Finding a refuge and a second career in film

An unsettled home life. A love of films. And a lifelong urge to make the most of what’s around her. Those are just three elements that have formed the Bujuanes Livermore of 2021, which, as you’ll discover, is much more than simply a Microsoft principal design manager in Sydney, Australia. She’s a burgeoning filmmaker, with one short film and one feature film already on her resume. Here’s just a bit of Bujuanes’ story in her own words. To learn more, check out the Powered by the People podcast with Bujuanes.

Lessons learned from crisis

“My home was an unsafe environment on many levels. During an event when I was 7 or 8, one of my brothers took me away from the action, as it were, and led me into another room. He said something to the effect of ‘this doesn’t have to be your future. You can make choices for a different life.’ In that moment, he was essentially equipping me to believe that there would eventually be a way out. And it happened, just as he said it would. That’s been a lesson that’s stayed with me through many tough situations.”

Bootlegged cinemas

“When I was very young, if I wasn’t out playing sports with the boys, I would find a way to watch movies. I simply loved the escapism of the story. Then, in my early 20s, I started mixing with a crowd that spoke about film with what I now understand to be critical language—dissecting stories and analyzing roles other than actors, such as screenwriters, directors, choreographers, and gaffers. They also handed around bootleg copies of European and new-wave cinema (we’re talking pre-internet days) that were intellectually stimulating and quite appealing to me.”
Putting theory into practice

“When I got to university and began studying film, I realized there’s an ocean of difference between understanding the theory of something and understanding it in practice. So, I began volunteering on films and planning my own work that’s resulted in my first short film, Angel, and first feature film, Gratitude: Our Wonderland, which took me to Hungary.”

Invisible ideas

“I find a parallel between creating a film, story, or any work of art and the incremental and monumental innovations where technology is involved. Both start as invisible ideas that need to be externalized to get people bought in—to be dedicated to the project. And both also can require several iterations and a lot of people because of all the specializations involved.”

Correcting course

“I’ve wasted a lot of life by being paralyzed with procrastination—paralyzed by the belief I didn’t have the right to do things because I wasn’t an expert at them. There have been years where I’ve been dormant while dealing with, and needing to work through, other things. That didn’t feel good, so I started to course correct and learn that action is a good thing. If it doesn’t turn out as you intended, it’s a far better place to be than looking back and thinking I did nothing. Or worse, I had so much opportunity and still did nothing.”