

'It's a collaborative process' Thoroughbreds editor Louise Ford shares her movie editing journey



Please introduce yourself and tell us how you got into the industry?

I'm originally from the UK and had a previous career as a journalist in London, working for *The Sunday Times* and *Cosmopolitan* magazine, among others. I had always wanted to work in film, but I couldn't see a way to do that in the UK. My husband was a TV editor at the time (now a documentary editor and producer), and when he got a six-month gig on a show here, we loved New York so much we decided to stay.

I took the six-week editing course run by The Edit Center, and through that met the editor Michael Taylor, who took me on as his assistant. I assisted him on a few independent feature films, cutting shorts in my down time, until I got the opportunity to cut my own first feature, *Half The Perfect World*, for a wonderful director called Cynthia Fredette. The rest of my feature film career followed from there.

******* Check out our EXCLUSIVE interview with *Ghost Stories* editor Billy Sneddon on how he got started in the TV and film industries *******

How did you become involved with *Thoroughbreds*?

Thoroughbreds' writer-director Cory Finley had seen my work on *The Witch* and wanted to meet me. The script knocked me out - not only was the dialogue super-smart and hilariously funny, it was obvious Cory had an innate cinematic vision. The first time we talked, we hit it off immediately over a shared appreciation of David Lynch, among other things.

Could you tell us what the process was for editing the movie? Were you on set? What was the relationship like with the director etc?

They shot just outside of Boston, with a fantastic local crew, and I was cutting in Brooklyn while they were shooting. Cory and I would talk, when we needed to, to give feedback on the footage, the edit etc, but mostly I work alone when I'm putting the editor's cut together. The director will usually take a week off after shooting and then we will work together to finish the movie. It's a collaborative process, which I really enjoy.

Cory and I share a very similar creative sensibility, so the film was a breeze to edit because we would be enthusiastic about each other's ideas and be able to expand on them in an organic way. For example, Cory said he wanted to use drums in the soundtrack, not jazzy like *Birdman* – kind of military-feeling but not military. I came up with using the Japanese taiko drums (inspired by the photograph of Mark with the samurai sword we see in the first scene), which ended up being an important element of the soundtrack

and contributed to the film's unique mood and atmosphere

What do you use to cut? How do you feel about the advances made in editing equipment?

I cut on Avid. I'm not super into the technical side of things, I could cut on anything. But with Avid, I love ScriptSync, I use it all the time.

What is coming next for you in 2018 and beyond?

I'm currently on location in Nova Scotia, Canada, cutting Robert Eggers' second film, *The Lighthouse*, which stars Willem Dafoe and Robert Pattinson. It's set in 1890, and we're shooting on 35mm black and white stock, virtually unheard of nowadays. Most black and white movies are shot in colour, and then converted to black and white in post. The dailies look beautiful; it's very exciting.

Beyond that, I have no plans. I hope I'm lucky enough to carry on cutting all Cory Finley and Robert Eggers' films in the future. In my daydreams, the directors I'd most like to work with include Lynne Ramsey, Jonathan Glazer, Claire Denis, Yorgos Lanthimos... basically, any director doing idiosyncratic work, who is open to creative collaboration.