MEDIA RELEASE   11 May 2021

"Film lecturer by day, screenwriter by night"

Jesse Laurie is a Senior Lecturer of Film at <u>SAE Creative Media Institute Perth</u>, a successful screenwriter and a coach at <u>East Fremantle Football Club</u>. In this interview, Jesse talks about his role at SAE, and how his script for feel-good-film *Raising Thunder* got nominated for the prestigious <u>Monte Miller Award</u> and received WA Government funding.

You describe yourself as a 'film lecturer by day and screenwriter by night with an insert of football (AFL) when the two meet at sunset' - is this still the case?

Pretty much, though I've stepped away from playing and am now in a coaching role at East Fremantle Football Club. I work alongside the leadership group and with the defensive line of the development group.

What do you enjoy about your role as a Senior Lecturer at SAE?

I'm in a managerial role where I assist the Perth Film Department Coordinator and Film Program Chair, Magali McDuffie. Similar to the coaching role I have in football, I communicate with the other film lecturers to make sure everyone's on the same page and moving in the same direction.

I love to create and deliver a module that fits in the middle of a film degree; seeing how that puzzle piece sharpens the overall picture for students when they come around to doing their final projects.

And you're a member of the SAE Film Program Committee. What does that entail?

Essentially it gives me greater insight into how the film faculty function at a high level; what we do influences student learning. There's a great blend of people on the committee with varying levels of experience. I like to offer a unique insight through my sporting background, which a lot of people don't have.

What did your students think when they heard your script for *Raising Thunder* was nominated for the prestigious Monte Miller Award, and had received WA Government funding to go into production?

I'm not one to broadcast my own success. A few know, including graduates who I now mentor, and they're excited by the news. In this industry, it's one thing to lecture, but being able to walk the walk as well brings far more credibility to what you're teaching the students.

Do you think your success externally acts as a source of inspiration for your students?

The more I can be involved in the industry gives me opportunities to provide clear and current insight to students in regards to the processes.

Some of the graduates I mentor are in the process of applying for the funding that I was able to get from the WA Government. It's been beneficial for them because I've been able to give feedback and guidance on the application process.

Can you tell me about *Raising Thunder*?

It's a short film concept, which we'll turn into a feature film. It's about a young farm girl named Kayla who finds an infant cloud. She has to raise it to maturity to capture its thunder in a bottle, so she's able to reignite her grieving father's initial spark.

It stems from the idea that Kayla's lost her mother, and her father has lost his wife and it's that notion that when grief strikes, a part of you dulls or is taken away from you. In order for Kayla to safeguard her future she has to bring her father back from the grief that's consuming him, so they can be a family again.

Will animation or CGI be used?

It's going to be a cross of live-action and CGI and animation for the cloud. We were lucky that one of the animation lecturers at SAE Perth, Steven Teune was able to provide some of the proof of concepts for the cloud, which allowed us to gain the funding we needed from the WA Government.

ANIMATION   AUDIO & MUSIC   CREATIVE INDUSTRIES   DESIGN   FILM   GAMES   WEB & MOBILE

When does filming begin?

We're still in the development period at this stage. We've got two weeks to get the final script over to Screen West and then we'll go into pre-production which will be up to three months. Filming will take us around a week, and then we'll spend between six to ten months in post production. Overall we're expecting it to take 12-15 months before the film's ready to be revealed.

Which director or filmmaker would you love to step in the shoes of for a day?

In the animated realm it has to be Andrew Stanton or Pete Docter - who have both worked on some of Disney and Pixar's most successful films.

If I had to choose a director in the live-action genre, I'd have to say I'm a big fan of Richard Curtis and his films *Love Actually*, and *Notting Hill*.

So you like romantic comedies?

Yes, my wife and I had *Love Actually* playing in a blow up cinema at our wedding. It was really really good fun!

SAE is the place for creators and innovators; the leaders in creative media education across seven disciplines – animation, audio and music, creative industries, design, film, games, web and mobile. Find out more at sae.edu.au

For more information:
Barry de Silva, National Communications Manager
Phone: 0468 304 636
Email: b.desilva@sae.edu

ANIMATION   AUDIO & MUSIC   CREATIVE INDUSTRIES   DESIGN   FILM   GAMES   WEB & MOBILE

Imagery (L to R: Jesse Laurie; Jesse and *The Raising Thunder* team)

About SAE

SAE Creative Media Institute is the place for creatives and innovators. Since 1976 we've been the leaders in creative media education across animation, audio, creative industries, design, film, games, web and mobile. Every year, we support more than 10,000 students globally to develop the skills and experience needed to carve successful careers. Students enjoy access to the latest technology and are taught by industry-experienced faculty, while putting their skills to the test in small class environments. Our graduates become part of a highly-respected global community of creatives that's been around for over 40 years. We pride ourselves on being technically explorative, transformative and brave through our range of creative media programs, from short courses and professional training through to bachelor and postgraduate degrees. In Australia, our programs are delivered at campuses in Sydney, Brisbane, Byron Bay, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide. SAE is a part of Navitas Pty Ltd. More information about SAE is available at sae.edu.au.

About Navitas

Navitas is a proud Australian company that pioneered an innovative university partnership model of education in Perth in 1994. Its entities have delivered education programs across the country since 1976. Further information about Navitas Pty Ltd is available at navitas.com.