

"My favorite moment is in the fitting room. When you're with the actor and the clothes go on and it all makes sense and the character reveals itself. It's amazing and magical."

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Where did you grow up and go to school?

I grew up in Pascagoula, MS and also New Orleans. I'm a proud graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi film program.

At what moment did you discover an interest in working in Film/ TV?

I was in the Radio, Television, Film department at USM studying broadcast journalism. I wanted to be an on air weather person. But also, I was really obsessed with music videos at the time and wanted to direct them (music videos in the nineties were pieces of art). When I told that dream to my then boyfriend (a fellow USM film alum), he urged me to switch over to the film department (my higher math skills are/were really terrible, so it was easy to ditch the broadcast journalism/meteorology degree). I'm so grateful to him for that urging. I recently reflected on the dots that connected me to this career and path and I'm so grateful for the things that happened when they did, and for the people that influenced me.

At what point did you realize you could take steps to pursue your dream from Mississippi?

I don't know if there was a moment. I don't think I thought I was limited to Mississippi. You know when you're young, you have less fear.

What type of training have you had and where?

I had a lot of obsessions growing up. Clothes (and music) being huge. I would design things and my mother would build them for me. Every dress I wore to anything - I designed. I also had and studied period costume reference books at an early age and hoarded too many fashion magazines (which I still have a collection that goes back decades). Those things paired with film school was my training. So, not a formal costume education. I've learned so much on the job and am so lucky the amazing people I've been able to work with have taught me so much along the way.

What was your first Film/TV job?

Well, I PA'ed/ interned on a couple of movies while I was in school, and also worked on all my classmates projects, but my first real paying gig was the summer I graduated - I was a camera loader on a low budget feature in New Orleans. It was hot as hell. But I got to load film in a doorless helicopter above the Causeway and thought that was awesome. I got paid \$50 a day. I was thrilled.

Are you working on any current/recent projects?

I recently wrapped "Troupe Zero" with Bert and Bertie (all hail these two badass inspiring women who were just named to Variety's 10 Directors to watch in 2019!). It's having its world premiere and is the closing night film at Sundance. Whoop Whoop!! Now I'm deep in research for Barry Jenkins' "The Underground Railroad" series. I start in January and it's massive. I'm terrified and excited and really looking forward to it. Also if Barry Jenkins wanted to do an infomercial on rubber tires I'd be there in a half a millisecond. He's an amazing, beautiful, wonderful person and director. I was so lucky to do "Moonlight" and "If Beale Street Could Talk."

What has been the most surprising thing about working in the film industry?

That I get to do this.

Who has been an influence on your career and why?

My mother- an artist, my father- a pianist, my sister- an interior designer, my husband- a cinematographer, my mentor - the legend Aggie Rodgers, my film professors - Phillip Gentile and Dixon McDowell, Amy Seimetz, Adele Romanski, Wim Wenders, Barry Jenkins, Tim Blake Nelson, Lee Daniels, Nina Parikh, Diego Velasco and my other classmates in film school, my fellow costume designers who I watch continuously and who I admire so much, music, fashion, photography books, design books, costume books, art books, museums, travels, movies,

everyday people walking around. There's a million reasons why! I'm so grateful and lucky for all the people and all the things.

How does being a Mississippian help you stand out in our industry?

Well, sometimes it's helped because the project/movie itself is southern and I can help with specific nuances in character's costumes, I think, I hope. And maybe I've stood out because I still have this damn accent.

If you could create a scene built around one location in Mississippi, where would that be and why?

If it still existed, the Subway Lounge in Jackson. Oh boy, I miss it. Magic happened there. And maybe the scene would take place back in the 30s with Robert Johnson and Johnny Shines. Oh wait, we did that... I miss Subway!!!

Favorite moment on set or with a project?

My favorite moment is in the fitting room. When you're with the actor and the clothes go on and it all makes sense and the character reveals itself. It's amazing and magical. FAVORITE!!!

What would you say to convince/encourage a producer to bring their project to Mississippi?

That Mississippians are going to bend over backwards for you. And that people are so genuinely nice. I know it's so cliché, but it's true - the hospitality can't be beat.

What do you do when you're not working on a film set (other jobs, hobbies, etc.)?

I think I'm always researching my next project! But when I'm not - I love to see music and concerts, I travel a lot, of course I catch up on movies and I love to get sucked in to a series. I love to go to museums. And I also love to people watch. I also use the time to catch up with family and friends because when I'm working I don't see anyone. Oh also, I like to make mix tapes!

What are your hopes for the film industry in MS?

I hope Mississippi can change its image and change people's sometimes negative impression of Mississippi. That more diverse projects can be made in Mississippi, and that underrepresented stories can get made and well, change things. I hope that it gets back on its feet and has a heyday again like the days of

O' Brother Where Art Thou, My Dog Skip, A Time to Kill, etc. It was such a good run in those years.

What's your advice for someone looking to break into the film business?

Put yourself out there! Meet as many people as you can! And now, these days you can reach out to anyone! You can find your heroes on Instagram! Send them a message! Who cares! Offer to work for free for people. Enthusiasm and eagerness goes a long way. Follow up with people. Be persistent. I swear it will all happen if you do those things. It will show you are committed and determined. I'm always looking for that person!

How can people find/reach you?

They can find me through my agency - UTA in Los Angeles. Or on social media - Facebook or Instagram

UTA: www.unitedtalent.com/

IG: @ceselin

FB: caroline.eselin

Learn more:

How 'If Beale Street Could Talk' costumes pay homage to author James Baldwin - <https://www.lajollalight.com/109700699-132.html>

'If Beale Street Could Talk' movie costumes on display...
<https://hollywoodmoviecostumesandprops.blogspot.com/2018/11/if-beale-street-could-talk-movie.html>

**If Beale Street Could Talk* premieres in theatres on Dec. 14th.