I can remember seeing as a child a documentary on the making of some film—I can’t recall which it was. But it was the first time I’d seen the magic that went into moviemaking, probably what sparked my own interest in film, and I’m sure the first time I’d heard the word editor. And though the memory is probably as distorted as any other from so long ago, the image that went with that word has stuck with me: A graying man in thick-rimmed glasses, cigarette between his lips, with loose film flung over his shoulder, hunched over a vast, horizontal machine, pulling and working knobs like a pipe organist. We might not imagine what equally important work might see a set full of cameras and actors, a director shouting into a bullhorn. We might not imagine what equally important work happens beyond the set, in the cutting room, where editors toil.

One might be surprised by how much choosing—whittling down of that original block—an editor must sometimes do. While editing Frank Darabont’s film *The Mist*, Via worked with 120 hours of footage to make a two-hour film. It was largely left to him to decide which tiny fraction of the footage worked best. He never takes this task halfheartedly. “They worked hard to shoot it,” he explains. “My job is to make everything work.”

Via has true passion for what he does. He always knew he wanted a career in media, and at the College he realized that he wanted to be an editor. He can remember, as an 8-year-old boy, giving interviews to the guests at his parents’ parties. He also remembers purposely skewing career-aptitude tests, so that they’d suggest he work in media, instead of law, like his grandfather. And when asked if he, like so many others in film and television, plans on pursuing other areas of show business, such as directing or producing, he answers quickly, and with a certain pride: “No, I’m an editor.”

**Cutting Room Conductor**

by Joseph Hasinger ’08

**HUNTER VIA**

**AN EDITOR SERVES AS A SECOND PAIR OF EYES, INTERPRETING AND MAKING JUDGMENTS, CHOOSING PERFORMANCES, CREATING PACE.**

**Hunter Via ’99** with *Sons of Anarchy* director Guy Ferland

**I’m an editor.**

**Via came to the College because of its Cougar TV program, which he helped transform into what it is today. He helped build the first set with money from his own pocket, and he also put together a makeshift editing system while fighting to purchase proper editing equipment (with funds ultimately snagged from the student newspaper *George Street Observer*).**

**After graduating with a degree in communication and completing a two-year program at Full Sail University, Via quickly fell into a career that seems to have advanced partly because of an obvious, impressive talent, and partly by chance. One of his first jobs was as an assistant editor for the pilot episode of Fox’s *Arrested Development*. The show’s eager directors—brothers Joe and Anthony Russo—established a challenging atmosphere, sometimes requiring an hour workdays. The producers were pleased with Via’s work, but by the time they offered him the full-time job, he’d already accepted a position as the editor for *The Shield*, a new cop-drama on the FX Network.**

**Via hit it off with filmmaker Darabont, who directed an episode of *The Shield* in 2007. When Darabont went on to direct *The Mist*, he gave Via the opportunity to edit his first feature film, *The Mist*. Via was pleased with his work, but by the time they offered him the full-time job, he’d already accepted a position as the editor for *The Shield*, a new cop-drama on the FX Network.**

**Via, and his partner, director Guy Ferland, work tirelessly on *Sons of Anarchy* and its spinoff series, *The Shield*, which centers on members of a motorcycle gang and draws its underlying stories from *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. While while stylistically the show shares elements with *The Shield*, it is does characters. Via says it works hard to “take things to a new level.” Via explains that *The Shield* had a consistent ride-along feel, while *Sons of Anarchy* has a more emotional style of editing, the mission being to “use whatever’s in your toolbox to make the best show you can.”**

**Via spends six months of his year working on *Sons of Anarchy*, and tries to edit more feature films during the off-season. He spends his downtime with his wife and 10-month-old, and freely admits that he continues to love movies and television. He laughs at the irony of how, after a stressed day at work helping to create television programming, he wants nothing more than to hit the couch and turn on the tube.**

**And when asked if he, like so many others in film and television, plans on pursuing other areas of show business, such as directing or producing, he answers quickly, and with a certain pride: “No, I’m an editor.”**

**SUMMER 2009 | 51 |**