

## Cut to Black: Craig Hayes, Film Editor

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*For each day in the month of February, the African American Steering Committee will be highlighting Local 700's African American members, both past and present, and their accomplishments. We look forward to showing the contributions and influences African Americans have had on the industry.*

**Name:** Craig Hayes

**What's your job/classification?** Film Editor

**List the credits you're most proud of.** "To Die For," "KALUSHI: The Story of Solomon Mahlangu," "Hidden Figures," "The Hate You Give"

**What are you working on right now?** "Big George Foreman"

**Who and what are your influences and/or mentors?** My uncle George, who was an actor.

**What books are you reading, shows are you watching and/or movies you're excited about?** I'm not sure I'd say they were riveting but I enjoyed them all. Here they are in recent order: "Touch: A Novel," "The Candy House," "The Anomaly," "Opal & Nev," and "Klara and the Sun." Books that influenced me early on were: "The Idiot," "Denial of Death," and "The Plague."

**What would be your superhero name?** When I was in 1st or 2nd grade I conjured a superhero sidekick persona replete w/ black leotards and some sort of cape strangely named: The Black Duck. It is hard to guess what name I would adopt now but for many years I spent hours in the gym lifting weights for the outside chance that if I were bitten by a radioactive spider I'd be 'ready.'

**What are your black history month memories? What cultural or historical events have impacted your life?** When I was growing up we were witness to the black power movement in real time in the street, on TV and in school. It radically changed our comportment as a people; how we related to each other and the world at large. The speed at which this manifested across every sector of life- both political and interpersonal- was invigorating and inspiring. Every day would bear witness to new heroes in the Zeitgeist. Not just Medgar Evers and MLK but one of our elementary school teachers who was bidding farewell to the student body as he joined the Freedom Riders. I remember how strange it was to be told it wasn't certain that he'd be coming back. It was a cultural whirlwind. Cheese cutters and Afro picks instead of lye and conks. Gangster leans were supplanted by revolutionary struts. Music, film art. Names like Simone, Baldwin, Parks, Van Peebles...introduced an ever evolving language that seemed even the most onerous cultural appropriation couldn't keep up. I remember looking around and seeing everyone feeling giddy with the possibility of achieving something like justice in our lifetime.

**What's the best piece of advice you've been given?** From John Carter: When putting together a sequence on the first pass, getting it up on its feet, it's best to follow your instinct and resist the impulse to refine and perfect the edit points. I find this easier said than done but it's super helpful if I stick to it.

From Michael Kahn: While pointing emphatically at his noggin' he cautioned me NOT to edit 'up there' but to instead while thumping his chest, to 'edit down here.'

**If you could time travel, when would you go and why?** Try as I might I couldn't pin point any specific moment in the time continuum that I'd like to revisit. I think I'd be the most intrigued by having a glance at our near future (say 100 years) to see if humanity was able to survive our

ceaseless calamities and privations not to mention whether we were able to finally achieve extraterrestrial travel.

**What's your favorite (Black) television/movie moment?** Sidney Poitier slapping the plantation owner back in the movie "The Heat of the Night."

**Was there a television show/movie that inspired you to pursue your career?** I believe viewing "The Seven Samurai" during my teenage years completely transformed my sense of what was achievable in film. Heightened emotion and transformative imagery.

**What's your personal/professional mantra?** When stuck on a scene move onto something else and come back later/tomorrow.

**What's the last show/movie that left you speechless?** "Triangle of Sadness." Paroxysms of laughter buttoned by an unsettling ending.

**What would be your dream project to work on?** A magic realism story employing a single character narrative thread spanning Africa and America, set in either the Revolutionary or Civil War era.