



THE ACADEMY
OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES

84th Academy Awards Nominee Questionnaire

Lon Bender / Nominated for: Sound Editing for DRIVE

What is your Hometown? Where did you go to School?

North Hollywood. I attended Oakwood school.

What was your first movie-going experience, and how did it affect you?

My experience began as in the wonderful darkness of a movie theater with endlessly watching all kinds of movies as a kid; I was so affected by the stories, mainly because I shared so many of the emotions with the various characters... Not much later the idea of telling those stories was what I wanted to do and I pursued that and I pursue that with my work in sound.

Did you watch the Oscars growing up? Was it a family experience? Do you recall a particular favorite Oscar moment?

I grew up in North Hollywood, so the film industry and watching the Oscars were always a part of my life. We would always watch together each family member with their own interest. The favorite Oscar moment I always remember was after his name was called, the presenter said that the winner couldn't be here tonight because he's busy working on his next project. This was so impressive to me that someone would be so engaged in their work as to miss the Oscars and the honor that goes with it!

When did you decide you wanted to make movies? What influenced you? Who or what inspired you along the way?

I decided that I wanted to tell stories with the movies when I was eight. My family was not in the industry, yet I had been surrounded by the children of film people through Oakwood School, at which I was a 'lifer' K through twelve. The story tellers were all around me and I wanted to be a part of that.

What's the most valuable advice you ever got in your career?

"be the first one there and the last to leave" - My dad, Martin Bender, who passed away in October.

What was the biggest challenge you faced on the movie for which you were nominated?

My biggest challenge was veering away from building a denser more conventional soundtrack that characterizes most Hollywood movies. Our director, Nick Refn didn't want to fill the sonic frame of Drive from the beginning to end, which is indicative of most Hollywood films.

The signature sound of Drive was creating sonic reality from which the main character experienced the world. The idea of an objective reality was out the window on this film. Every moment is viewed from the subjective perspective. The story is as purely subjective as our Director, Nick Refn. From the moment we're introduced to the city, there is a specific sound to define his experience of the city; When he's fighting for his life by being clever as opposed to being a muscular movie hero, he hears the smallest details and we do to. When

it's time to be muscular, the sounds become bold and assaulting with little regard for reality. It is this laser focus that challenged my years of previous experience with larger studio films.

What was your most memorable moment on this movie?

My most memorable moment was one of complete fear when I had Nick in my studio at the beginning of a wonderful review process. Normally playing things and taking notes for changes offline, he said, "why not just do it now and I'll make a couple of phone calls" - - I suppose it was performance anxiety, but it was the beginning a many full days spent together working through every inch of the film and shaping the track. I got a real sense of what Picture Editors experience as the shaping process happens in real time.. A real collaboration on a new level was what made this experience so profound for me.

What would be your dream project to work on?

Whichever project I'm working at any given moment! I love editing sound.

What's the one thing that people would be shocked to know about you?

I love the data generated by my Garmin more than I love riding my bicycle itself!

Do you use social media?

no

Facebook fan page?

no