ROGER CRITTENDEN

FINE CUTS

THE ART OF EUROPEAN FILM EDITING

FOREWORD BY WALTER MURCH

Focal Press

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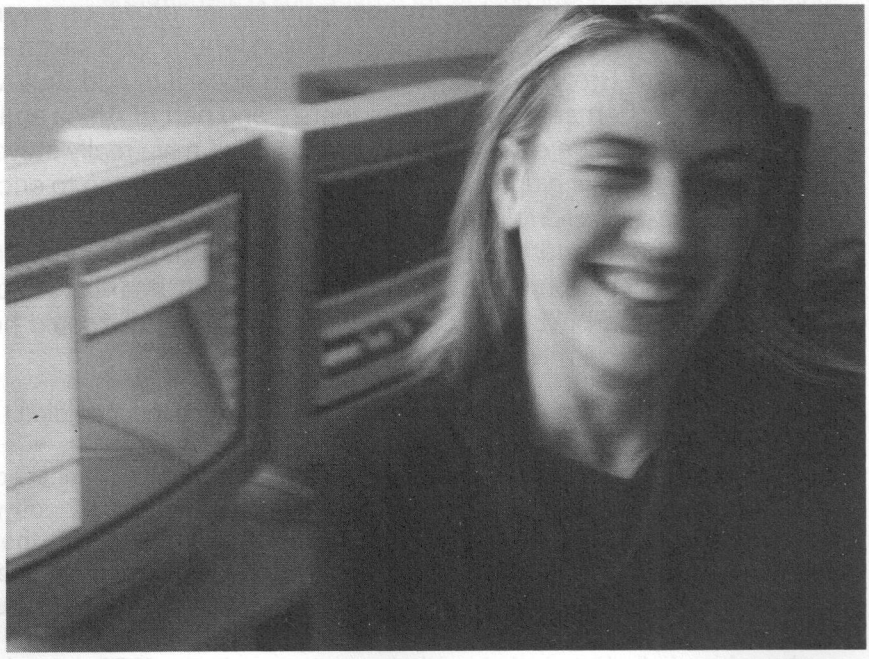
The conversation with Lucia took place in her flat in Notting Hill, not long after she had edited 'The Deal' for Stephen Frears and just before she was off to Luxembourg to start on Michael Radford's film of 'The Merchant of Venice'. I had first met Lucia when she was a student at the same time as Lynne Ramsay, with whom she has established a close working relationship as her editor, including on 'Ratcatcher' and 'Morvern Caller'.



Lucia Zuchetti (Courtesy of Lucia Zuchetti)

I was born in Monza near Milan where I spent my childhood and my teens to then move to London when I was nineteen. From a big family – so the youngest one of four, which I would say is something that has affected the way I am – massively, being the last one in a big family. From parents who were not involved in the arts: my father is a doctor and my mother is a teacher of teachers – what we in Italian call a pedagogist – a specialist in teaching methodologies. She worked when she was younger and then she gave up to raise the family and then went back to work when we were teenagers.

I had a fantastic childhood, I don't know if I have ever told you this actually – with parents who were not quite hippies, I guess because in 1968 when there was a student movement, they already had a family and were a bit too grown up to get involved in all that . . . but, had they been born a little later . . . They came from quite a working class background so they were completely – my father definitely made his own path – going to college in the context of family where no one had ever studied so I think they were very in touch with their roots and they wanted us all to learn that. We spent our childhood travelling with them in a little camper van, discovering the world.

From the age of six my mother and father drove us every year around Europe – even to the Soviet Union when I was seven – during the time of Brezhnev – they were keen socialists and they wanted to see for themselves what was there – and part of Africa and places like that, so quite extraordinary travels which have really stayed with me in my growing up. Their philosophy has always been to encourage us to discover and follow whatever we were interested in. So I spent my childhood and teens doing all sorts of artistic things, because I knew their support was driving me – moving from music to painting to dance and physical theatre and as much as they could help me and encourage me to explore they would.

RC: Was this alongside a conventional education or didn't that happen?

LZ: (laughs) No that happened too but – no, a conventional education in an Italian sense is Italian comprehensive school which is pretty much the norm for us – because there isn't the division between public and private education in Italy as there is here. So after my basic primary and secondary school up to age fourteen, I chose to go tan 'alternative' state funded high school, a mad place that was the result of a 1970s experiment

of alternative education: full-time studying, unconventional teaching methods and the opportunity to explore – learn – subjects connected to the visual arts like photography, film and graphic design, all backed up by more classical studies. I guess it was all part of that exploration that had been ongoing from the age of seven when I used to think I would be a painter, or when I was ten and was writing little plays and performing in them as well, or when I was thirteen and composed little piano pieces . . . I didn't know what I wanted to do – I was just trying everything out.

RC: Was this School in Milan?

LZ: Yes, in Milan. I actually met a film director, contemporary of mine, not long ago: Anna Negri,[1] who, you may know because she worked over here for a while after studying at the RCA, and she also went to this School. When she discovered I was there too she said, 'Oh my God, Lucia, whenever I meet someone who went there who has ever achieved anything I am always amazed'. So that's just to give you an idea of what kind of place it was. A school where freedom and individuality were encouraged, but where people got lost in it.

So I think I had quite an extraordinary growing-up – part of a big family doing quite a lot of learning in an alternative kind of way.

RC: and was cinema. . . .

LZ: Well, I was trying to recollect and cinema was just part of that – there wasn't a special attention to cinema. I think I discovered it quite late. I was trying to remember the very first film I ever went to see – and maybe, apart from the Disney films I saw as a child, my mother and father – and this probably says it all – took the whole family to see Kurosawa's '*Dersu Usala*'.[2] This is the first memory I have of going to the movies as a big event, grandparents and all, and that film was made in 1975, and that means I was probably six or seven. I think it was part of my parents thinking of this as an amazing story on a human level and they were just very keen for all us kids to see it, and I still remember it quite vividly.

So quite a lot of cultural stimuli, but within the possibilities and limitations of a family which had quite a few children to nurture. My parents would say: 'If that's what you want to explore right now we'll let you explore that'. Equally if I wanted to give it up, I felt free to do that. We were never pushed into anything. I actually feel a bit angry that I was never pushed to, e.g. stay in music more, because I studied piano for a few

years. My mother used to play the piano as a young girl. The piano that her father gave her as a big present when she was a young girl, that still sits in their home now, was the piano that all of us kids learnt on. Then when I got to my teens I got bored and never pursued it and it is the one thing that I say to my mother I wish that someone had told me you'd better stick to that – and I never did, and I've got quite a lot of regrets.

RC: I have the same regrets.

LZ: My awareness of cinema started becoming more and more apparent in my teens. I started studying photography and taking pictures and then watching films and thinking about cinema at school.

A film that hit me when I was in my teens was '*The Icicle Thieves*' by Maurizio Nichetti,[3] an Italian film-maker who is not very well known over here but who I used to look at with interest, because he comes from Milan and has a background in physical theatre and mime, something that has always interested me. '*The Icicle Thieves*' is a sort of post-modern parody of '*The Bicycle Thieves*',[4] and is a social commentary on the state of Italian Television and culture.

I've seen it again and wondered why it hit mew so much but I guess it made an impact on me because it was the time I was starting to have an interest in how films were made. It was probably then that I was becoming aware of what editing could be about. Although that took a while to develop, if I have to be completely honest.

RC: So it wasn't necessarily only the editing that interested you.

LZ: No I think it was more to do with what you can say with films. I think that was the first thing that made me start to be passionate about it – working out what one person could say in choosing what kind of film to make.

Then I would say it was my luck to come to this country, which happened almost by chance, in the sense that it wasn't part of a big plan or anything. I wanted to study film and in Milan there was no place to do it. I would have had to leave home and possibly go to Rome. I had a sister who was in the UK studying, and I thought well I might as well go and investigate. That was in 1988 and I came to investigate and I have been here ever since. I'm still investigating! (laughs).

RC: You stayed – you didn't come and then go back.

LZ: No, I came and I thought, oh well, I'll learn English and I'll find out what's on offer. I guess my dilemma was that I knew that in Italy my choice would be either a really academic one or a

very practical one and I knew that I wanted to read more books and study a little bit more, especially because the school I had come from I felt that it had taught me to think but had not given me a lot of academic knowledge. I wasn't ready to give up on that, so when I arrived here and discovered I could do a course that combined the two I got really excited. I spent my first year in the UK studying English and applying to different degree courses. Then I was offered a place on the course I really favoured and I was very happy about that. It was a degree in Film, Video and Photographic Arts at the Polytechnic of Central London.[5]

I remember, and this is really funny now, that although I wouldn't admit it to myself, my ambition was already to get to the National Film and Television School. I thought that saying it out loud would bring me bad luck, but I remember going to the interview at the Poly and wondering whether it would be the place that would lead me to a more vocational course like the NFTS.[6]

RC: But at this point you hadn't decided on editing?

LZ: No, it was in those three years at PCL where I discovered editing really, and almost by chance in the sense that I kind of stumbled on it. It was a really small course – I think fifteen of us only doing film. So we had to take it in turns to have a go at different things and not many people wanted to edit, because none of us at the time understood how much you could give creatively. Most people wanted to direct, and I remember having a go at editing and somehow discovering that I was enjoying it enormously and people would respond to what I was doing suggesting I had a bit of a knack for it, and that obviously gave me satisfaction and because everyone was trying to direct I was lucky enough to have first pick to edit what was made. I edited my first two or three short films there, which were then the ones that allowed me into the Film School.

RC: and was the theory valuable at that point?

LZ: I think it was. Probably half of the time I was thinking 'God, why am I studying semiotics, it is really boring!' Or maybe thinking that some analysis or interpretation in film theory books felt really contrived and half of the time it had nothing to do with what the film-makers had in mind when they made the film. But I'm glad I went through that thinking process and I guess that overall I came away from that course feeling a stronger awareness of point of view. It sounds basic, but it was important to spend time thinking about it, both to be a good viewer and to develop a sense of responsibility as a film-maker.

RC: Were there people in your year group who were stimulating or some teachers?

LZ: Yes, I think I owe a lot to the course leader, who is still there now: Joost Hunnigher.[7] I think with his enthusiasm, he was a real inspiration for me. He taught me the first few things about editing – first not to get stuck into following rules and second to look at the material and see what it says, sometimes – and this often applied to student projects – what was intended on paper was not there; 'What can you get out of what you have?' he would say.

RC: and at that time did you drown yourself in movies – did you develop a taste for certain kinds – did you make discoveries through the films you saw?

LZ: I was trying to recollect what seminal films I saw, because they did make us see loads of things and that was the other amazing thing, as well as reading some books and studying psychoanalytic texts. One film that has always stayed with me, was Len Lye's '*The Colour Box*',[8] which was made in the 1930s at the GPO Film Unit. Its basically colour patterns and letters painted on celluloid and moving in sync with the music.

RC: Why was it fascinating at the time?

LZ: I think I had never seen anything like it! A moving painting, a work of art that made use of colours and rhythm. I think it was just a great discovery – suddenly seeing these colours dancing on the big screen to this music had completely blown me away.

I think I probably saw my first French New Wave films at PCL too. It was probably '*À Bout de souffle*'[9] that started making me think about editing – what you can do with it – how editing can affect something – how a point of view can be established – or how a film-maker can signal his/her presence to break the 'film as reality' illusion – that fascinated me as well.

RC: So would it have been more Godard than Truffaut?

LZ: Well, actually I saw more Truffaut than Godard – though I remember '*À Bout de souffle*' stayed with me very much I also fell in love with films like '*Jules et Jim*'.[10] Another seminal film, that I discovered later on even though it is by an Italian director, was '*The Battle of Algiers*'.[11] If I try to look at what there is in common I'm not quite sure, but I know that I'm generally driven by the passion of what something is about.

RC: Well I think we all have an eclectic list of favourite films if we are honest rather than one with a narrow logic.

LZ: Exactly! I used to wonder why my dad loved spaghetti westerns, I just wouldn't get it, I would find them so unappealing,

I guess I never sat and watched one properly until I grew up. Then one day I sat and watched '*Once Upon a Time in the West*',[12] and I fell in love with it. I think Sergio Leone is a master of film language – I love his use of sound.

There are a lot of films I love but there are also a lot of films I haven't seen. I am not a film buff and there is a side of me thinking that almost I want to be a little bit free from knowing what's been made. There's nothing worse than finding it difficult to shake of the influences that great film-makers can have on you. I find that knowing too much sometimes limits you, inhibits you, a little bit of naivety keeps ones work fresh.

RC: So have you held on to any of the other arts over the years?

LZ: Well I still take pictures, though not as much as I would like, and I keep having fantasies about getting back into music but now I think if I started playing again it would be percussion. I got inspired when I went to Cuba last year. I'd love to get back into studying piano but I think it is probably unlikely that I will.

RC: So in Cuba did you get a chance to play.

LZ: A bit – but mostly I was inspired by the music and I learned to dance salsa – realised a lot of my passions are connected to music and rhythm thankfully they do not all involve being stuck in a room on your own or in the company of one other person only. I know those things are what keep me happy, that keep me alive.

RC: How do you feel now about the relationship between growing up in Italy and Italian culture and cinema and its relationship to who you are now? Do you think there are things you tap into – or is that just subconscious?

LZ: Its difficult. I'm sure that where I grew up and the kind of culture I absorbed is affecting the person I am regardless of the fact that I've almost spent half of my life here now. It's a bit hidden in there, it maybe difficult to articulate it.

RC: What do you miss?

LZ: Apart from the basic things that everyone would know like the food and my family and the beauty of some places that are very accessible.

RC: I mean music is so rich in Italy – it always feel to me like more a part of life whereas here its mostly an activity – rather than something where the heart and soul are involved – its probably a romantic notion about Italy but . . .

LZ: Yes probably – I was thinking more something that was connected to your heart and how much you express your emotions – I would think that is what to me maybe distinguishes

'Englishness' from 'Italian-ness', the expression of what's in there – what's in your heart, passion and emotion.

RC: So by the time you got through the PCL course you had focussed on editing.

LZ: Yes, I didn't know how far I could go with it but I knew that I could close a door – put myself in a room with a whole load of rushes and I knew that I was (1) having fun and (2) I was getting something good out of it. At the time I was relying on other people telling me that, who appreciated what I was doing.

Tony Grisoni,[13] the screenwriter who was a student on the same course and was doing some part time teaching at the time, before he started writing scripts for Terry Gilliam, and Michael Winterbottom,[14] was a crucial source of encouragement to me. I owe a lot to him.

RC: With him did it develop your understanding of the relationship between editing and writing – the structure of narrative – the way stories are told.

LZ: I think a little bit, but because the films we were making at college were beginners films, it was hard to talk about writing and the production process, the writing was often very minimal! I think the writing often happened in the cutting room and I learnt a lot through that! I've learnt lots about structure and how to look at the heart of things.

RC: You always seemed very focussed – you gave that impression.

LZ: I know – its scary in the sense – because it is something that other people have commented on, but I do not feel it. Its interesting because I wouldn't be able to say that there was the point where everything felt or path felt so clear – it just organically developed. Obviously at the Film School where I met, what now I call 'the family', some of the fantastic people I still work with to this day, it all felt great – we had that nucleus of support and inspiration and basis for exchange of thoughts and ideas.

I've got a fantastic memory of that time, because I think we were trying to explore something that wasn't quite what we were directed to explore by some of the tutors, who maybe believed we should learn the conventions before we could experiment, but we encouraged each other to try things out, we believed in each other and the support drove us forward. It was an amazing platform for me and I think probably for my number one director-collaborator Lynne Ramsay[15] who I met in those years at the School. The minute we had some

confirmation that we were onto something interesting we had the force to push things further.

RC: So at that time were there other people outside of the group who you found gave at least some kind of affirmation that what you were trying to do was worthwhile and legitimate or was that just reinforced from within?

LZ: We did find a lot of strength in each other – there wasn't a guru – but the one person in terms of editing I felt close to and I still do is Tom Priestley[16] – not for any specific reason but he taught me that, as far as editing is concerned, there was not one answer. He would come and see the work and he would never give THE solution and I appreciated that very much because it gave me confidence to find my own way.

RC: So when you came out of Film School was it Lynne's short that you did first?

LZ: I remember spending a couple of years cutting six or seven shorts when I came out. By that point I had cut Lynne's graduation film, '*Small Deaths*'[17] which had won a prize in Cannes. We knew that probably we would be making other things together. So in those two years I cut six or seven shorts of which two were directed by Lynne Ramsay one was '*Kill the Day*'[18] which I love – it is the least well known – and then '*Gasman*'[19] which won a prize in Cannes, so after those three shorts we could see the possibility of Lynne directing a feature and that we would probably all be together on that journey. Which is what happened. So '*Ratcatcher*'[20] was about two years after Film School. I remember saying to myself after Film School I don't want it to be more than two years before I get to do something really substantial and pretty much it was that. I said to myself if I have to wait longer I know I'll get frustrated and I'll end up changing direction or something.

RC: Reverting to type!

LZ: Working with Lynne was always a challenge – she has a very individual approach, to shooting that verges on the documentary. She likes to turn over a lot and gets inspired by unplanned events and spontaneous thoughts. On '*Ratcatcher*', which I cut in the old fashioned way – on film with a pic-sync and a Steenbeck – we ended up shooting a lot – we had a 22:1 ratio and working with many non-actors so every take – often was not the same so I think that was a difficult but great way to learn really – I mean a hard way to learn because suddenly you've got this mountain to climb and you've only been up a hill before. It felt like we had to work out how to do it

sometimes but again knowing we could support each other through that that is what gave us strength – that is what made it possible.

RC: Were you left alone – without executives breathing down your necks?

LZ: Considering it was a first feature we were left relatively free to experiment – I just remember it being free and that we had the space to the point that it became really hard. I think we lost a lot of weight over the mountain we were climbing – I certainly did – physically like losing a stone in stress, but then I also have incredible memories of it – so we learned the hard way.

RC: and were you tough with each other?

LZ: We have a quite interesting relationship, me and her. We can be tough on each other, but I think because we ultimately have great respect for each other as well – well I definitely have for her – and I'm sure she has for me. I think what works for us and what we have developed is if one of us has doubts, like if we are trying to pursue something and we are trying to crack it and we often acknowledge that we have a different opinion, but we often know that we are in tune with things and how we respond to things and therefore if one of us feels something good is happening and the other one doesn't the interesting thing is that we keep searching, because we always have a sense that if one of us has a doubt maybe there is still something else to be found.

RC: Can you be specific in either film is there a part – is there a sequence you had a particular struggle with?

LZ: In '*Ratcatcher*' I can think of the opening sequence – meaning from the drowning of the boy to the introduction of the another boy – the film's main character. It was written and shot to be a bit more complex – than the way it ended up in the final cut of the film – well not complex but there were some details in the writing that were beautiful but did not help us in setting up the story. Also I remember we had problems with the footage because on the day we were shooting the canal scene we realised that one of the boys was so scared of water that he could hardly relax. Anyway it turned out to be a bit of a disaster and we felt we had on the one hand not enough good material to make a very important scene work and on the other a lot of beautiful footage with other elements that were not essential. We spent a lot of time working out how to present the first fifteen minutes of the film and our biggest lesson was pretty basic that less is more – so we took things out and

gradually discovered that it worked much better. That was a particular sequence I know we worked on for a long time and had arguments over but we just kept exploring and exploring.

The first cut of '*Ratcatcher*' was over three hours long, and we were cutting on film. We often would film different versions off the Steenbeck, so that was our way of keeping track of the different cuts. I have to admit at one point we had such a big 'structure' crisis that we ended up importing a video copy of the cut into a digital system and trying some major restructuring of the film. We stripped the film right down to the bone – we did it very quickly and it was very beneficial for us to find out what we really missed. Lynne and Alwin together are lethal – they shoot such beautiful visuals that sometimes it is difficult to let them go!

What was fantastic however was that there was a lot of improvised material that came about during the shoot, which we incorporated in the first assembly and I still keep a VHS copy of it for myself. I'm very fond of it. For instance, what happened when they shot the little boy's funeral was that the period car, an old 1970s banger, that they used for the parents of the dead boy kept stalling and even when it stalled in the middle of a take Lynne never called cut. We ended up with this great long shot where these bereaved parents in their old car are meant to follow the hearse, their car stalls and all the friends and neighbours start pushing it behind the hearse. As it happens it did not end up in the final cut of the film, but there is a real beauty to theses things, and I would say, the biggest lesson I learnt from Lynne in a way, is just to look at anything, even the results of so called accidents and some real gems might pop out, never discard anything.

RC: That reminds me of Renoir's '*Partie de campagne*',[21] where the shoot was plagued with rain – and it was supposed to be a sunny film – in the end the film makes such eloquent use of the rain to change the mood and its what moves me most – that change of mood which was not in the script and yet they made use of it with a wonderful transition to the end sequence which cuts me to the quick every time I see it and that's the kind of accident of filming that Renoir loved to take advantage of. Its part of a wonderful opportunity to play.

LZ: and there are accidents that happen in the cutting room that sometimes are wonderful. I will always remember this in fact during '*Kill the Day*' which is the short film that was our first collaboration outside the film school with the same group of

people. We were cutting that on 16mm film and Lynne was saying 'come on I want to learn how to use the Comp-editor', and she was fiddling with this machine to put a piece of film in correctly and she put it the wrong way up. It was this beautiful shot of two boys walking alongside a canal bank but the camera was recording their reflection, which appeared upside down. We ended up with an odd reflected image that was not upside down and we liked it so much that we decided to keep it like that in the final cut. It is difficult to admit it but sometimes wonderful things happen by accident.

RC: Changing the subject – how was the transition from the Steenbeck to the Avid?

LZ: I regard myself really lucky because at the time I started at Film School we were pretty much still cutting on film, so I learnt to cut the old fashioned way: cutting and splicing celluloid. When we got to make '*Ratcatcher*', my first feature as an editor, I was asked whether I wanted to cut it digitally or not. I did not feel I used digital systems with enough confidence at the time and I did not want to feel frustrated by the technicalities of it. Knowing that, Lynne and I opted for cheaper film equipment, a longer post production schedule and a lovely team of assistants. It was labour intensive, but I have no regrets and I felt much more in control, cutting on film.

Now that I know how to cut digitally it would be really hard to go back to cut on film – I would find that extremely – um – laborious, yet there is a beauty that goes with it and that's why I'm really glad that I learnt that way. That beauty is to do with the physicality of it; the simple fact that you don't have to sit in front of a computer all day – the laborious side of it forces you to take your time with it, the time it takes to rewind reels, find things and change them round or reassemble them goes back to our thinking process and computers often can do things faster than your brain can think of them.

On the other hand they do free the editor of the burden of doing dramatic changes, especially on things that partly work. When you would do it on film you knew it would be a big task and if there is something that works you would fear losing a bit of that – in actual fact you never do – you can always put things back as they were, it just takes more time. So there is an argument for and against that really. The computer makes you freer and that is wonderful, but it does tend to make you splice more shots together than necessary – I always try to remind myself not to cut too much.

I enjoy this freedom that the new technology allows you to have enormously but at the same time I find that projecting your film – watching your cuts projected in the theatre is not the same as watching a video projection. What you can do with sound is incomparable with what you could do when we were cutting sound on mag. Now if I have the choice I would like to have both – the computer and a print and have a pos-conform[22] and project it as the cut develops. Unfortunately a pos-conform is often the first thing to go when too much money is spent in the production of a film.

As I said I am really glad I learned the old-fashioned way because I think that affects the approach you have. That was something that Tom Priestley taught me – just watch and watch the rushes and don't dive in until you are ready and if you don't feel you're ready just keep watching them. I think with computers its too easy sometimes to just dive in and cut and then you realise you haven't really quite got in your head what you are trying to get out of the material, and film in a way kind of forced that on you – made you really think much more before you started your first assembly.

RC: I'd like to get your feelings about sound. Did you learn the value of sound gradually as you gained more editing experience?

LZ: I think I've always been aware of sound and worked with it a lot from the beginning – and talking about sound that means also silences. I'm very aware of it when I work definitely and its almost as if I build my own sound track in my head – as basic as that could be but I definitely think of it quite early on.

RC: With Lynne's films have you track-layed them?

LZ: The short films yes – we did everything without a sound editor and we enjoyed that tremendously so I would say that is a little bit of a trade mark for us now and then obviously the bigger the project the more people – and talented people we have incorporated in the team and the more 'sprouting' there is – the more kind of blossoming of ideas in a way.

RC: But I assume you don't just hand over when you've locked picture.

(loud sound of objects falling in another room)

LZ: Oops! Its probably some books falling off my bookshelf.

Oh yes – I definitely like to follow things through. I think you discover how the times you haven't had the chance to follow something through how that effects what you've done. So I

like to see things through and know that you can incorporate other people but still work with them and new ideas that they might bring but also the basis of what you were thinking about when you were cutting your picture is there.

That applies to music as well – I'm discovering that music can spoil a lot of the work that has gone into a scene – I might make myself unpopular saying this, but there is often a tendency to use music as wallpaper and I am much more into intelligent use of sound. I like to think of sound a lot and yet its often about minimal sound, but that minimal sound is very important and specific.

RC: Do you think you have developed any habits in your editing?

LZ: I would say something that I stick to is the habit to cut things together and not look at them immediately I find it useful just to hold back from the temptation of watching back your cut until I've got something substantial to see. Some people find that quite unbelievable – maybe you are starting the assembly of a film and you get a call saying what are the rushes like and you comment on that and then how does the cut feel and sometimes I don't know – I don't want to know. Its almost like I am holding back – trying to be driven by my instinct and my understanding of what the material is about and the notes that I've been given, but trying not to overcrowd my head yet by looking at the scenes cut together until I've got quite a bit there to watch in context that is going to allow me to have a greater understanding of what works and what doesn't and why. Almost like trying to preserve the objectivity by not watching things over and over again too much.

RC: What do you do when you are not cutting a film?

LZ: I think I'm learning to adjust to the change of pace that goes with being freelance so when you are on a job you haven't got time for much else than the work and suddenly in between you've got a lot of time on your hands and you've got to learn to use this time in the best possible way. I travel a lot so that is fantastic and that makes me appreciate the patterns of the work. I spend time away from home – home being London. Apart from that catch up with life: films, music, exhibitions and friends of course.

RC: So was working with Stephen Frears[23] an entirely different kind of experience?

LZ: Well, let me think – it was a different experience in the sense that it was the first time I worked with a very established director on a feature length film and I was very excited about it.

Stephen however usually works with a regular editor: Mick Audsley[24] and I can appreciate what a regular relationship between editor and director can be about, because I have that myself – so suddenly stepping into someone else's shoes can be a little scary. It turned out really well in the end and I think there is something to be said for trying new collaborations every now and then – one might have to do more ground work, but the learning that comes out of that is often invaluable.

RC: What about the female point of view and working with a female director – is that significant or different?

LZ: There is a pride that goes with being in a male dominated industry. I also love the fact that the group of people that I started off with is mostly female. I am sure that it was something to do with our gender that made us connect and made us connect on some of the topics we wanted to talk about in our films. I have to say, however that editing is possibly the one specialisation in film where women have been given more access and that I believe is because an editor contributes a lot but does all the work locked in a dark room, behind the scenes – their contribution is not apparent.

RC: Are you comfortable to be in that position?

LZ: I'm actually quite comfortable with being behind the scenes. I think it suits me I am not the little girl who used to sing and dance in front of an audience as I did when I was seven! Having a rewarding relationship with my collaborators is what matters to me.

RC: Have you any idea what you would have done with your life if editing hadn't come along?

LZ: No. (laughs) I really don't – no, isn't that incredible! I don't think I do. I'm sure it would be a job in the creative field, but its been such a roller coaster with the kind of path that has been quite defined – I haven't even wandered and its just kind of been happening – yeah!

Notes

1. **Anna Negri** – Director/writer – *In the Beginning there was Underwear*, 1999.
2. ***Dersu Usala*** (1975), Akira Kurosawa (1910–98) – A magnificent and beautiful film set in Siberia and based on the true story of a Russian explorer.
3. ***The Icicle Thieves*** – **Maurizio Nichetti,** 1989.

4. ***The Bicycle Thieves*** – Vittorio De Sica, (1948 – co-incidentally the year Nichetti was born!).
5. **Polytechnic of Central London** – Now the University of Westminster.
6. **National Film and Television School** – Established in 1971, the UK's premier establishment for professional training in Media.
7. **Joost Hunnigher** – Internationally respected teacher and administrator of long standing.
8. ***The Colour Box*** (1935), Len Lye (1901–80). Born in New Zealand Lye became a prominent experimental film-maker often treating celluloid as raw material rather than as conventional 'film'.
9. ***À Bout de souffle*** – Jean-Luc Godard, edited by Cécile Ducigis, one of the prominent female editors who contributed greatly to the French New Wave, 1960.
10. ***Jules et Jim*** – François Truffaut, edited by Claudine Bouché, another of the women who cut for the rising stars of this period of French cinema, 1962.
11. ***The Battle of Algiers*** – Gillo Pontecorvo, 1965. Brilliant film evoking the struggle of Algeria for independence in the 1950s.
12. ***Once Upon a Time in the West*** – Sergio Leone from a story by Dario Argento and Bernardo Bertolucci, 1968. Famous opening sequence set at a remote railway station whilst a gang wait for a train – seems to play out in a rhythm that extends real time. Edited by Nino Baragli.
13. **Tony Grisoni** – Writer, e.g. *Weiser* (2001), Wojciek Marczewski.
14. **Terry Gilliam** – Worked with Grisoni on *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* 1998, **Michael Winterbottom** worked with Grisoni on *In This World*, 2002.
15. **Lynne Ramsay** – Graduated from NFTS in 1995 and won BAFTA for Most Promising Newcomer in 1999 with ***Ratcatcher***.
16. **Tom Priestley** – Cut for Karel Reisz, *Isadora*, John Boorman, *Deliverance* Roman Polanski, *Tess* and Michael Radford, *1984*, amongst others. Son of J B Priestley and one of the nicest people in the business.
17. ***Small Deaths*** – Jury prize at Cannes for best Short, 1996.
18. ***Kill the Day*** – Prize for Best European Short Film, 1996.
19. ***Gasman*** – Jury Prize at Cannes for best Short, 1997.
20. ***Ratcatcher*** – See above, 1999.
21. ***Partie de campagne*** – (1936 but not released until 1946), Jean Renoir – edited by Marguerite Renoir in the absence of the director – a minor masterpiece of exquisite construction.
22. **Pos-conform** – The process of match cutting a print of the rushes of a film as it is being cut digitally to allow for projection in the form it can best be judged.
23. **Stephen Frears** – Eminent director for whom Lucia cut *The Deal*, 2003, the story of the relationship between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown up to the election of the Labour government.
24. **Mick Audsley** – See interview in this book.