

Tec graduate editor helps turn film into Sundance winner



The film *Radical*, which was produced by and starred **Eugenio Derbez** and won an award at the [2022 Sundance Film Festival](#), bore the hallmark of [Tec graduate Eugenio Richer](#), who was in charge of editing the film.

*"It's the biggest production I've worked on in terms of duration, intensity, and everything. It's very satisfying to see it selected for screening at and **opening a festival as important as Sundance**, as well as for it to have been **awarded favorite**,"* said the editor.

Richer is a Communication Science graduate from [Tec de Monterrey's](#) Monterrey campus. To date, he has been able to work as **editor on films and series** on **Netflix** and **Amazon**, and for production houses such as [3pas Studios](#), with whom he collaborated for this film.

*"I'd never experienced anything like this, **receiving an award as big** as this one. It's an award for the film, not specifically for the editing, but I'm totally jumping on the bandwagon. The director has said as much. We're all part of this project,"* he said, smiling.

Radical was awarded **Festival Favorite**.

<https://twitter.com/sundancefest/status/1619048454520713216>

Radical: a film capable of connecting with people

The **Radical** editor is clear that there are several reasons why the film won, but mainly it was due to its plot, which is **based on a true story** and conveys a message that can **raise awareness** and make people **reflect on education**.

Radical tells the story of **Sergio Juárez**, a teacher at a border town school. Faced with unfavorable social conditions, the protagonist educates his students by experimenting with **alternative teaching methods**.

“It’s the story of how someone arrives at a place, and you see how they connect with the children. It’s very satisfying to see how they progress as a group and break free from all the problems they have in that place.

*“It’s really nice to see how **people connect with the story**. The film is designed so that you feel that you’re a part of the school and you imagine that you’re almost sitting with the children. The protagonist also has great charisma, and he takes you on the journey with him,”* he explained.

Richer highlighted that **the film has very emotional parts**. For example, it shows the children’s sensitivity and how they see the world and adapt to problems in a town full of violence.

*“It’s satisfying to know that most of the audience (at Sundance) was American. It was screened as a Foreign Language Film as it is, with subtitles, and it still managed to move people and be **awarded favorite**. It’s really lovely,”* he added.

Eugenio pointed out that one interesting aspect of this film is that **it isn’t a comedy**, like the ones the public is used to seeing Derbez in.

“Seeing (Eugenio Derbez) in this type of project, which is very different from what he normally does, is very interesting.”



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The challenges to editing *Radical*

Eugenio, who hails from Monterrey, said that he's been collaborating for about 3 years with the production house, founded by Derbez and producer **Ben Odell**, with whom he also worked on the film ***Quando Sea Joven (When I'm Young)***, starring Verónica Castro.

Richer, who currently resides in Mexico City, said that there were several **challenges** to this production, such as having to **move to Antigua Guatemala** for several months to edit the film.

*"They told me, 'You're going to Antigua Guatemala to edit the film,' because the **director (Christopher Zalla) lives there**. So as not to be on Zoom all the time, they put me up in a house there, next to where the director lived so I could work there.*

*"It was a huge challenge because you're not used to leaving your studio for even 2 weeks and well, just imagine, **a country where I don't know anyone** and it's almost like starting from scratch, and being 1,000% focused on the project. It was pretty intense," the 38-year-old editor said.*

Eugenio said that another challenge to ***Radical*** was that it was a project with **a high volume of work**, because it took a long time to edit and there was a lot of material to choose from.

*"Because we were working with children, they wanted to protect the shooting time and have more takes and more camera time on them. So, **there was an exorbitant amount of material**, hours and hours in the classrooms.*

*“That **increased the level of time** I had to spend viewing, selecting, moving, searching, and finding a certain line that I needed, which made it more complicated. The volume of work was quite high,”* he added.

Richer said that it took approximately **7 months of editing**, when films usually take around 4 or 5 months.

What’s more, Richer pointed out that knowing that he was working for **Eugenio Derbez**, the star of the project, also posed the challenge of always seeking to deliver **work** that was up to the **production standard**.

*“(Derbez) is also a producer of the film, but he gave the director his due and that was also very rewarding, that **everyone had their place**, their moment, of production in general; but it did increase your stress about not wanting to let anyone down,”* he added.

Ultimately, the editor said that seeing the end result of this production and the reception it has received is a way of realizing that all the effort they put into **Radical was worth it**.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10167289345460072&set=a.355833640071>

The editor’s role: making everyone’s work shine

Despite the fact that the editor’s job is not the main focus of productions, Eugenio points out that one of his responsibilities is for the combined efforts of **the entire team to shine**.

*“Part of the editor’s process is **making everyone else’s work perfect**, which means that if the camera jumped for some reason, I remove that jump and do something so that everyone looks good. (Editing) is providing **the best of everyone’s contribution** to their work in the final product,”* he explained.

Richer, who has worked on almost **10 feature films to date and as many series**, said that once shooting takes place with the cameras on set, his job is to **organize the footage and work scene by scene**.

“The first instruction is the script, and I have to reflect it with the images they’re giving me. I have to select the actors’ best lines and remove the ones that don’t work, combine, remove, or add audio to give rhythm to each scene,” said the [Tec graduate](#).

Eugenio pointed out that as editor, his role is to make the **first cut**, including a proposal with a temporary soundtrack, with his vision and creativity, to then **present it to the director**.

“When I show a first cut, it must already contain all the music. If there are any visual effects, I make a basic version so that whoever sees it fully understands what happens in the film without reading the script,” he added.

After delivering the first cut, adjustments are made together with directors and producers until the production is complete to be presented to audiences.

*“The editing itself is about **organizing the material** that’s being delivered to tell a story.”*

“Part of the editor’s process is making everyone else’s work perfect (...) providing the best of everyone’s contribution to their work.”

Over a decade in editing

After finishing his degree in Communication Science at Tec de Monterrey in 2007, Eugenio completed a master’s degree at the [American Film Institute](#) in Los Angeles, where he trained in **film editing**.

Before **Radical**, he had the opportunity to work on films such as *Verónica*, *Compulsión*, *La Nave (The Ship)* and *Cuando Sea Joven (When I’m Young)*, which was also produced by Ben Odell and Eugenio Derbez.

Likewise, he collaborated on series produced for streaming services such as **Netflix** and **Amazon Prime Video**, which include *Control Z*, *Diablo Guardian (Guardian Devil)*, *El Candidato (The Candidate)*, *El Recluso (Recluse)* and *Un Extraño Enemigo (An Unknown Enemy)*.

Eugenio was moved that **Radical** won an award at Sundance and feels proud of the work that was done and of the fact that people have received it in such a good way.

“I’ve always had the support of my family and friends, my parents, and [my sister who’s a screenwriter](#) and is like my number 1 fan. Interestingly, she carries out the first film production process and I do the final part, and well, this is for all of them,” he added.

Eugenio, who has also **been a professor at Tec de Monterrey**, emphasizes learning to work as a team and under pressure, and always seeking the success of his projects from his education at this institution.

Today, the **Tec graduate** is already working on a **new production, a Christmas movie**. Meanwhile, he’ll be watching out for the premiere of **Radical** in theaters in Mexico and the United States, a film that he estimates will hit theaters during the second half of the year.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jj9dDtAMJOk>

About the Sundance Film Festival

The **Sundance Film Festival** takes place every year in Park City in the state of Utah, United States.

Since 1985, it has provided a space for filmmakers and viewers seeking to discover new voices, fresh perspectives, and original stories.

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