

## Editor's Union 101 + Editor's Panel

- **Panelists:**

- **Nena Erb** - ACE - Picture Editor - *Generation, Insecure, Little America* , & *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*
- **Chris Gomez** - Supervising Sound Editor @ The Formosa Group - Previous work includes: *Modern Family, Heroes Reborn, East Los High, Orange is the New Black, Step Up: Highwater, Better Things, Yellowstone, and Teenage Bounty Hunters* , & *Everything Sucks!*
- **Tracy Pacio** - Membership Assistant @ Motion Picture Editors Guild
- **Shari Holly** - Moderator - Director of Operations @ PipelinesMobile

- **The CSU Entertainment Alliance Intro**

- **Pipelines Mobile Intro**

- **Motion Picture Editors Guild Intro**

- **Tracy**

- MPEG - Union contracts and helps with all of the related aspects - wages, health insurance, retirement, pension, etc.
- Post production professionals - animation/picture/music editors, story analysts, technical directors, etc. so many fields covered
- Paperwork and negotiations
- Membership offers protections, networking, job opps
- Resume and availability through the website and you can be “available for work” through the guild database
- Companies go to the site to find folks to edit their projects
- Variety of seminars from health to finance to resume building
- New software demonstrations
- Masterclass - mentors professionals in their craft
- 8-10 students that spend the weekend working on clips and being mentored
- Top health, pension, and IAP
- Employer pays into those
- Lots of benefits

- **Shari**

- Chris & Nena: How have these benefits helped you in your careers?

- **Nena**

- Health insurance and being able to go to the doctors
- You can be a bad negotiator, like many editors, and still get what you need because they do the leg work for you

- **Chris**

- It makes it so you have less things to worry about
- There is a standard that is set that you can start from

- **Shari**

- What is the roster and how do you get on it?



- **Tracy**

- If you are working in LA, you must be on the roster and in compliance with all of the safety courses
- Contract services makes it a one stop shop - like the DMV
- Located in Burbank and they are looking at your non-union work
- They need 175 non-union days
- Assistant editor - 100 days within the last two years

- **Shari**

- Union vs. Non-union days: what's the difference?

- **Tracy**

- Non-union is not covered under a union agreement so there aren't the perks (contracts, defined wages, etc.)
- Non-union is probably a little more flexible but many people get taken advantage of when they are not union

- **Shari**

- Union vs. Non-union days: what's the difference?

- **Nena**

- Had a friend that helped her get in the business and then worked her way up from a PA and then discovered Post
- Then found a company that she got to work with a while ago.
- When you start out you take whatever you can get but its not always great for your well-being

- **Chris**

- Reality tv sometimes goes outside of union
- With sound you have a few different options
- Ability to come in as a sound service person
- Not doing the editorial but it can give you an in
- There are many different jobs that can get you the hours and the training
- Many different ways to get to the sound editor point which may be different than picture editing
- Low budget indie films - occasional student projects

- **Shari**

- Getting on the roster vs. getting in the guild

- **Tracy**

- Once you're on the roster you are eligible to join the guild
- We don't urge you to join the guild until you have a union job lined up
- \$3700 + 100 fee for Editors (highest classification)
- If you're on the roster you are welcome to join the guild

- **Shari**

- What was your first union job and how did you get it?

- **Chris**

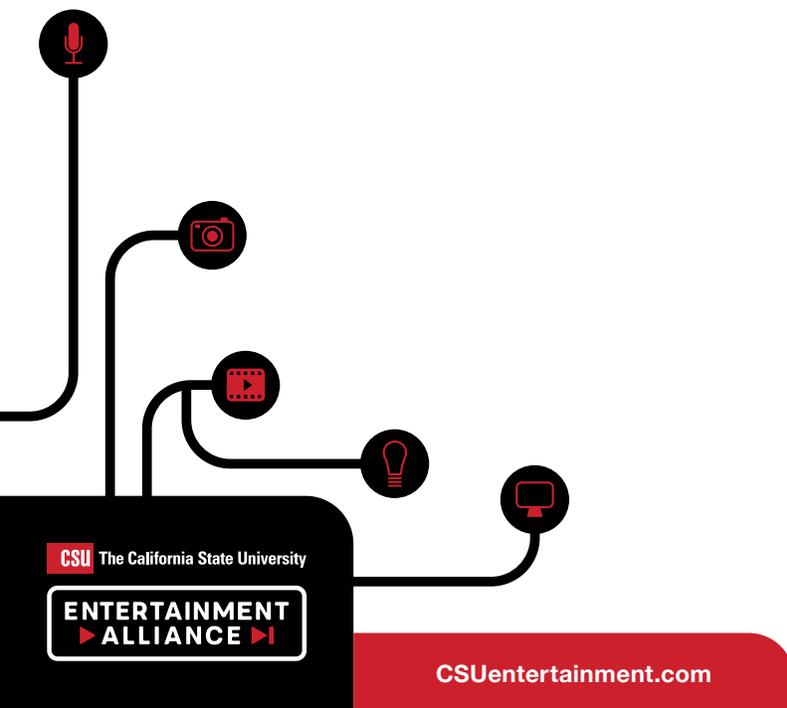
- One of his professors had a professional post sound company so he got hired there
- Started low, doing office tasks, then moved up to a runner, etc
- First union editing job was Modern Family
- Fortunate that they were helpful in helping provide advice/guidance



- **Nena**
  - Did a lot of non-union work as an assistant editor
  - Did non union indies / features / etc
  - Took her a long time because it was a lot of days
  - The first union job was a half hour comedy for Lifetime
- **Shari**
  - Do you think that networking had a big part to play in getting your first union job?  
How should students be preparing now?
- **Nena**
  - Networking is taking all kinds of different forms now
  - Before, if you have a movie you like, look up the role you are interested and reach out for a coffee meeting with that person, etc.
  - Very few people reach out to editors so chances are good that people will be receptive to meeting with you
  - Her first union job was received through networking but she didn't know it at the time
  - A couple of years after meeting someone, the woman came back to her and offered her a gig
- **Chris**
  - With sound, most folks are based out of a facility or company
  - So a lot of those connections come from within that
  - If you find someone you are interested, find a way to get ahold of them
  - Continually shocked about when people are interested in the opportunities
  - He still reaches out to sound supervisors or re-recording managers - usually via facebook - and 9/10 times people respond positively
  - Get to know the people you are working with
  - That is how he got a lot of the work he has done
  - Supervisor from I took him under her wing and started sending him opportunities, which is how he ended up working on Orange is the New Black
- **Shari**
  - Networking can feel hard if you are shy, etc. but it can be done so many ways
  - You have to take the risks - the worst that can happen is they say no - but that isn't going to kill you
  - Reach out via social
  - Nena - can you talk about working on insecure?
- **Nena**
  - Love that show
  - Her family emigrated here and the show is based in the same place
  - Everyone on the show was very welcoming
  - The star is also the producer and she was incredibly welcoming and easy to be around
  - They worked really well together
- **Shari**
  - How did you go from where you were to this?



- **Nena**
  - Everyone wanted the social media graphics to look differently so it opened up a new creative route
  - Is Isa is feeling empty, let's make it 50/50, split the screen with other people - with everyone except Molly
  - Her teammate/assistant was a great collaborator on this
  - She has so much creativity and working together is easy so they can collaborate and she creates the graphics while Nena is doing the scene and then it makes it faster to do all of those things
- **Shari**
  - Chris - at what point do you come in as a sound supervisor? What is a day in the life?
- **Chris**
  - It depends
  - On an episode like that from Insecure - generally they are brought in with the picture editor, producer, sometimes composer - they meet about ideas and send the ADR list and a list of issues with sound etc.
  - Pitch ideas for sound
  - Gets flushed out in spotting
  - Then they take the notes from that and send to the sound editor team (FX, Foley, Sound, etc.) and then they work as a team to put the sounds together
  - Heavy vfx shows you are working on go months ahead of time
- **Shari**
  - What realistic things can folks be doing now to have a successful career?
- **Nena**
  - Go to America Cinema Editors and they have an internship program you can apply for
  - Applications usually happen in MAY
  - Sessions start around October - first week is a lecture series, then in a motion picture room, plus reality tv and facilities, meet the people that run the backend and learn the process
  - <https://americancinemaeditors.org/ace-internship-program/internship-process/>
- **Chris**
  - For sound - find out who the people are who have worked on the film you love and reach out to them!
  - You'll be surprised at folks who give out opportunities to shadow, etc.
  - They're often all socially awkward as well so don't stress about it.
- **Tracy**
  - Try to build up those non-union days
  - Contract services recognize anything that has been streamed or broadcasted, etc.
  - Can't say enough about networking - they hold a ton of mixers at the guild - they provide the food, etc - and then there are also seminars
- **Chris**
  - Michael Break - he worked on Insecure with Nena and also with Chris on a different project
  - The post production world is very small



## • Q&A

- How did you advertise yourself when you first started out? Reel? Website, etc?
- Nena
  - She had nothing, just approaching people and receiving opportunities
- Chris
  - Most teachers would probably kill him for saying but they don't really use reels for each other.
  - For sound, your best tool and asset is your personality
  - The folks who are optimistic and want to learn are the people they are going to gravitate toward
  - If they have to spend 9 hours in a space with you, if you are a good person to be around, they will want to have you around
  - There are a lot of editors that are difficult to be around and it causes a lot of issues
  - You become a family so people will be more willing to work with and mentor you if you are kind and open
  - Being shy is perfectly okay but try and get to know people on a real level
- Shari
  - People want to work with people they like because they have to spend time together!
  - Introverts are just as successful as extroverts
  - Your personality goes a long way
  - Give yourself the credit that you have a lot to bring to the table
  - We want to work with people we like
- Resources for data wrangler jobs? How does someone get their start doing that?
  - Assistant editors would go on set and offer to be a DIT - but that may be a camera dept hire
- What is viable for paystubs of non-union work? Venmo, etc?
  - Contract services administers and approves the non-union work so they will have more info on that
- Nena: what is the difference with you working on musical aspects of shows (singing and dancing, etc.) vs. not?
  - It's about storytelling either way
  - It takes a bit more time and making sure you are paying to more of the details
- What are your home working rigs like?
  - Nena: curious about Chris'!
  - Chris: been working from home before covid - simple set up - mac mini, headphones, speakers, and monitors
  - Nena: what are the headphones?
  - Nena: the show she is on now has her remote in - only has a box, monitors, simple set up
  - Chris: music editors typically need less because it is more simple to run pro-tools
  - Nena: varies by show - some of them send things to your house to use and some are very simple
- Did you clear music ahead of time for Insecure ?
  - Nena: every week the music supervisor will send options and then leaves it to Nena to choose which work best within that - sometimes it gets clearable and sometimes it's not and when it's not it can be heartbreaking because you get attached to the music
- Can you get work remotely?
  - Chris: the networking has changed but you can work definitely work remotely
  - There are sound jobs around the world now
  - A lot of it is just doing research dependent on where you are. LA, NY, & London are still the go-tos but it is definitely possible and covid has made it easier.



## • Q&A (CONT'D)

- For students who are graduating that lose access to free tools, how can they keep up with editing tools, etc?
  - Nena: Avid gives students free versions, etc. For picture related, like adobe, it's pretty cheap to do monthly.
  - Chris: a lot of them are switching to subscription services which are more manageable financially
- Nena: What is it like to be a female picture editor
  - Nena: no idea - just knows it took her a long time to get here.
  - Things are changing and now finding she is not the only female editor on a show anymore
  - Before she was typically the only woman and person of color in post
  - Hoping to help move the needle further
  - Hope that one that this won't have to be a question
- Chris: Chris, have you ever used the REAPER DAW for sound editing? Or do you use Pro Tools?
  - He only uses pro-tools at this point
  - If you like specialty, use them, but eventually everything makes its way to pro-tools
  - Eventually it's an investment you have to make for sound
  - All mixing stages use it
- What skills are useful/standout to be chosen for a picture editing job?
  - Nena: Personality, ability to listen, anticipating people's needs, listen to what people are looking for.
- Can the panelists explain what "shadowing" is and why it's helpful when you're starting out in Hollywood?
  - Chris: Shadowing falls along the lines of internships - you follow their steps and watch the day to day and workflow and the bits and pieces of what their job entails
    - Different types of editors so each person's work flow is different
- What is the unscripted world? Like live TV?
  - Nena: from her experience, you get a lot more material to look through
    - Like project greenlight - they shot for a full year before editing even started
    - On Chris' end - how has that been different?
  - Chris: Never worked on unscripted but from what he has heard - you get what you get and make it work
- Are there any resources to find paid, non-union editing gigs? And how do they get officially counted as hours for getting onto the roster/into the guild?
  - Tracy: the work that contract services recognizes are things that are streaming, at a film festival, etc.
    - Reach out to them to find out if the non-union work would qualify for that
- Is the union strictly LA or does it expand to other states wherever the industry is, such as Atlanta, Georgia? Are there a lot of post-production jobs outside of LA? Is it possible to have a remote (at home/being anywhere) post-production/editing career, especially now with the pandemic?
  - Tracy: The Guild has an office in New York - same with Central - reach out to NY office
    - If you join the Guild, you can work pretty much anywhere
    - If you work in CA you would want to talk to one of the field reps
    - Once you join you can basically work anywhere
    - The only place where the roster is required is in LA
- If someone wants to reach out to you personally, what is the best way.
  - Reach out to Haley Seppa - [hseppa@calstate.edu](mailto:hseppa@calstate.edu)
- How much has COVID changed working in your field?
  - Nena: It hasn't changed much except that you are reliant on the speed of your internet.
  - Chris: a lot of it has gone to the remote world even pre-covid
    - Used source connect before to do ADR
    - Now with ADR they also use zoom
    - Less people giving their thoughts/opinions etc.
    - With covid they have a limited number of people they can have on a stage.



- **Q&A (CONT'D)**

- Would you suggest more freelance work first before joining a company or just apply to work at larger companies?
  - Chris: Personal preference
- What are your long term editing goals?
  - Nena: To keep doing work that I like and work with people I like.
    - Have to love it - have turned work down that she wouldn't watch
  - Chris: Keep doing this and keep working - the awards are a side piece - with Nena on that - keep making content that we love
- Is it important to get an agent as a picture or sound editor?
  - Chris: Doesn't have an agent - it's a drastic difference between picture and sound
  - Nena: She doesn't make as much with an agent but it frees up a lot of time and energy so she prefers it.

