

WITH JIM SOTO

THE CREW- THE EDITOR



That's the thing about making a movie: You never finish editing. They just take it away from you.

- Abel Ferrara

THE EDITOR

Editors play a pivotal creative role in a film production. A film editor is a mechanic who removes the unneeded and fits pieces of film together to make a finished movie. He is an artist who captures a director's vision and tells a compelling story.



Lee Smith is best known for editing Christopher Nolan's films, including *The Dark Knight* (2008) and *Dunkirk* (2017), for which he won the Academy Award.



Film editing is a demanding job that requires creativity, attention to detail, and the ability to work under pressure. Editing is a fast growing field and in some cases, a great work-from-home job. The future of editing is poised to be dynamic, immersive, and high-tech. The integration of AI, VR, AR, and other new technologies will empower creators to craft engaging narratives that transcend traditional confines.

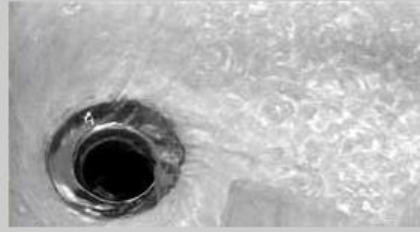
THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM!

French director Robert Bresson said it first many years ago; *"you do make **a film three times** and the first time you make it on the page and that means the same stress that you have when you are shooting and when you are cutting"* – cutting referring to the process of editing. Later, Legendary director Alfred Hitchcock paraphrased it with -*"A film is made three times: When you write it, when you shoot it and when you edit it."*

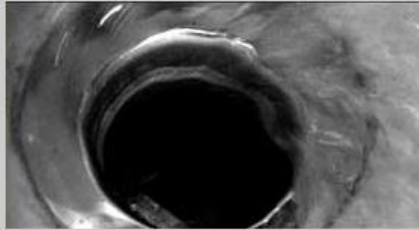




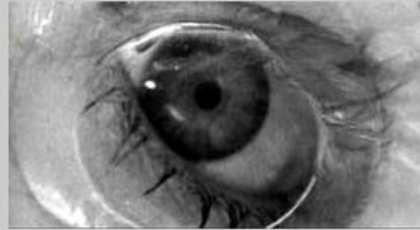
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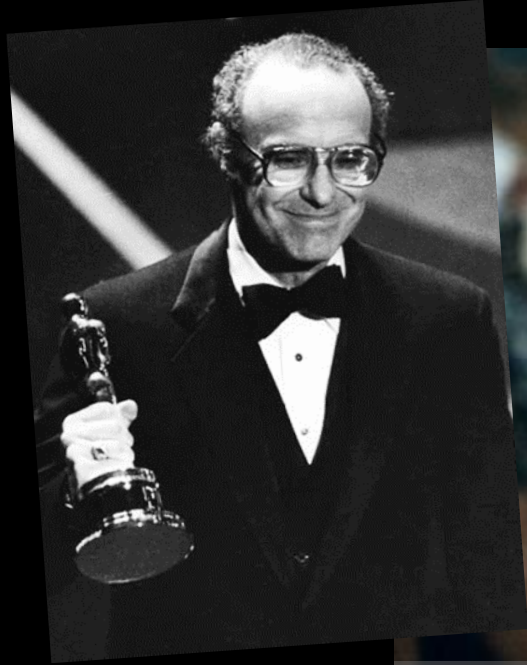


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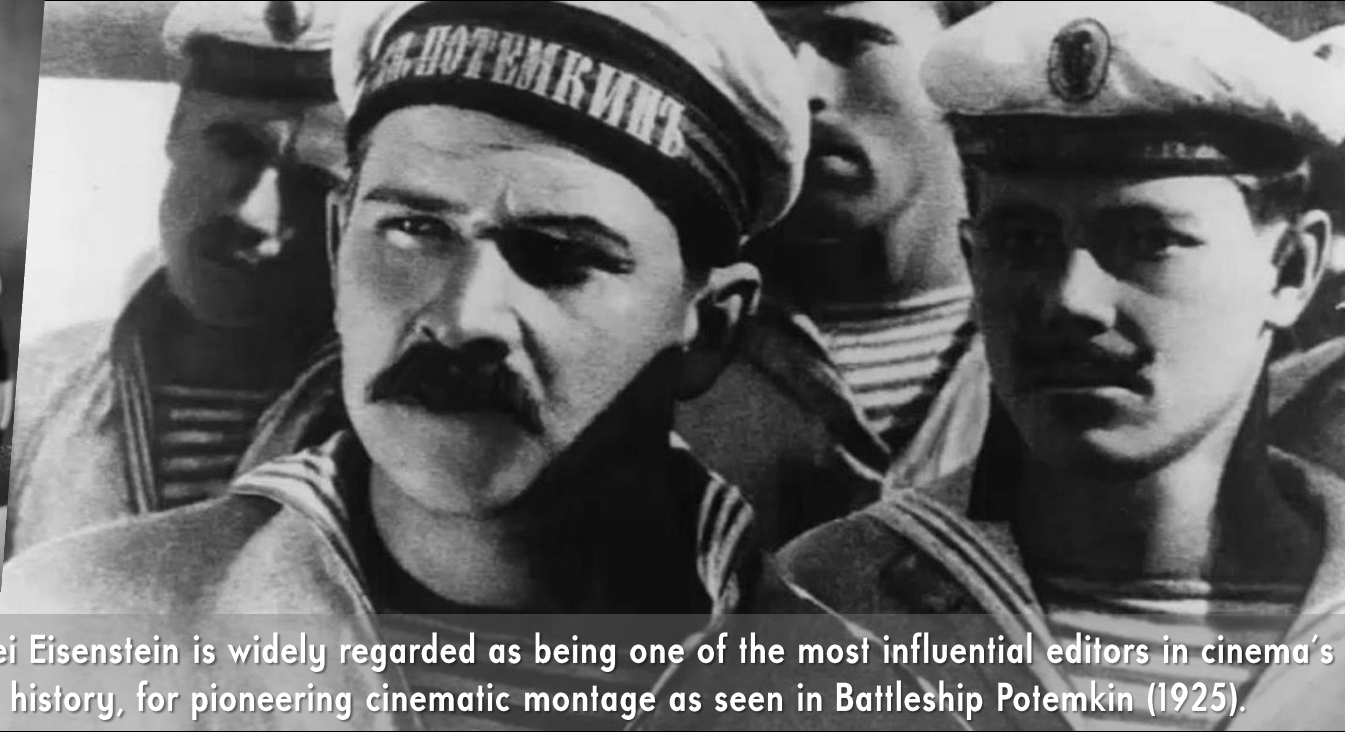
The way a story unfolds and grabs the attention of the audience is one of the most important elements in filmmaking.

To ensure that the story flows effortlessly from beginning to end, each shot is carefully chosen and edited into a series of scenes, which are in turn assembled to create the finished film.



Multiple Academy Award winner Michael Kahn, who's edited the vast majority of Spielberg movies since 1977, worked his magic in *The Color Purple* (1985).

Editors work long hours, under pressure. They are employed on a freelance basis usually by the Producer, based on their reputation and experience. Editors work closely with the Director before shooting begins.



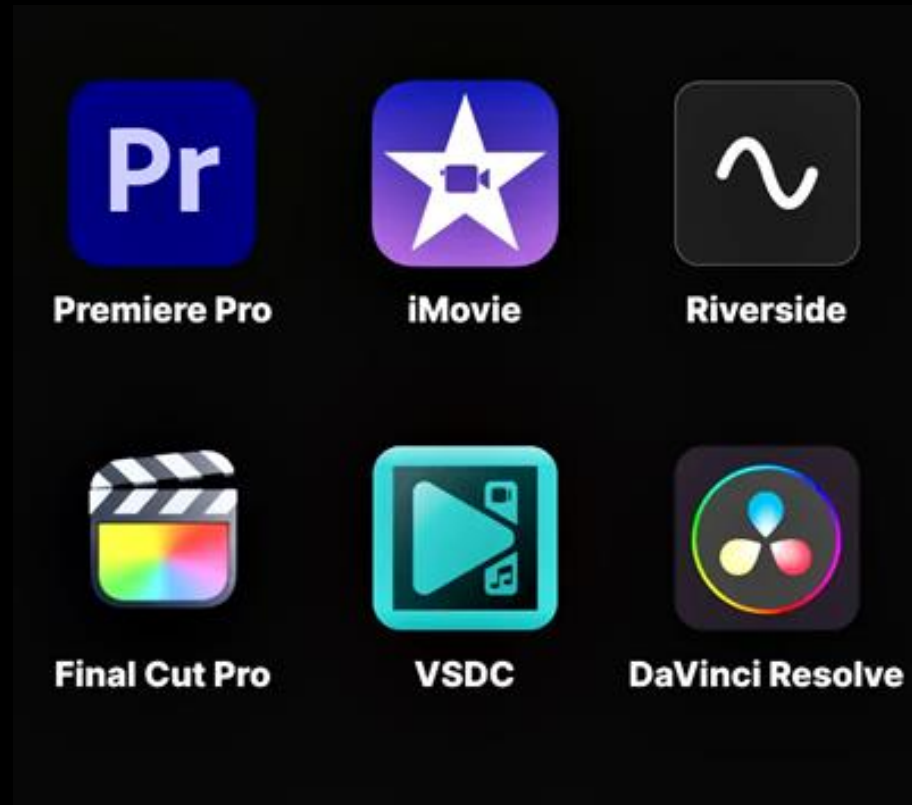
Sergei Eisenstein is widely regarded as being one of the most influential editors in cinema's history, for pioneering cinematic montage as seen in Battleship Potemkin (1925).

On the first day of principal photography, Editors begin work by looking at the previous day's rushes which are developed overnight at the Film Lab and synced-up (synchronized, the alignment of sound and image) by the Assistant Editor.

TWO TYPES OF EDITING

In the past, film editing was done in a linear fashion, where the film was literally cut into long strips divided by scene and take, and then glued or taped back together to create a film in logical sequence. This was time-consuming, tedious and highly specialized work. While linear editing is still relevant today, there is a newer and more user-friendly system available for editors: nonlinear editing.





Linear editing is a process of selecting, arranging and modifying images and sound in a pre-determined, ordered sequence – from start to finish.

Nonlinear editing (NLE) allows instant access to whatever clip you want, whenever you want it. Instead of going in a set order, you are able to work on any segment of the project at any time, in any order you want. In nonlinear editing, the original source files are not lost or modified during editing.

FROM ASSEMBLY TO PICTURE LOCK

There are three stages of the editing process that every filmmaker should know about: the **rough cut**, **fine cut**, and **final cut**. Each step has its specific purpose, requiring unique skills to complete. It would be good to look at the pre-edit stage known as the **assembly** to better understand the process.



1. ASSEMBLY

The assembly is preparation for the editing process. The raw footage gets organized into a coherent sequence. It includes arranging shots in a logical order, syncing audio and video, to create a rough cut of the film.

This is a critical step because it sets the foundation for the rest of the project, allowing the editor to see the available footage before shaping it into a cohesive story.



2. ROUGH CUT



The **rough cut** is a basic edit of the footage that provides an idea of the overall structure of the film. The editor builds a rough sequence with the footage, deciding what clips and where to place them. It's not about perfection at this stage, but about creating a structure and rough story flow.

3. FINE CUT



Fine cut is when editors begin fine-tuning the rough cut by selecting the best takes and refining the pacing, rhythm, and tone of the story. At this stage the film starts to take shape.

To have a successful fine cut, the editor must have a clear vision of the final film, a good sense of the of sound design and music.

4. PICTURE LOCK



Picture lock refers to the film's final cut approval. Here no further changes can be made to the visual content. This means that the editor and director have agreed on the film's final cut, and it's ready for post-production processes such as sound design, color correction, and vfx.

5. FINAL CUT



Thelma Schoonmaker has edited almost every single Martin Scorsese film since Raging Bull (1980), including Killers of the Flower Moon (2023).

The **final cut** is the finished product; the film is ready to be distributed, and shown to audiences. At this point, there is no turning back, no further revisions to the edit, and the film is out there forever!

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT?

When we say there are no further revisions to the edit doesn't include a director's cut! This is a version of a film that is re-edited or recut by the director with their own creative input, often released after the original theatrical release. It allows the director to have full creative control and to present their intended vision of their film to audiences.





THEATRICAL CUT (1982)



FINAL CUT (2007)

A better-known director's cut is Blade Runner: The Final Cut (2007), directed by Ridley Scott. The original release of Blade Runner in 1982 was heavily edited by the studio, resulting in a confusing narrative and a lack of character development. The Final Cut was released 25 years later, and Scott finally released his original vision for the film. It features new and restored scenes, improved visual effects, and a new color timing that better reflects his vision.

When director Peter Jackson released his cut of The Lord of the Rings trilogy, he added 128 minutes of extra footage, which took the total three-film runtime to 11 hours and 26 minutes! Additionally, Ridley Scott added an additional 90 minutes to his cut of Kingdom Of Heaven (2005).



WHO IS ALAN SMITHEE?

**Directed by
ALAN SMITHEE**

Often after a director has had his chance to oversee a cut, the subsequent cuts are supervised by one or more producers, who represent the movie studio. There have been several conflicts in the past between the director and the studio, sometimes leading to the use of the "Alan Smithee" credit signifying when a director no longer wants to be associated with the final release.

RESHOOT

1. Why is the job of the film editor so important?
2. What needs to be done to ensure that the film's story flows effortlessly from beginning to end?
3. What does it mean to "sync-up" a movie?
4. What is a "daily" and what is its purpose?
5. Name and describe the "cuts" of a film.
6. What is a "Director's Cut"?
7. What does the "Alan Smithee" credit signify?



Next:

EDITING

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