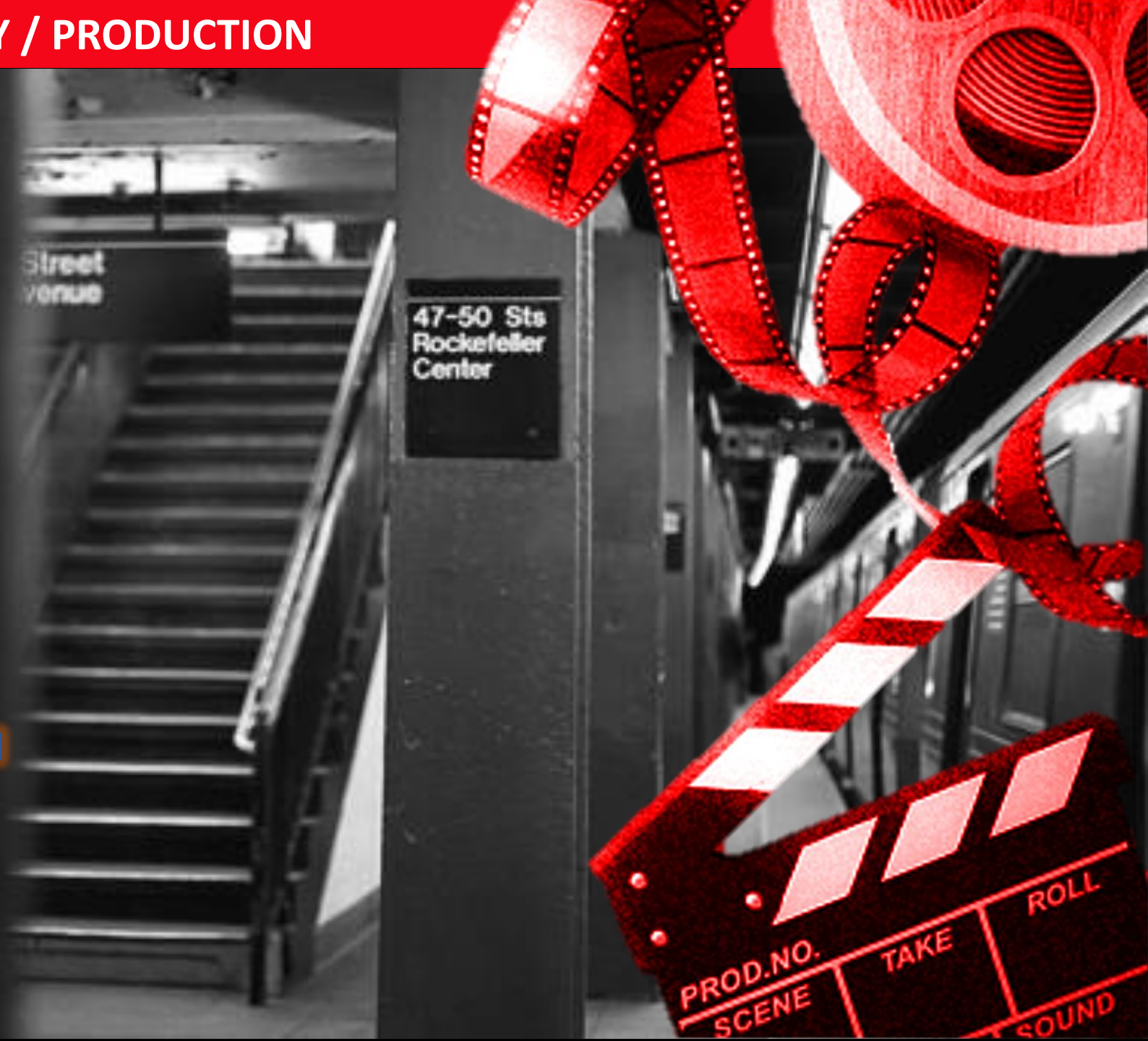


# B-ROLL

WITH JIM SOTO



Chances are you've probably heard the term "B-Roll" thrown around in this class before. Whether it be from documentary footage, or news coverage, or in regards to a film productions, the concept of having different types of footage like A-Roll and B-Roll is pretty common.



# What is A-Roll?



Simply put, **A-Roll** is all the main footage you shoot for a film production. The term is connected with the idea of having (at least) a two camera setup and having an A-Camera for your main footage. In a scripted world, your A-Roll footage is the main meat of what you're shooting. It's your primary actors, dialogue, and storyline.



**In the digital age of filmmaking, the term A-Roll has fallen out of practical use, but the meaning of B-Roll remains a term filmmakers should know.**



# What is B-Roll?



**B-Roll** footage, Broll or B roll is any supplemental video that considered to be secondary to your primary footage. B-Roll can be gathered with a separate unit, acquired from stock footage, or obtained from any source other than your principal photography. While not always the case, B-Roll is thought of to be lesser footage shot on a lesser camera and of lesser importance.

# Importance of B-Roll

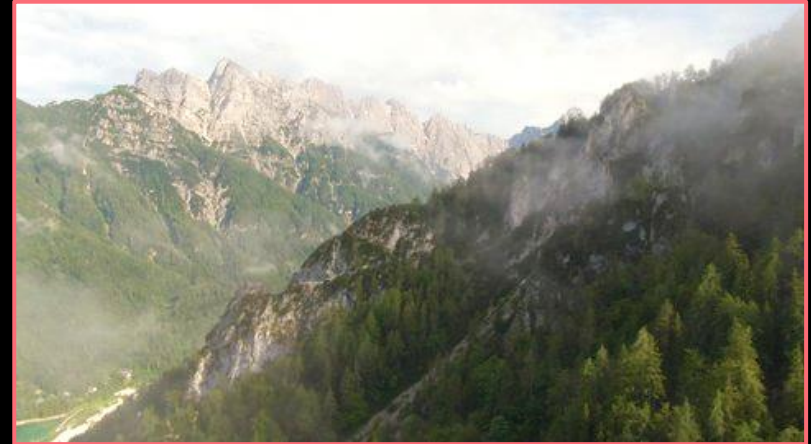
B-roll footage plays a huge role in the storytelling process. It's just as important as the main set-up shots in creating a captivating film, but often it's not given the consideration it deserves. It provides:

- **Visual Appeal:** Enhances the overall aesthetic and professionalism of the video.
- **Seamless Transitions:** Smoothly connects different scenes and helps continuity.
- **Contextualization:** Provides additional information and context to the main narrative.

# Types of B-Roll Shots

The different kinds of B-Roll footage that can be used include:

- **Establishing Shots:** An establishing shot helps to set the stage for the upcoming scene—setting, time, and place. Many times, it's done with a wide-angle shot, so the whole location can be seen by the viewer before honing in on the main event.





- **Cutaway:** These shots cut away from the main action in a scene, often highlighting details or providing a visual punchline. Using cutaway shots that are associated with a different time and place, (can be a flashback, but not always).





- **Reaction shots:** Refers to when an action takes place on screen, and then cuts to a separate shot that allows the viewer to see the reaction to this action from other players in the scene.

- **Insert Shots:** It is a shot of part of a scene as filmed from a different angle and/or focal length from the master shot. Inserts cover action already covered in the master shot, but emphasize a different aspect of that action due to the different framing. E.g., a character receives a text message. We see the character checking their phone. To reveal the contents of the message we cut to a close-up shot of the phone's screen where the text is visible.



# Planning B-Roll Shots

Think about the story you want to tell, then determine how B-roll footage can help support that narrative. It helps to list all the shots you'd like to capture, including A-roll and B-roll, then put them in order sequentially to create the structure of your video. You can do:

- **Script Analysis:** Identify areas where B-roll can enhance the narrative.
- **Storyboard:** Visualize the integration of B-roll into the overall flow.
- **Collaboration:** Work closely with the director and cinematographer to ensure coherence.

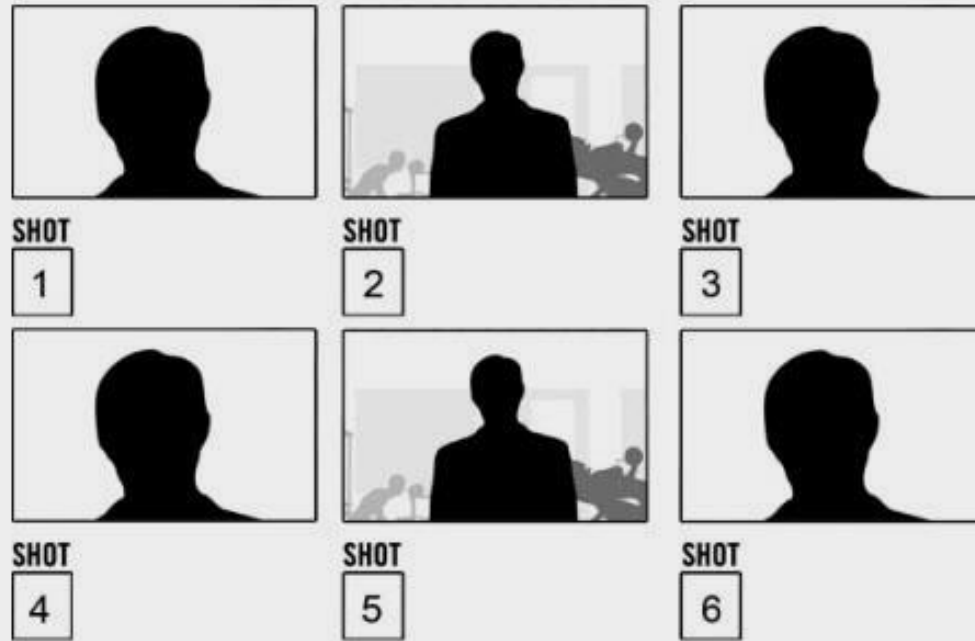
# Avoid



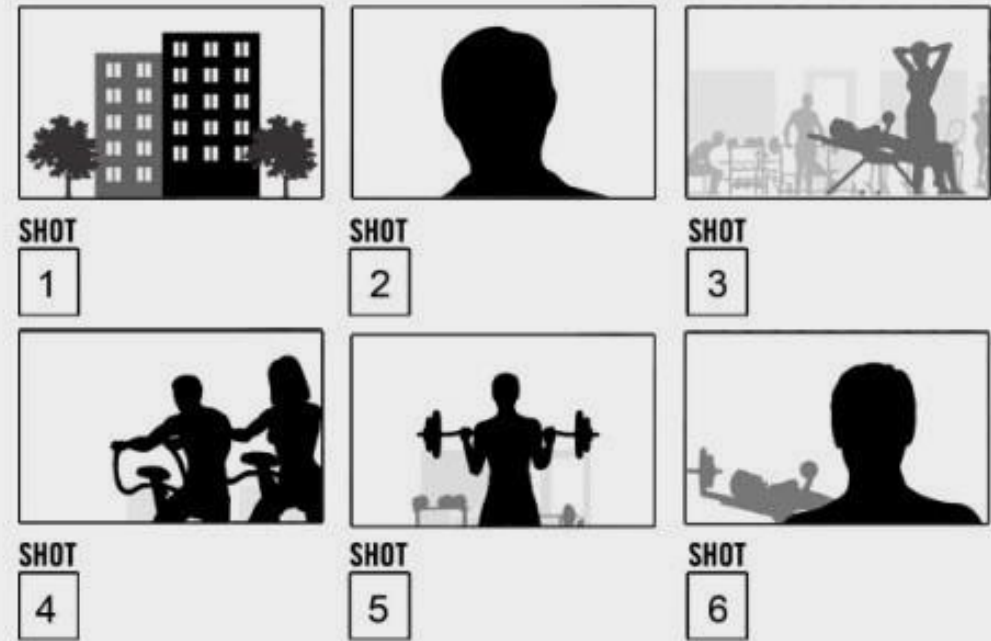
- **Overuse:** Avoid overwhelming the main story with excessive B-Roll.
- **Lack of Purpose:** Ensure each B-Roll shot serves a specific purpose.
  - **Poor Quality:** Maintain consistent quality standards for both main and secondary footage.



Example 1 – Video Shot Without B-Roll



Example 2 – Video Shot with B-Roll



Unlike primary footage or A-roll—which usually contains the main narrative, interviews, or key scenes—B-roll adds depth and context, and prevents monotony. It enriches the story and provides a visual break from the main video content.

# Reshoot

1. What is the difference between A-Roll and B-Roll?
2. What does B-Roll do to a film?
3. Briefly explain the different type of B-Roll.
4. How do you plan B-Roll shots?
5. What errors should be avoided when using B-Roll?



Next:

# ACTORS & EXTRAS

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