



FILM-SOUND EDITOR

Kimberly McCord-Wilson, 35
SALARY: \$60,000–\$90,000

I've always loved listening to sounds. As a young girl growing up in Cleveland, I used to borrow my mother's tape recorder to record my voice and just about anything that caught my attention. While studying chemistry and mechanical engineering at Howard University in 1987, I began to feel that my academic track did not reflect the real me. After three years I left Howard and gradually found my way back to sound. I took a job helping the sound mixer set up in a jazz club, where I met the director of a local cable-television show. Through him, I got an internship mixing audio for videos and television shows and became a full-time sound engineer. I also met a film-sound recordist and did research that led me to the world of sound editing in film. I studied a dialogue-editing manual and practiced cutting dialogue on the digital audio workstation in my spare time at work. In 1995 my friend, the recordist, referred me to an internship in film in New York. At 26 I became an intern sound editor for the movie *Clockers*—my first working experience with Spike Lee.

"As a film-sound editor, or dialogue editor, my job is to clean up the production sound so that the actors' dialogue is clear, intelligible and free of extraneous noises. I also look for creative alternatives to help support a director's vision and enhance a film's mood. For example, in the movie *Summer of Sam*, I elevated the feeling of doom and paranoia connected with the David Berkowitz character by strategically placing a blood-curdling scream at the end of a scene that originally ended in silence. My projects include *S.W.A.T.*, *He Got Game*, *Beloved*, *Bamboozled*, *Solaris*, *Frida*, *Gangs of New York* and *Barbershop 2*, as well as the HBO series *The Wire*. I now live and work in Los Angeles. I love my job and would like to see more people of color check out this side of filmmaking."

—MARSHA KELLY

WORK&WEALTH

SO YOU WANT TO WORK WITH SOUND?

7 WAYS TO BE HEARD

GET BASIC KNOWLEDGE Take film-sound-editing courses (New York University and the University of California, Los Angeles, are good choices). Visit filmmaking.com or cinema.com.

VOLUNTEER ON STUDENT FILMS This is how you can acquire hands-on experience with dialogue, sound effects and ADR (audio digital recording); it can also lead to work with those same students, who may go on to become prominent directors.

BE AGGRESSIVE Routinely read *Variety*, the film industry's bible. It lists current and future films along with production-office phone and fax numbers for forwarding résumés. Let them know you're interested in postproduction sound and ask for the name of a contact person.

STAY IN THE MIX Film schools have lists of events, like screenings and panel discussions with directors and picture editors. Introduce yourself to the panelists and get to know the movers and shakers in the business.

VISIT SOUND FACILITIES Make arrangements to sit with sound editors to observe them as they work their magic with sound.

SEEK AN INTERNSHIP Carry your résumé, and when introducing yourself to people in the industry, tell them that you're interested in interning. And be willing to go above and beyond the job description.

BECOME AN APPRENTICE If you really know your stuff and have experience, it's possible to start as an apprentice—a job with more responsibility than you'd have as an intern. Log on to c5sound.com or call (212) 696-1154 for more information.

—M.K. ▷

Become the CEO of you, advises Barbara Pachter, author of *When the Little Things Count... And They Always Count* (Marlowe & Co.). Be positive and visualize yourself achieving career success. "If you anticipate the best," she says, "you are more likely to get the best."

