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WOMEN IN POST

Thankfully, the times they are a-changin', as our roundtable with these four post-production professionals makes clear.

Post-production has been mainly a male domain, even though many of Hollywood's earliest editors and negative cutters were women and sustained those roles down through the years. In the post house, however, the emphasis on engineering and technology has always favored men – a reality that is slowly changing.

Organizations such as the HPA's Women in Post, supported by SMPTE, are reaching out to support young women in the field. The organization just launched its Young Entertainment Professionals Program to encourage “worthy individuals” of both genders to pursue media careers. ICG's technology expert, **Debra Kaufman**, sat down with four women in post-production – Allie Ames, colorist/conform editor, Technicolor PostWorks New York; Jill Bogdanowicz, senior colorist, Company 3; Karen Boyle-Anastasio, online editor, Encore; and Eileen Godoy, executive producer, Cognition – to learn about their experiences, as well as how changes in technology are impacting their crafts.





Allie Ames

Colorist/Conform Editor
Technicolor PostWorks New York

Photo by Sarah Shatz

Early Days

ICG: What was your path to your career in post-production? Did you have mentors?

Allie Ames: I studied Middle Eastern history and then realized I wasn't interested in government work. My father is a VFX producer and learned that Deluxe had an opening. I started there in 2008 in Shipping and Receiving. Almost immediately, I met a colorist, Jack Lewars - we were both on the swing shift - and he started training me. I realized that's where I wanted to go. I went through the machine room and transitioned to work with Ben Murray, who taught me to be a Flame conform artist from scratch. He's been one of my great mentors.

Jill Bogdanowicz: At SUNY Geneseo, my major was art and my minor was physics, which was the perfect training for a colorist. My father was working at Kodak and told me about an internship in the R and D Telecine department there. As an intern, my mentor was engineer/colorist Kyle Aluet, who taught me the technical side of how to run the machines and color. My father also taught me a lot about the technical side. Kodak needed someone at Cinesite in Hollywood to work on the first DI, for *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* I was in the right place at the right time with the right background.

Karen Boyle-Anastasio: I wanted to be a pilot, but

when I took video classes at a community college in Pennsylvania, my whole interest just changed. I especially loved editing because it is so creative. I got my flying license, but moved to California with a degree from Temple University in radio, TV and film, and ended up at The Post Group as a dubber. I haven't had any one mentor in particular, but 90 percent of the other editors I've met throughout my life have been extremely helpful.

Eileen Godoy: I studied financing in college and started in the accounting department at CIS Hollywood in 1995. A year into it, I expressed an interest in learning more about production to our VFX producer, Marie Davis, and was promoted to scheduler, a great opportunity. Marie was really tough, but I learned a lot and became disciplined early on. I worked at EFILM in 1999 when it was a small company. Five years later, I ran into Joe Mazza at a party and got a job at Post Logic, which gave me exposure to commercial, episodic and audio services. [Colorist] Lou Levinson was a real mentor. He took me into his bay and showed me how to re-master, work with restoration and evaluate elements. Kevin Dillon, president of EFILM, asked if I was interested in being a DI producer, and I stepped into that role in 2007.

The Double X-Factor

ICG: Have women's roles (and the ratio of females) in post-production changed over the years?



Eileen Godoy
Executive Producer, Cognition
Photo Courtesy of Cognition

Bogdanowicz: A lot has changed since I first came to Los Angeles in 1999. There were so few women, and no colorists that I knew of. Sarah Priestnall (currently VP, Market Development, Codex) was my boss at the time, and she was the only technical woman I knew in a very male-dominated field. Sarah was one of the people really behind my career. I always felt that I had to be a little bit stronger technically and work a little bit harder to go up in the ranks. There still aren't a lot of women in technical areas, but I feel that the women coming up now have less of a glass ceiling, and it's a bit more common to see women colorists.

Godoy: It was very much and still is a male-dominated industry. A woman is seen more as the person who communicates with the client. As my technical knowledge started to increase, I gained more respect from my male colleagues, and I now see them collaboratively arranging workflows with me. Yes, I think it has changed, but women just coming into the industry will still be challenged by men. A woman has to be very assertive, calm and cool, and technical knowledge is a plus.

Boyle-Anastasio: Being a woman in post in the 1980s was unusual, but there were several at The Post Group, so it was a good place to be. Twenty-five years ago, I walked into my edit bay, and the client, a much older gentleman, assumed I was in client services. When he found out I was his editor, he wasn't happy. So for the first two hours, instead of starting on a level playing field, I had to prove I was competent. That was the only time that happened, but it was so strange. It has definitely gotten better, although it's still not equal by any means. But I don't get any old-school clients any more.

Ames: Early in my career, when I was trying to get out of shipping, I did get some pressure to go into producing, and I had to say, "No, I want to be on the technical side." I wish there were more women doing this with me. With my female clients, it's a different feeling, and I've been fortunate to work with amazing female directors, producers and editors.

Brave New Worlds (of Technology)

ICG: How is new tech, like 4K and high dynamic range, changing what you do?

Godoy: I'm seeing a surge in the discussion about the benefits of a 4K DI, that's for sure. I've handled quite a bit of 4K since early 2003, and we're seeing many more true 4K workflows. Of course, working in 4K increases storage and bandwidth, and when you're working on a budget, you have to realize everything takes a little more time. But I'm finding that the clients are pretty knowledgeable about 4K, and HDR is becoming a big topic now. One thing we've done at Cognition is use the ACES workflow. What we tell our clients when we're in discussions with them early in their project is that if they agree to use an ACES workflow, they will be future-proofing their content. Even if they don't have the budget for an HDR version, they can always take the ACES-compliant archived master and create an HDR version later.

Bogdanowicz: Today, there are more resolution-independent projects than 4K ones. People are focusing more on HDR now. With my tools, I can do any resolution they want, but people rarely want to pay for 4K. But they do pay for HDR deliverables because it's pretty impressive.

Boyle-Anastasio: It's changed quite a bit and quite fast. The transition from SD to HD was much slower. We did *House of Cards'* second season, and Netflix wanted 5K. You have to figure out how to bring in these huge files and play them in real time. It's been challenging, in a good way. Now UHD is the norm, and a lot of shows, even if they aren't finishing in HDR, they're preparing to. That's impacting the colorist, who has to do one session for standard dynamic range and then apply a LUT and tweak it for HDR10 or Dolby Vision. For the conform, I have to apply a certain LUT to the titles in HDR so they're not so bright.

Ames: People want all the bells and whistles, and it's interesting because our expectations for what you see on the screen are changing. The transition has been reasonably relaxed for us, but we go through what everyone does: when you quadruple the footprint of files, storage becomes more of a constant in the conversation. We have to be very organized and do our archival processes in a strategic way. We can't keep a million 4K jobs online.

Bogdanowicz: As a colorist, my role has changed, especially now that things are being shot digitally, to set the look or LUT early on so everyone can be on the same page. I have some directors who like to send me scripts to get ideas, and that's becoming more commonplace. When I did *Stoker* a few years back, [director] Chan-wook Park had me involved from the very beginning. I would Skype with the cinematographer [Chung-hoon Chung] about specific colors of shoes and wardrobe and how we could separate them in the DI.

Boyle-Anastasio: The other change has been with binge-watching. It's not like before, when a show airs, and you take it offline. Now they go back to Episode 1, and a lot of times we have to have all the episodes online. Some clients are very knowledgeable [about new technologies], and for some, it's their first UHD show, some have just come from tape-based shows and they have to pick it up fast.



Karen Boyle-Anastasio

Online Editor, Encore

Photo Courtesy of Boyle-Anastasio

ICG: Are the toolsets up to the jobs you're doing?

Bogdanowicz: Absolutely. For HDR, now there's the Sony HDR monitor that is 1,000 nits and the Dolby monitor that's 4,000 nits. I run Blackmagic Resolve and FilmLight Baselight, and both are HDR capable.

Boyle-Anastasio: As a Flame artist, I'm working on Flame Premium, and it's a very strong, powerful box and the best tool for 4K conforms. Autodesk leads meetings of Flame artists, and they're always interested in feedback of what we need. The Flame community has a forum to ask questions, and it's a very generous community.

Jill Bogdanowicz
Senior Colorist, Company 3

Photo by Nicola Goode



Final Cut

ICG: Concluding thoughts about post-production circa 2016?

Godoy: I think the ACES workflow is a big deal. The facilities at which I worked in the past had proprietary workflows, so it was hard for any studio or other post facility to mimic what we did. With ACES, it's a big move to standardize workflows.

Ames: HDR, HFR, high resolution - it's all very complex stuff with resounding implications for capture and post. It's nice to have crazy-smart people here with me, but I have to keep moving forward and learning more, which I love.

Bogdanowicz: The female presence in our industry is making me excited for the future. I'm very proud to be one of the few females to have been around for the last 17 years and seeing this change. It just needs to keep going forward, because our industry needs a female perspective.

Boyle-Anastasio: I've had some very proud and exciting moments in my career, including working on three winter Olympics with CBS - Albertville, France; Lillehammer, Norway; and Nagano, Japan. For the last two, our crew won Emmys. I also got to meet my inspiration, Thelma Schoonmaker, while working on *Aviator*. Being a woman in the ever-changing, ever-growing world of post-production has gotten much better. But there is still room for improvement. Hopefully, the future will see more women in all fields of production and post-production. 🍀