When you're a grownup, you don't have to settle into one thing. You should always follow your passion. His really good friend from growing up was Gary David Goldberg, who had created Family Ties and really hit it big as a writer, but they were just little scrappy kids running around Brooklyn in the '50s. But Gary really wanted his friends to join him in his success, so he taught them how to write from afar. I just remember my dad writing all these spec scripts of cheers and whatnot.

Liza Cardinale:

I would read them, and he would say, "Read this script and put a red check mark by anything that's funny."

Sarah Taylor:

That's awesome.

Liza Cardinale:

To make sure that the humor was coming across. I'd say that, that was my early training, was in reading. Reading his scripts and seeing him evolve as a writer. He still writes to this day. You cannot get this guy to stop writing. He loves it. No one's paying him for it, but he loves it. That's something you can do forever. That was a happy thing. Then when I would visit him in LA, I could sometimes visit the set of Family Ties because they had a live audience, so that was super exciting to me, as like an awkward tween from suburban Marin County, where nothing exciting was really going on.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, that's awesome.

Liza Cardinale:

Getting that peek behind the curtain made a big difference. Sadly, I never got to work with Gary, or even talk to him really, professionally, because by the time I had a strong career, he had already retired and sadly he's passed away now. But interestingly, sidebar, he is one of the main reasons that Liz Feldman became a showrunner and a writer. She's the showrunner of



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Dead to Me. She also grew up in Brooklyn, like my father did, like Gary, and she said that, when she was a kid, she was in her parent's chiropractor office, and they got all the magazines for the clients to read in the waiting room.

Liza Cardinale:

She read People Magazine. They had a huge profile on Gary David Goldberg, the showrunner of Family Ties, and he was talking about his life story growing up in Brooklyn. Liz said that that was her light bulb moment, where she's like, that's what I want to do.

Sarah Taylor:

That's amazing.

Liza Cardinale:

She didn't know showrunners existed, but the fact that he came from Brooklyn and he ascended to those heights showed her that she could. So, it's been cool. Sometimes Liz and I talk Brooklyn stuff.

Sarah Taylor:

What a wild connection that, that ended up being. How cool is that?

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. The last time my dad visited me, I took a picture of him, because I gave him like a Dead to Me hat or something with a baseball cap. She said, "Oh, it looks like your dad and my dad should be friends," and then she sent me a picture of him, and they're like the exact same type of cute Brooklyn dude. I don't know how to explain them [crosstalk 00:06:01].

Sarah Taylor:

Dude from Brooklyn.

Liza Cardinale:

Adorable. Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh, that's fantastic. So, your dad was a big influence on you for even just storytelling, getting into that world, knowing that, that's a possibility. How did you end up then ... Did you just decide to go to film school? What was your next step knowing that you wanted to do that too?

Liza Cardinale:

Well, I didn't know much about it, and my dad didn't know much about behind the scenes people, so I just thought there are directors, there are writers, and there are actors. That's about the extent of what I knew about filmmaking. I thought, I know I don't want to be in front of a camera. I could be into writing, but I think I should direct. I think I want to be a director. That was initially what got me into really studying different directors' work. I would rent all their movies and go down the rabbit hole of Hitchcock or John Waters. I got really obsessed with them, and David Lynch. I liked the weird stuff.



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Liza Cardinale:

I still like weird stuff. I went to UC Berkeley and it didn't really have a film department. I was doing like theater. I was just sort of dabbling at that point in various art forms, but I made some films instead of writing papers because I was lazy about writing papers sometimes. The teachers would accept that, even though there was no production department, so I just had to make my own movies and use my own camera. Then they had one VHS tape to tape kind of editing system, so I got in there. You could not tear me out of that room. I just wanted to stay for hours and hours, and the sun went down and the time flew by.

Sarah Taylor:

It sounds very familiar.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah, that's a very common early editor story. You get in there, you're like, I've never done this before, but I can't stop. [crosstalk 00:07:45].

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. It's been ... What? 12 hours just passed? What? Oh my gosh. Yeah.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. It was so rewarding. That's when I realized that this is my happy place. I don't really want to be in charge of everything, and I definitely don't want to get up at five in the morning every day and run to set. I think this is a much better fit.

Sarah Taylor:

Then what led you to your first job? How did you get your first job in the industry, or even learn the craft?

Liza Cardinale:

I still didn't know what I wanted to do. I was doing random jobs. I went to New York thinking I wanted to move to New York, so I was pretty much homeless at that point. I was just like subletting an apartment. September 11th happened the day after I arrived in New York City, and that completely shut the city down. So, any like job hunting, house hunting, Mary Tyler Moore fantasies I was having of taking over Manhattan, that definitely was halted in its tracks. Instead, I just had the experience of being there for that.

Liza Cardinale:

One of my best friends in the city was an assistant editor. I knew I liked editing. I still hadn't committed to that as a craft, but she let me come to work with her every day because I had nothing to do and nowhere to go, and the city was kind of shut down. She was working in Nyack on a Jonathan Demme movie called The Truth About Charlie. She was an old school film assistant that doesn't really exist anymore where she was conforming the print. But the main editor, Carol Littleton was working on an Avid, and she had one assistant who was working on an Avid.

Liza Cardinale:



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I'd sometimes sit behind that one. Her name's Suzanne Spangler, she's an editor now. She would just look over her shoulder and be like, "So, here's what I'm doing. Here's how you get the dailies, you get the bin, you get the ALE file. I just like accidentally shadowed some really great, top tier professional editors. Then went to a trade school right after that. I went to a school that just taught editing in Portland, like an Avid certified whatever kind of place. Somebody I met there ... I was still homeless at this point, by the way, because I moved from New York to Portland.

Liza Cardinale:

That school, they get a director to bring footage in to let the students play with it. The director was named Billy Logue, and he said, "Why don't you move to LA after this is done and recut my movie. I want you to cut the whole thing. I can't really pay you, but I'll get you a job at the Playboy channel." Which is where he worked.

Sarah Taylor:

Interesting. Yeah.

Liza Cardinale:

But I'd said, "Sure." It's very open at that point, and then what's the next door that's opening I'm going to walk through it? I moved into my dad's garage, where I had a little twin size bed and got to work night shift assistant editor. My first job, I just learned from the people. I learned the Avid, but I had no idea about workflow and scripts and all the things, outputs that I had to do, but people are so friendly. They taught me everything I needed to know, the other assistant editors.

Sarah Taylor:

Then that led you to assistant editing, right?

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. I assistant edited for a very long time. It felt like an eternity.

Sarah Taylor:

Did it feel like an eternity because you felt like you're trying to get to the next step and it just wasn't happening, or how did it work for you to get from assistant to now then be like, okay, I don't want to be labeled that anymore, I want to be the editor?

Liza Cardinale:

That was a very tough leap. I think it might be a bit easier for ladies now because people are so hungry to find lady editors. But I did notice in my time, which is not that many years ago, that all my male counterparts had been promoted long before I was. I don't think it was because I had less skills. I just think people just tended to trust guys more. The way it's changing, it's great. For me, I met this editor named Jonathan Schwartz on the Big C.

Sarah Taylor:

That's such a great show.



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Liza Cardinale:

Oh yeah, it was a great show. I loved it so much so I always made sure I went back to it. I couldn't make the last season, but I did three seasons of it. We would kind of share ... It was a weird setup, so I think I had to assist a few different editors and they'd shuffle us around. I just really liked John. I had been working on *The Walking Dead*, but it was giving me so many nightmares.

Sarah Taylor:

Can't even imagine.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah, it was pretty gross to work on that. It was with a good friend of mine. I was assisting someone from college actually, from UC Berkeley. Lovely guy, but I just called him and I said, I don't think it's a good fit for me. I'm dreaming about putting axes in zombies heads and blood spurting is just really not my style. I told John, "John, I like you. I like assisting you. Wherever you go next, you can have me if you want me." He said, "Oh, okay. You're not going back to *The Walking Dead*. Okay." He took me to a show called *The Neighbors* for ABC, which was a sitcom.

Liza Cardinale:

He really wanted to cut features, so he didn't want to stay there for very long. He did stay the whole first season, but then the second season, he decided to leave to do a feature that he recommended that they promote me instead of finding an outside editor.

Sarah Taylor:

That was great.

Liza Cardinale:

So, I was very lucky to have that assist. Then the showrunner, Dan Fogelman, knew me, trusted me. I had cut some stuff for him, so he went to bat for me. I think that the hard thing is that you need somebody in a position of great power to go to bat for you with the studio because they don't want to risk it.

Sarah Taylor:

Was that your first sitcom? You watched the sitcoms as a young kid in the '80s, and then now you're cutting a sitcom. Were you like, "Wow, I'm here."

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. It wasn't the kind of sitcom that those were. There was no live audience or anything, but it had that sensibility. I think, because it was very wholesome and sweet and family based. As my dad would tell me, you always have to end with a quiet scene between two people. You have to get to this intimate, true heartwarming moment at the end, and I pretty much followed that formula. It did feel pretty good. It was definitely weird too, but it got canceled. But still, it was such a great first job because I knew everybody on the crew. I even knew the actors because they shot right there and I had so much support.



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Liza Cardinale:

My first day, I had people coming into my room saying, "Liza, we're so happy for you. You're going to do great. Congratulations." Because they knew it was such a big deal too. I felt like, oh, I'm so supported. I don't have to prove myself. I still do, but I don't have to do it in a unfriendly environment.

Sarah Taylor:

Exactly. That makes all the difference.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

You ended up being the one of main editors of Outlander, which is a huge series that has a huge following. People love it. I giggled when I heard that your first job was with Playboy and you're working on Outlander, which some people say is soft core for women. I was like, that's fun.

Liza Cardinale:

Definitely is. Yes, there's enough soft core for men. It's time to make some for women. I fully support that.

Sarah Taylor:

Yes, amen. I think that is great. Getting onto Outlander, did you read the books? Were you interested in that series before you got onto it? What was the story of Outlander, and when you started working on it, did you have a feeling that it was going to become this big?

Liza Cardinale:

Well, I knew it was a huge romance, novel community. I knew it was huge in that community as a book series, so I suspected. Just like Game of Thrones, that whenever you have multi-million human beings already in love with these characters and waiting for it, I figured it would be pretty big, especially once the casting was good, because that's where I guess it could have sunk if people didn't love their Jamie because they love their Jamie so much. That would have been like a personal affront. I love that it has such a big fan base because I like to read their comments on episodes that I've done and see on Facebook.

Liza Cardinale:

I just love to know that it's connecting with people and to see which are the moments that they really connect to, what makes them cry, what disappoints them too, I'm curious about, which is usually any time it diverts from the book, which is like the Bible.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, no kidding.

Liza Cardinale:



Even before I had my interview for that show, I read the entire first book, which was hard to get through all of it really fast, but I didn't really know about it before. I got the audio book, I would read it, I would get it in my car whenever I was driving through Los Angeles. It was really fresh in my mind when I talked to Merrill, who was an executive producer and she was in Scotland. She was like calling me from the set to interview me.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh, so cool.

Liza Cardinale:

The crazy time zone difference. But I could just talk about the characters in the story and that was basically the interview. It was so easy to latch onto that, especially in that first book. It's so exciting because it's the falling in love and the time travel. Yeah, all the hot steaminess of it. I'm someone who's been to a lot of conventions like Comic-Con or KublaCon, various kind of nerdy things. I just like that environment. Super fans are not new to me. That's a very comfortable crowd. I remember when it premiered and I went to the ... A lot of us went down to Comic-Con for the premiere, and they had it in a big movie theater. Bear McCreary, the composer debuted the Jamie and Claire theme music live on stage.

Sarah Taylor:

Amazing.

Liza Cardinale:

Then they played the first episode of cut outs and all these ladies in the audience just screaming, screaming throughout. It was really fun. It's so fun as a TV editor to get to see things in the theater anyway, because usually you have such a distance from your audience.

Sarah Taylor:

That must've been really interesting, you're getting feedback from your audience all the time. As you went forward to the second season, to the next seasons, were you taking some of that knowing how the audience was reacting to things? Were you thinking about that in the edit, or were you just still doing your thing going with your instinct?

Liza Cardinale:

Well, I would always read the book before the season started for me. That was mainly because I could see how important accuracy was to the fans. I had to just become a fan of the books myself in order to deliver that, so it's very clear in the books what are big moments and what a character is supposed to be like. Sometimes that changes based on casting and stuff, but I could tell ... I could just see what were the important moments that needed to land and needed to be really emotional and heartfelt, so then I made sure I gave them a lot of extra time in the edit. I spent a whole day, and this is not even actually something from the book.

Liza Cardinale:

This is a bad example, but I spent at least a full day on a one minute scene where Jamie goes into a blacksmith place, and Murtagh's there, and he doesn't know Murtagh's there. They're seeing each other for the first time in years, but I understand how important that relationship is



and how huge that moment needed to be an epic reveal moment. I spend the time by trying it a hundred different ways until I find the best one.

Sarah Taylor:

It might not have been in the book, but you knew those characters and you knew how important those moments were for the audience, which I think probably made a huge impact for the people watching that [crosstalk 00:20:02].

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. A later episode in that season, I also got to cut the scene where Jamie sees Brianna for the first time, because she traveled back in time to find him. That also was a very tough scene, and I spent days and days on it trying a hundred different pieces of music and different close-ups, different timing, who, what. In the end, it got to a place where everybody would cry when they watched it.

Sarah Taylor:

Because you're like, I win. I did it.

Liza Cardinale:

I did it.

Sarah Taylor:

When you're in those moments where you're going and you're auditioning all these different takes or you're playing with the different music, are you bringing, in your workflow, do you bring somebody else in to watch your edits with you or do you watch it on a different screen? How do you navigate that world when you're trying to see if a scene is working?

Liza Cardinale:

I usually don't bring anyone in. I think, because I'm the hardest to please person that I know. If I can please myself, I kind of assume that other people will like it, which may be a weird thing to say, but sometimes I'll play it later, or I'll let my assistant, of course, watch it when they need to do some sound work on it or something. That's usually my first audience I'd say. I love when assistant tells me if the scene is working for them or not. I really respect their opinion. But yeah, I usually don't like get a crowd in or anything. I sometimes sit back, I try to watch it without touching the keyboard, but I usually fail.

Sarah Taylor:

It's really hard. I've tried that too. I'm like, maybe if I watch it on my TV where it's not in my editing, but I still haven't tried it.

Liza Cardinale:

Well, this is advice that Michael Ruscio, another ACE member, he told me that it was really important to take it home and to watch it on your TV, especially when you're talking about a full episode, because that's the only way you cannot touch it. It's the only way you can get in the head of an actual audience member.



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Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, for sure.

Liza Cardinale:

I still have not done that though. I don't know why. I don't have the patience to do it that way.

Sarah Taylor:

I know. I feel very much the same, but I think it's great advice. We just need to take it.

Liza Cardinale:

It's great advice. I'm just such an obsessive changer. I'm just such a noodler.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. That sounds very similar to my style. Were there any challenges that came with *Outlander*, you jumping between time? It sounds like it could be very complicated. Did you run across any challenges in the edit?

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. Well, I'd say the most challenging thing sometimes was the camera work, because it was a tough ... We were in this weird gray zone where they wanted to be beautiful, but not very composed, like a typical period piece would be. They wanted it to feel real and grounded. That's what was special and unique about the show. Sometimes when you have a handheld camera that's moving around and shifting focus, and there's a lot of times when it's just ugly unusable stuff, because cameras, then sometimes they miss the moment that I really, really wanted.

Liza Cardinale:

That's a challenge that I'd say is not my favorite challenge to deal with, but I just worked hard to preserve the beauty as best I could. Sometimes I'd have to stabilize shots that were a little too loosey goosey. The other challenge would be that the showrunner, at the time when I worked there, was Ron Moore, Ronald D. Moore. He likes to rewrite in the edit. Not all showrunners do that, for sure, but he is definitely the type. He's not restricted by what he's seeing on the screen. He's like, "Oh, let's just change the entire theme and vibe of this theme." Or like, "let's end it here, or take the whole middle out."

Liza Cardinale:

He's very outside the box thinker, which is great. I find it really exciting to work for people like that, but sometimes it feels like, "what? You want me to do what? That's not at all what they shot, that's not at all what was written, that's not how it was played. But there's actually a ton you can do in the edit when you have to. It was a great learning experience. For example, there's a scene in season one, episode five, which was my very first episode that I cut, where she's going on the road in Scotland. It's a love letter to Scotland episode."

Liza Cardinale:

It shows the world beyond just her, and she's starting to connect with these people almost against her better judgment. She's just starting to like them and feel like part of the part of the crowd. They were supposed to be on the road for like months and months, but it felt like it was



three days because I don't know, it was just a failure of the script or whatever. It didn't come through that there was time passing. Ron said, "I need to feel the passage of time. Let's just make a montage somewhere in the middle there and we'll add some video." Then he said, "Okay, make a montage out of footage. Shop for other scenes." I had to dig through now, luckily there were some things that I hadn't used at other campsites or whatever, so I could pretend like it was ... This is a whole new campsite.

Liza Cardinale:

This is a whole different ... This is the same river, but I'm going to flop the shot and pretend that's a different river. The view certainly helped, but I think people completely bought it that this was a legitimately planned time passage montage. It helps that everybody's wearing the same clothing. From episode to episode, they're just never changing their clothing because to be like time period realistic.

Sarah Taylor:

Exactly.

Liza Cardinale:

You can really steal stuff. You could steal stuff from anywhere. I could steal things sometimes I'd have to steal from other episodes to make a montage. Because this is not the only time I had to do that. I had to do that probably every season, make up a montage that wasn't there.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. Yep, that sounds like a challenge, but great that there's the opportunity that you have those extra elements that you can just harvest from, right?

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah, and that was nice about being there for so long, so I was there for the first four seasons, so I had a pretty good baseline knowledge of ...

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. You can remember what came from before or whatever. That's cool.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

Do you have a highlight from Outlander?

Liza Cardinale:

Well, my favorite episode was definitely the witch trial episode, which was season one, episode 11, and I loved it because it was when Claire confesses to Jamie she's a time traveler. I knew that also from the book was a huge, huge, huge, huge deal. There was so much anticipation leading up to that moment. It felt ... Yeah, I liked being able to cut that. Then I loved the friendship with Geillis, and the craziness of the witch trial and everyone's shouting. It was just



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such a visceral episode that went so many places. From beginning to end, you really feel like you've been through something. It's an experience. Yeah, I loved getting to be that.

Sarah Taylor:

That's awesome. Are there types of scenes that you prefer to edit? Do you like editing elaborate scenes with lots of people? What is your ideal scene to cut that you're like, "Yes, I can't wait to cut the scene?"

Liza Cardinale:

Well, I don't love cutting scenes with lots of people in them because they're so hard. They're so hard. I love any scene that has emotional undercurrents going on, like falling in love is my favorite kind of scene to cut, I guess, building up to kisses, or good friendship, or intimacy when something feels really real and connected. That's my favorite. Then hopefully the performances are good.

Sarah Taylor:

I feel like you've got to do a lot of that in your work on *Dead to Me*, there's a lot of those kinds of moments.

Liza Cardinale:

Yes.

Sarah Taylor:

You've worked a lot on a lot of Netflix series as of late, *Dead to Me* being one, and *Insatiable*, which I loved. I thought that was a great series. Then *Teenage Bounty Hunters*, which I sadly heard was not renewed.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah, that really surprised me.

Sarah Taylor:

With *Dead to Me* and *Insatiable*, it's comedy, but it's dark comedy. Is that something that you were wanting to get into?

Liza Cardinale:

Not consciously. I think it just sort of happened. I think I have enough of a slightly morbid sense of humor that it's a good fit, and I understand it, and I get it. I'm grateful to be in that place, but yeah, I didn't actively pursue it. If anything, I keep telling my agent, I want to do a romcom. I want to do a romcom. I think they're making them again. Just get me on some, like you've got mailed [inaudible 00:28:55] in Seattle type movie. That still might happen. Those usually are not dark comedy, but they're sweet. But yeah, I like to go between the two. I like to balance my light and my darkness.

Sarah Taylor:

That's amazing. Let's talk about *Dead to Me*. How did you end up getting that job? How did that work out for you?



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Liza Cardinale:

That was a matter of me sending my resume to the right person at the exact right moment. I was wrapping up on Orange is the New Black. I was hired to just cut one episode because the editor had to start late, and I had no idea what I was doing next. I heard about Dickinson for Apple, and that this woman, Darlene Hunt, who was the creator of The Big C, I heard she was involved. So, I sent her my resume and said, "Hey, do you need anyone, Dickinson? She said, "No, we're cutting in New York, but I'm sending your resume to a friend who's looking for an editor.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh great.

Liza Cardinale:

That was Liz Feldman. Liz got it. Within an hour, she had her post producer call me and say, can you come in and interview? I mean, they were desperate. They had already started shooting, and they didn't have their pilot editor.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh wow.

Liza Cardinale:

I think they had just started shooting that day. Liz is just ... She's very picky. She had interviewed a lot of people and she hadn't felt that click, that magic that she was looking for. I basically packed up my office at Orange is the New Black and drove right over to the interview with her at Raleigh Studios. I hadn't read the script because I really had just gotten the phone call about it. I didn't even know about the show. She told me, "I like Christina Applegate". I love her. Oh my God, she's a goddess. Yes, yes, yes. I'm going to love the show. Yes. I had already been hired to cut another dark comedy about a widow called Widow.

Sarah Taylor:

Interesting.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. Then that was going to happen the year before and then it got killed, whatever. Happens to pilots. They never ended up shooting it. It was for YouTube Red. I think that that disappeared, whatever happened. I felt like I had unfinished business in widow comedies.

Sarah Taylor:

You needed that.

Liza Cardinale:

I needed to do a widow pilot. I even told her about that one. She said, "Yeah, I read that script. That was pretty good." I said, "Yeah, it's really sad that didn't happen, but please can I do this one?" She sent me the script and on Saturday I read it. Then we talked again. I said, I loved it, whatever. We talked about the script. She said, "It's between you and one other person." I don't



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know who that was. She was really agonizing over it. Then Monday I found out she had chosen me. Yay.

Sarah Taylor:

Yay.

Liza Cardinale:

Then I had to get to work. I had to wait for Netflix to approve me, which took a couple of days. I started on Tuesday or Wednesday, right after the interview and I was already so behind, whatever, because they started shooting on Friday. Then there was that panic that I think you know about, where they were concerned about a particular scene [crosstalk 00:31:58].

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, tell us about that scene.

Liza Cardinale:

Okay, so my first day there was very intense. They were shooting down the hall. They were shooting using part of my ... The editing office as a location. So, there were like a million people thumping around the line producer, and Liz, and the director kept coming into my room and saying, "Have you cut the scene yet? Have you cut the scene yet? We might need to do a pickup. We might need to do a rewrite. I don't know. We have to get this location, it's really complicated. You just need to show us the scene right now."

Sarah Taylor:

No pressure, no pressure.

Liza Cardinale:

I said, "Oh my God", I just got here. I don't even know what this show is. This is really stressing me out, to have to show something on my first day. This is definitely not standard operating procedure. I cut something together and showed them, and they were like doing this kind of woooooensive watching. They're like, yes, we need to pick something or we need to shoot something differently. I said, "Well, Liz, what is it that you want from the scene? Because maybe I can tell you if it's somewhere in the dailies, maybe I just need to change the cut."

Liza Cardinale:

She said, "Well, I don't think you're keyed into Judy's story enough and I think it needs to be a closeup. I think we need a closeup of her and we need to have more of an emotional moment with her telling the story of her miscarriages." I said, "Yeah, that would really help. To be honest, I don't believe her because she's just been exposed as a liar, so I don't even know if she's telling the truth about these miscarriages." Liz said, "Mm." She wrote a lot of new dialogue and shot a new scene and it became abundantly clear she's not lying. This is a super earnest, sad, raw moment for her. That's what was missing in the original version of the scene.

Sarah Taylor:

Wasn't this one of the first scenes that they actually shot too?



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Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. They shot all that whole grief circle. Everything at the grief circle, which was the beginning and the end, they shot that the first day.

Sarah Taylor:

Even for the actors to get into it, that's such a big scene to do at the beginning?

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. That's wild.

Sarah Taylor:

Those scenes where you're like ... It's almost like a dinner table scene or a fight scene, or like your pen. You're in the scene and there's lots of different direction and it's a circle, that must've been a huge challenge in itself just cutting a scene like that. How did you approach that? Especially under the gun of, I need to put something together now. How do you do that? What did you do?

Liza Cardinale:

Oh God, I think I was having an out of body experience. I can't really remember. I liked the take where Jen ... The thing about Christina Applegate, she doesn't like to do a lot of takes, so you kind of have what you have. I liked the one where she came in really hot and was yelling and really angry. I just went with that vibe and then tried to find some funny reactions, but I don't know. I don't even know how to answer the question because it was such a frightening experience. I just tried to like block out everything that was going on around me and say, okay, what do I like? What do I like?

Liza Cardinale:

I don't know the tone of the show. I don't know what the showrunner wants. I'll just try to do something I think is interesting and hope that, that translates.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. I feel like that's a really common. It's sometimes hard to articulate how the process is working in our heads, as editors. Like, we're doing what feels right. We're doing what our instincts tell us to do. You brought up not really knowing the tone of the show, and as a pilot editor, that's what you're helping shape. How do you approach that with the director, the showrunner, and getting the right tone? Especially in a dark comedy, because I feel like if it's too much joke, then there's not enough drama, how do you balance that?

Liza Cardinale:

That was super tough on the Dead to Me Pilot. We spent a lot of time, a lot, a lot of time. Finding the tone for one thing was finding the right temp music. That was so hard. I basically gave up because everything I tried, Liz would reject. Eventually, we hired a music editor to come work with us for a few days. He had a huge library of soundtracks and he found one thing that she liked, one thing. It was the soundtrack to a movie called Barry, about Obama. It wasn't the Barry ... At first, I started cutting with it thinking this is Barry, the TV.



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Sarah Taylor:

The TV show.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. But no, it's the movie called Barry. For some reason, she responded to that. It wasn't too sappy. It wasn't too comedic. It just had a little lift of energy to it that helped you feel like it wasn't ... because we were trying the leftovers. All she had told us was that she liked piano and she liked a bit of orchestration, which sounded like we were going down a path of way too heavy handed, dark sadness. Because especially if I ever put in a comedy film score, she would say, "That's too jokey. That sounds too jokey. No, no, no, no."

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah, it was very hard to get there. But once I found Barry, we just used that for everything. We used every track of that throughout the first season. I mean, now we have actual score from Adam Plouff, which is beautiful and he hit that tone nicely. Yeah, I think music is a big part of the tone. Then we had to shave out a lot. Basically this tone was found by cutting out scenes, and part of that ... Or cutting scenes in half. Too much was being played, very earnestly, in dramatic, and so it didn't feel like a comedy at all. I would say it's still is not huge comedy forward, but you at least know that you have permission to laugh at stuff that it's not taken too seriously.

Liza Cardinale:

There were scenes like the beach scene where they talk Jen and Judy and they're really bonding there. There was at least two more minutes of that, for example. That was something we could trim down, keep it intimate, keep it sweet and important, but not linger too long on these heavy stories they're telling each other. There's another time when they go to a cliff and they do this primal scream together, and we just took it out. I don't know. It just felt a little too Indie movie moment scene moment, or something.

Sarah Taylor:

I've seen that scene before.

Liza Cardinale:

Exactly. It was an iconic moment. We didn't need to repeat. The grief circle in the beginning also went maybe five minutes longer than what you see today, which is still pretty long, but that's the shortest I can make it happen. I tried to cut that scene down for, days, days and days.

Sarah Taylor:

How much time did you have to get the pilot to be ready for ... Were you on a tight deadline to cut the pilot or did you have some space to actually try?

Liza Cardinale:

We had space because they didn't do the pilot separately. They just started the series, so I had basically the entire run of the series to keep tweaking it, and we did keep tweaking it for a very long time. I can't even remember what episode we were up to shooting when we finally said, it's locked, but it took a while. Yeah, we just had to, whatever time she needed.



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Sarah Taylor:

That's great.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

With Outlander, was that a scenario where, because it was for a broadcaster, were you doing it where you had, like you had your 10 days of, or whatever it might've been to get to an editor's cut, then you had a director's cut, and then you had lock-in stuff to meet deadlines, air date deadlines?

Liza Cardinale:

No, no. I think the air dates were so typically so far away that they really did not influence our time. We had as much time as we needed.

Sarah Taylor:

With Netflix stuff, is that kind of how it's going? Because you basically delivered the whole season at once.

Liza Cardinale:

I mean, Dead to Me season two was very intense delivering because they wanted to ... They had a launch date in mind so we did have to get every episode done by whatever, April or something. It was a lot of weekend work and late nights to make that happen. That was not an ideal creative scenario. I'm not sure what season three is going to be like, but I'll find out soon enough. They're gonna start shooting in January is the plan right now.

Sarah Taylor:

That's exciting. Cross our fingers.

Liza Cardinale:

Hopefully that works out. With other Netflix shows, we tend to stay on a schedule. Like Teenage Bounty Hunters, I think I would get ... They're pretty generous. I would have four days for an editor's cut, which was very helpful, because I always say at least one day to just catch up on dailies that I was behind on. Then doing my music usually takes a couple of days, and then like recuts and polish. I use all four of those days pretty intensely. A lot of shows don't even give you that. Then director's cut, whatever that was, I guess they get four days, two, three or four. Then producers would get four or five days. We really kept that moving along pretty snappily.

Sarah Taylor:

Are you doing alternating kind of you're maybe episode two and then episode four, and then kind of bouncing back and forth between other editors?

Liza Cardinale:



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Yeah. But we at least, on Teenage Bounty Hunters, it was nice because they shot one episode at a time. So many people are cross boarding now and that makes it a little trickier to figure out editing schedules.

Sarah Taylor:

Now, I know that you have been giving back to the editing community by doing lots of interviews like this one. You're also an artist in residence at the Manhattan Edit Workshop. How did you get involved with that? And why did you feel like it was important to do that?

Liza Cardinale:

Well, that was just Janet Dalton was her name, she's an instructor there. She reached out to me via Jenni McCormick, who's the director of ACE who is oftentimes my-

Sarah Taylor:

Yay, Jenni. We love Jenni.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah, she's 100% my fairy godmother in all ways of my career. That was just, yeah. Jenny sends me an email saying you should do this. I said, okay, I don't know what this is, but sure. Jenni told me to do it. I'm doing it. Then I connected with Janet. Really, I just sat in with her students a couple of times and I'd watch some of their work and let them ask me questions. They were people trying to make a career shift into editing. I'm not sure if any of them were even fresh out of college, maybe one of them, but they knew nothing about the world professionally.

Liza Cardinale:

So, they needed to know I could help them a lot with understanding how it works, politically, how you job hunt and what kind of first jobs you might need to take, like mine. Just take whatever you can. You might have to do night shift, you have to take the jobs that no one else wants to do, that is how you begin. I think it just comes naturally to give back because I don't know, I'm just that kind of friend. I see other editors as my friends. If I can help them, of course I want to, and I'm always so grateful to get advice and help too, I just think it's a really great community that way, where we ... Usually, we're not huge ego people. Usually, we're like happy behind the scenes, supportive type people. We work best when we're helping each other get ahead. I don't feel competition with my fellow editors.

Sarah Taylor:

You mentioned when you first started, you got to shadow two women, which back then was a big deal, that you had the editor and the assistant editor were two women. You mentioned, touched on like, you might've become an editor quicker if maybe you were a man. What are your thoughts on like, how do we make the post-world more equitable and how we bring more diversity into the edit suite and help shape what's behind helping create the stories with people that are actually in the world and it's not just homogenized as it has been for a long time?

Liza Cardinale:



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It just seems like it's 100% happening right now. I'm not sure all the mechanisms of that, but showrunners and studios are making a huge effort to increase their diversity. I know that because, for one thing, I get offered a lot more jobs because they're very often looking for female editors, or I recently interviewed with studio executive at 20th Century Studios. It's not Fox anymore, it's just called 20th Century Studios. He had called my agent saying, I need to meet some non-white guys, so send me. I just need more. I need more diversity in my Rolodex. I just need people, so he sent me and a couple African-American editors over to meet with him. I think that's what it takes. It takes outreach. It takes it being a priority from the people who have the hiring power to do it.

Liza Cardinale:

I'm not sure why, but I think there's a lot of inclusion writers going on so they need to get to that 50% mark. I'm so grateful for that. I think it's excellent. Now, a lot of people in socio-economic lower kind of poverty world, they don't know about a lot of these jobs that we have. A lot of people don't know what editing is, or how to be a PA, or any of these. It's just not around their world a lot. That divide, I don't know how to bridge exactly, except for something like a podcast is accessible to anyone. Hopefully, people will listen to that or try to get information to schools. Yeah, that I think is something that's an important next step is just trying to get the word out there that these kinds of jobs exist and that you might have a talent for this kind of work and you just don't even know it because you've never heard of it.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. I think in our industry, it's very much like, oh, so-and-so says there's this job, and so we're kind of all sort of getting work from somebody we know. It is opening up that world to everybody. There's programs I know in Canada where they are offering internships to BIPOC people and people that wouldn't typically be invited to the table, which is what we need to do. I feel like, in some cases, I don't know what it's like, maybe in the States, maybe you can touch on this, but up in Canada, we often have the choice to who we get to choose as our assistant. There's one editor that I ... Cathy Gulkin, she's a documentary editor here in Canada.

Sarah Taylor:

She is so brilliant. She said, "Whenever I hire, I always try to hire somebody that doesn't look like me." I think that's like a huge thing that we can take forward if we have the ability to hire, to not keep filling our spots with people that look like everybody else, because then we'll have more voices in the room. I'm wondering how it's like in the States for you, or in Hollywood, if you have any say in that sort of stuff.

Liza Cardinale:

I do have say in who my assistant is. Now, I'm very attached to my current assistant.

Sarah Taylor:

That's fair too, yeah.

Liza Cardinale:

I'm not going to quit her until she quits me, but she is also ... She doesn't look like me. She's younger. She's half Mexican immigrant, but I do think that I would certainly make a push to hire somebody who was having a hard time getting opportunities who I felt like they had the



enthusiasm and the drive to learn. It's a really hard thing to take a risk on somebody when you're doing remote work, because then you can't be in the room educating them. I think that's what it takes is, if somebody doesn't have the experience, which is very common for a lot of these people trying to break into the business that they're not in it yet, they're going to have experience that's not necessarily relevant.

Liza Cardinale:

But if they have intelligence and drive and a generous person in the office, then they can learn anything the way I learned at the Playboy channel.

Sarah Taylor:

Everybody needs to work at the Play ... I'm just kidding.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah, and then I learned in time, my next bigger job as an assistant was the Sarah Connor Chronicles. Full of visual effects, but I had to learn all about like Anna Max. Such great people there helped me out too. But you do have to be a quick study. It's okay to know nothing, but you have to be able to pick things up pretty quickly, because nobody can stop their work and just teach you all day long.

Sarah Taylor:

But I think hearing somebody, like you say that, to say, you don't have to know everything, and that as long as you're willing to learn, you will figure it out. Where I feel like, maybe it's typical, or it's been said before, but often, I think women will be like, well, I don't know all the things so I might not take that job. Or a man will typically be like, well, that's fine. I don't know the system. I'll just do it. I'll just do it.

Liza Cardinale:

[crosstalk 00:49:10]. Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

To hear women who are successful, say, "I didn't know everything, but I figured it out. I learned, and it was part of my job and it was amazing." I think young people in the industry need to hear those kind of stories and know that you don't have to know everything because you're starting and every show is going to be different and it's going to have its own thing that you're going to learn and figure out, right?

Liza Cardinale:

Exactly. Yeah. You just have to be friendly. You just have to have a good attitude and be open, and do not be afraid to ask questions, because all of us will say this. We'd rather you ask the question than do it wrong and make it up. You know what I'm saying? You don't know how to do something, there is no shame in that. Usually, it can be taught pretty quickly.

Sarah Taylor:

You mentioned remote working. As we all know, amidst of COVID, you had just wrapped up Dead to Me when you got the lockdown, but you did get back in the edit suite because you



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recently ... Well, the show Social Distance, which just was released. Well, when we're recording this, yesterday, I watched the first three episodes. Quite enjoyed it. How did you get onto that show? What was the process like working remotely, I'm assuming, on a show all about the pandemic?

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. I was three months into safer at home with just being trapped in a house with my husband and child. Her school had closed down. She's, she's five. So, I was still a bit in that shocked frame of mind of like, how vigilant do we have to be? How big is this threat? There's just a little bit of stress going on all the time. When they contacted me from Tilted, the production company that does Jenji Kohan's production company that did Orange is the New Black and Teenage Bounty Hunters. That's why they called me because I had already worked for them.

Liza Cardinale:

When they contacted me, I was thrilled to get back to work, but also a little concerned about, how am I going to rewire my brain to focus on something else. Maybe it was good in a sense that it was commenting on the pandemic itself because that's where all of our thoughts were anyway, but it was enough of an escape from my own internal anxiety about it, to just be able to work, to get into some normalcy of a routine. It felt really good. I don't have a space to work at my home, so it's a bit complicated for me. My place is just really small.

Liza Cardinale:

I had to rent a little room for my friend who has a photo studio. I just locked myself away. There were no windows, no furniture, no comfy couch, like you usually get in an editor's room. But it worked out. It was great. They rented me the Avid. It was just like my little workstation. We decided to get on Slack. We just said that pretty quickly. That's not something I've ever used on a job before, but I think it's actually quite brilliant because then your own email doesn't get clogged up with all this little chatter, and it was great.

Liza Cardinale:

We'd have different channels based on the episode number, and then we'd have general channel, so we could all connect about things we all needed to know, so incredibly helpful to have that. We felt a bit of connection was going on between the whole team all the time. I had my assistant far away. We had a VFX editor. We had a lot of media coming and going in and out. The visual effects were extremely complicated and a lot of things in my script there'd be no coverage for. The editors had to generate the content from scratch. I'd have Hannah, my assistant, doing like screen recordings of Google searches and screen grabs of all these different apps. It was tough. It was definitely not the easiest job.

Sarah Taylor:

Because I knew you cut the first episode, as I watched it, I was like, oh, this looks very complicated, but it worked great. Can you give just a brief synopsis of what Social Distance is about?

Liza Cardinale:



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It's an anthology series. So, every episode is its own unique story with its own cast. They don't fit together in any way except the timeline, I suppose. It starts as quarantine pretty much is new. It starts in New York City with my episode where he is a recovering alcoholic who's going to AA meetings. That's the thing that pops up throughout the episode is AA meetings are on Zoom now. Are they as effective? Are they feeling connected? It's hard to know. Then he goes down a rabbit hole of his own version of doom, scrolling, just looking at his ex-girlfriend's Instagram page and seeing that she has a new boyfriend and all these things that drive him a little crazy.

Liza Cardinale:

It was a tough episode because most of it is just one guy alone, not a ton of dialogue, unless he's talking to somebody on a video chat. Usually, he's just the lonely dude scrolling the internet. I just have shots of his face that they recorded. All the actors had to record themselves with iPhones. I think they used iPhones for everything, but they somehow patched to a SD card. I don't know how that worked, but so they recorded all their own stuff. Maybe a PA came to their house. I'm not sure. All the actors lived different places.

Liza Cardinale:

It wasn't all shot in LA or anything. It was shot all over the country so that there was a lot of severe coordination going on behind the scenes that I was not privy to. For me, the process was fairly simple and that I just downloaded my dailies every morning and they were sunk up and they looked like normal dailies, so I didn't have to figure out how to get things off an iPhone or anything.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. That's good.

Liza Cardinale:

But yeah, it was unique figuring out the tone of that too, and how strict we had to be about, what were the rules of it? A lot of these things were worked out as we went that you had to always ... All right, I didn't say the most important thing about it, which is the entire thing is in screen genre. The movie, *Searching*, was done, which I watched for research. That entire movie takes place like you're watching a laptop screen. You sometimes see the person if their camera is on, but otherwise, you're not going to see them, and you're just going to see the stuff they're typing or the things they're looking at on their desktop.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah, that was the genre that we were locked into. We used a lot of different apps. Every script had different apps written into it and you can show them as long as it represents accurately what the app does, then you don't get into legal trouble with it.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh, I didn't know that. That's good to know.

Liza Cardinale:



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I don't even know if they had to pay, to say Instagram, as long as it looked like a real Instagram, but don't quote me on that. I'm actually not sure, but I know that we had to be very careful about accuracy, like with Zoom and all that stuff. Many meetings about all those tiny details.

Sarah Taylor:

There's so, so many details. Because even in the one, the first AA meeting, there is what? You probably know how many people were in the meeting.

Liza Cardinale:

I think there were maybe just 24 in the first one, something like that. It was a lot of those squares.

Sarah Taylor:

There was a lot of squares. It was great because I think a lot of people would probably feel as like, that is exactly, I didn't go to an AA meeting, but I've had many different meetings, different conferences I've gone to where you see ... That's what we saw. We've been seeing for the last nine months. I think you did a really great job of merging all those different elements together. Yeah, him with his laptop on and you see him recording in photo booth. There were just so many elements where I was like, wow, there's so many things. I can only imagine what your script was and like what you had.

Liza Cardinale:

I think I had 12 video layers, at least. If they tell me to change something, I'd be like, this could take me three hours and 20 minutes of render time, so I'll just make a note of that.

Sarah Taylor:

Are you sure you want me to do that right now? Okay.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. You're not going to sit here on my ever cast stream while I make changes.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. How did that go for you? Not getting to be with the director in the room. Was that something that was hard for you or was that an easy transition?

Liza Cardinale:

It was okay doing the video streaming. It's just awkward and there were a lot of technical problems. I would just get booted out spontaneously or their picture would freeze. There's just a lot of like, stop, stop, wait, refresh, change your bandwidth, turn your video off, mute your microphone. It over-complicates the situation. I think video chatting with five people is always a little awkward because you never know when it's your turn to talk, and no one's really looking at each other. It's definitely not ideal, but it worked.

Liza Cardinale:

It helps that I knew everybody. I didn't know the showrunner, Hillary, but I knew the rest of the people, the producers that were in the rooms. They were the same people I had just worked



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with in Teenage Bounty Hunters. That helped a lot, because like my current show, I'm doing a show called On The Verge with Julie Delpy, French actress. I've never been in a room with her at all. We had the job interview on Zoom. We've done some streaming sessions with her, like always full of huge technical glitches. She's a super scatterbrained creative individual, so I never even know when she wants to talk to me. She'll just say, "Let's do a session, 10 minutes. I'm ready."

Liza Cardinale:

I'll be like, okay. I go to make sure everything's plugged in right, and my microphone is muted. There's always new challenges with remote work. It's just not as organic as someone dropping into your room to have a moment of realness, like a human connection moment that's not just business. No, every moment you're interacting with someone, it is scheduled, it is limited timeframe. It is all business, no chit chat. Plus, there'll be other people listening.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, which you kind of miss that intimacy of ... Sometimes there's an intimacy with director-editor moments, where you're kind of playing therapist sometimes. You're learning about whatever happened the night before, or whatever happened on set and probably don't get to do some of that stuff.

Liza Cardinale:

Find those little moments of connection and relationship. They matter a lot in the editing room and on the screen, they matter just as much that I'm feeling connected to the people making the show, so that I understand what they're looking for so I can deliberate. You know what I mean?

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah.

Liza Cardinale:

What their values are, who they are as a person, what's their sensibility, what's their sense of humor? It's all information to channel into editing.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. Have you figured out any tricks on how to find some of that stuff now that you've done your second show now in this world?

Liza Cardinale:

No, I'm basically just in survival mode, just get through it until life can be normal again. This is never going to be my favorite way to work. I'm in a slightly better environment now because the other editor of the show I'm doing, she had an extra little room in her backyard that I can rent from her. We have a bit of communion between us, which is great. Yeah, we can show each other stuff, and she can translate all the French stuff to me because I don't fully understand it. She's a native French speaker as well. That's really great.

Sarah Taylor:

That's perfect. Have you done other shows in other languages?



Liza Cardinale:

Well, there was a bit of Gallic in *Outlander*, but I highly doubt that any of those actors were really speaking it correctly. We didn't quite worry about it too much. I think there was a Gallic consultant guy who'd be on set and he had really weird hair and he would sometimes watch cuts and try to get us to ADR things that they were really off. We would get them to pronounce, to repeat their performance, so they pronounce things right. But most of the audience is not really Gallic.

Sarah Taylor:

Probably not that many people.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. They're just reading the subtitles. But the French people, this show is made for the French audience, so the French has to be correct.

Sarah Taylor:

How are you finding that work? I'm working on a French show right now as well, and I don't speak French. But it's a docuseries, but yeah. It definitely takes, for me, it's like a whole other ... my brain is working so much harder because I'm like ... You're trying to make sure the translation, but get the body language and get the right sense. Yeah, it's definitely a little more challenging, that's for sure.

Liza Cardinale:

I find it almost impossible to judge if somebody's being funny, or even good acting, I find it a lot harder to judge, because I barely understand. I know a bit. I've studied French, but the way people actually speak is slang. They're mumbling and throwing things around. It's going right over my head. I'm just going to have to rely on Julie for that. She actually has her own Avid so she can watch tapes, and maybe she's even going to cut some stuff. I'm not sure, but she has all the dailies, and so she can maybe make selects. I don't know. It's all very new in the process, but she will definitely tell me if there's a better French read. She didn't expect me to be fluent, so it's okay.

Sarah Taylor:

You'll pick up some stuff, I'm sure.

Liza Cardinale:

It's kind of fun. Yeah, exactly.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, it is fun.

Liza Cardinale:

I think I'm learning some. French people are so passionate and shouty when they [crosstalk 01:02:43]. It's fun.

Sarah Taylor:



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I have a couple more questions and one of them I think is very important. What are the things that you need to have in your edit suite that make you feel like a normal human being?

Liza Cardinale:

Well, I always have nice little dim lights. I have essential oils and a diffuser. I like to pretend that my workplace could be a spa.

Sarah Taylor:

Is there a specific smell that is like you use certain scenes? Do you have like a moon one?

Liza Cardinale:

Well, I only have lavender and eucalyptus, just because they're both universally appealing. So, if somebody else is coming in ...

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, and they're very calming.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. They're calming, they're soothing, they're cleansing of the environment. I like for my room to be a place that people enjoy entering, and I'm talking more normal editing life, not COVID editing life. I try to keep it peaceful. I don't have a lot of stuff in here. I keep lighting kind of dim and all over the room if I can. I have little spritz of sage spray. As you know, you can't really like burn a sage stick if somebody comes in and acts all crazy and then leaves your room, and you want to just clear out juju. I use this little sage spray. That's it. Usually, I have a picture of my daughter up.

Sarah Taylor:

Nice. Do you have a set routine of how you like to work? Do you take walking breaks? Do you eat lunch at your desk or do you make sure you eat lunch elsewhere? What is your sort of editing day routine?

Liza Cardinale:

The most exercise I get is switching from a sitting to a standing desk. I try to do that a few times a day. I don't do a ton of walking, but I just got a Fitbit to try to encourage myself to get away from the desk. I think that I usually just get so engrossed in my work that I forget about my body and how to take care of it. But I think quarantine taught me that there are lots of great exercise videos on YouTube, and I should just take a break and do a half hour Pilates thing or yoga thing. And it's not in my routine yet, sadly, but I have a yoga mat here. That's another thing I always keep an edit room is a yoga mat and some foam rollers for trying to stretch out the shoulders that get a little too tense sometimes.

Sarah Taylor:

Yes. Do you have any tips for editors who are making maybe a career transition into, coming from documentary and to television or assisting into editing?

Liza Cardinale:



My tips would be to have a great attitude to everybody that you meet so that they want to hire you later. Because even if they don't have a job for you right now, they might have a job for you in three months. That timing is a big part of it. But if you show consistency and genuine enthusiasm and a work ethic, that will go so far, even more than actual skills, I think, because we've all come across people who bring unpleasant vibe to the office and then everybody's a bit uncomfortable. I think that a lot of we'll make allowances for somebody who's just ... You're just going to play well with others, you're going to fit in here. My husband is actually making a career transition. It has nothing to do with editing, but he was a software engineer for 20 years and now he's studying to become an architect.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh wow.

Liza Cardinale:

It's totally different than what he's been doing, but he is such a knack for it. It's clearly what he should have been doing all along, but that's okay. I don't think it's ever too late to make a switch, especially if you have a passion, but I do think you need to also have a knack for it or else it's going to be pretty hard to do a career transition later in life. So, you want to feel like it has to feel kind of easy and right when you're doing it. I don't think editing is something that's very easy to teach, especially when it comes to just the instincts of it. That way that you just have to keep changing things till it feels right.

Liza Cardinale:

I don't know how to teach that to a person, but I think if you have that, you probably know it, just because people watch your work and they'll connect to it and they'll get it and they'll feel something when you want them to feel something. Yeah, I'd say don't attempt it if you're finding it a huge challenge because it is a pretty tough gig even when you're good at it. But I want to encourage people for sure, if you love it, if you've tried it and you love it and the hours fly by and the sun goes down, that's what you're looking for, that's the sweet spot. Anyone who feels that way about editing should absolutely pursue it as a career because it pays well. There's tons of jobs. There really are tons of jobs once you're in the flow of it.

Sarah Taylor:

During COVID, we've definitely seen it, people want content. We've always wanted content, and we always want it ... We need it. Now more than ever, yeah, it's not going to stop. How we do it is changing, but we always need to tell stories.

Liza Cardinale:

Right. There are like what? Four more streaming services just started in the last year.

Sarah Taylor:

It's wild.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. A lot more, a lot of opportunity there.



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Sarah Taylor:

I feel like you've given us a lot of great information and lots of, I don't know, exciting tips for the young editors out there or people wanting to be an editor. Yeah.

Liza Cardinale:

Yeah. I guess the only tip I would give is just to keep meeting people and keep asking questions. Not only do you learn from asking a question, but the person you're asking will come to trust you based on your questions, because they'll see, oh, this person has a really active interest and a curiosity, and they're asking the right questions. They're really getting to the heart of this and they care. I find that, as far as who I help get a leg up, it's always the people who just wanted to come into my room and hang out. Maybe it's a PA wanting to come in and just see what I do and ask me once in a while without intruding.

Liza Cardinale:

But when they see a moment, they could ask me, "Well, why did you make that choice?" Then it's kind of fun to talk about that. Because usually, we're just so in our internal brain. I think you'll find a lot of editors love to talk about why they do the things that they do.

Sarah Taylor:

Well, thank you so much for joining me today. It was so great chatting with you.

Liza Cardinale:

Oh yeah, you too.

Sarah Taylor:

Good luck with your French series. I hope it all goes well. I look forward to seeing it in the future. Stay safe, stay well.

Liza Cardinale:

Thank you.

Sarah Taylor:

Thank you so much for joining us today, and a big, thanks goes to Liza. A special, thanks goes to Jane MacRae and Jenni McCormick. The main title sound design was created by Jane Tattersall, additional EDR recording by Andrea Rusch. Original music provided by Chad Blain. This episode was mixed and mastered by Tony Bao. The CCE has been supporting Indspire - an organization that provides funding and scholarships to Indigenous post secondary students. We have a permanent portal on our website at cceditors.ca or you can donate directly at indspire.ca. The CCE is taking steps to build a more equitable ecosystem within our industry and we encourage our members to participate in any way they can.

If you've enjoyed this podcast, please rate and review us on Apple Podcasts and tell your friends to tune in. 'Til next time I'm your host Sarah Taylor.

[Outtro]



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