



## Cebuanos behind the scenes of internationally released films

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At 30 years old, Cebu native Kristoffer Villarino is already making his mark on the international film industry.

Villarino has held the position of head editor at Bigfoot Entertainment, a globally competitive, fully integrated entertainment company located in Mactan, Cebu, for the last four years. He has edited four international films, the most recent of these being *Midnight Movie*, a slasher film set for distribution in North America, Germany and Thailand. Villarino was handpicked by the film's director Jack Messitt for the role. The two met while working on Bigfoot's *Irreversi*, where Messitt held the position of director of photography. "*Midnight Movie* was Jack's first movie as director. He is very skilled, and for him to put his trust in me felt really good," said Villarino.

Although more a fan of suspense than slasher films, Villarino enjoyed the script and engrossed himself in the genre to prepare for his work on *Midnight Movie*. "I looked for the classic elements that people would look for, and tried to find ways to take them to our time. *Midnight Movie* has an old-school feel, and I wanted to create something that would stand among the best of them," says Villarino. The film pays homage to *Jason*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Psycho* and other teen horror movies of the 1980s — viewers familiar with these classic thrillers may recognize iconic scenes from these movies re-created skillfully in *Midnight Movie* by Villarino and the rest of the crew.

Villarino edited the film in Los Angeles, parallel to the shooting itself. "I'm lucky to have had the chance to work in a city with a century of movie history. Wherever I went, I met people from the industry, people who spoke the language of filmmaking," he said.

Although technology has advanced significantly in the last 20 years, the special effects remained purposefully traditional. "The use of practical special effects gave it a more organic feel rather than digital. It also meant that the editing process was more straightforward, and also that I would be relying on my abilities as an editor rather than CGI," commented Villarino.

Villarino remained objective by keeping his distance from the set, as it is essential that editors see the footage from an outsider's point of view. Each week he would meet with the director and show him the edits. "It's a huge responsibility being an editor. Editors can make huge decisions about the flow of the film and have to argue with the director if something doesn't work," he said.

The movie was completed in April 2008, and Villarino is happy with the final product. Along with the scary, yet funny, duality of a teen horror movie that he pictured from that start, he feels that the film also provides a commentary on viewer enjoyment of violence. "I find it weird that people enjoy it so much. We created one scene where the only thing you hear and see is a killing. We wanted to take away the music and the fancy effects, and make the audience members think about whether this is still 'fun' and about why they're so entertained by it."

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