

EDITING A MOVIE

WITH JIM SOTO

For a cinematographer, every frame has to be important.

- Karthik Subbaraj

IT'S NOT A MOVIE...

So you finally have all the coverage that you need. After days without end developing the script, getting assets for principal photography, composing shots and coaching your actors into good performances and a million other things, you finally got your movie, right? Wrong.



... YET!



Once a film is shot, all you have is a disparate mess of footage that we call **coverage**. Coverage, refers to the amount of footage shot and different camera angles used to capture a scene. Having more coverage means that there is more footage for you to work with in assembling the final cut. Notice that coverage doesn't equal having a movie.

WHAT IS EDITING FILM?

Coverage becomes a movie after it has been edited. At its most fundamental level, **film editing is the art, technique, and practice of assembling shots into a coherent sequence.** The process can involve correction, condensation, organization, and any other modification performed with an intention of producing a correct, consistent, accurate and complete work.





The job of an **editor** isn't simply to mechanically put pieces of a **film** together, cut off **film** slates, or **edit** dialogue scenes.

The editor must creatively work with the layers of images, story, dialogue, music, pacing, as well as the actors' performances to effectively "re-imagine" and even rewrite the film to craft a cohesive whole. Editing is a dynamic part in the making of a film.



GREAT EDITING SOFTWARE



There is a wide variety of software to edit footage into the movie of your dreams. However, many of them are not only expensive, but require PCs with above average GPUs (graphic engines/cards).

These apps have to deal with gigabytes of data. High quality footage can be in the GB per hour of footage range.



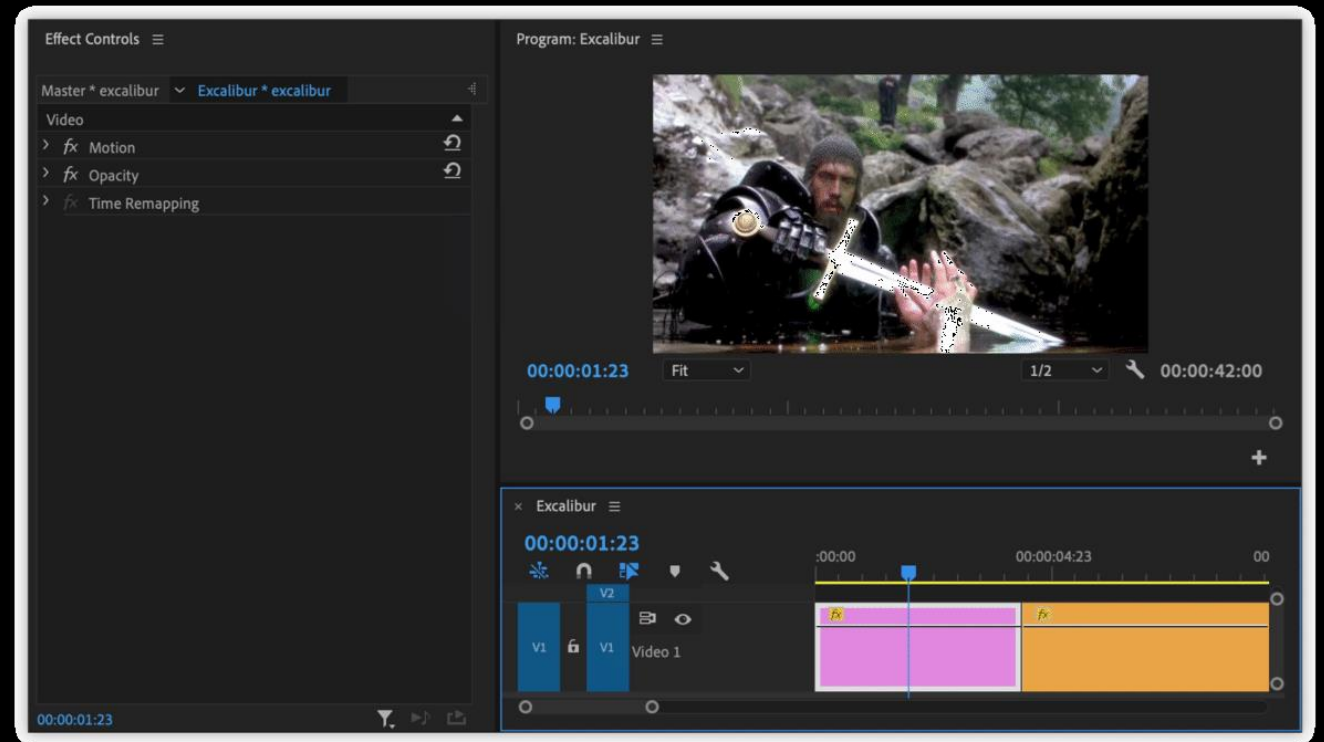
Editing takes time! Editing a 60 minute video down to 5 minutes takes a surprisingly long time. It is inherently time consuming because you need to watch a good bit of the footage, sometimes over and over again. This makes it challenging to create a good UI that makes editing fun.



If you are serious about making a great looking project, you should stay away from novice programs such as: iMovie, Capcut, or Filmora.

Editing software programs you should consider for Windows or MacOS include: Adobe Premiere, Final Cut Pro, DaVinci Resolve, Sony Vegas Pro, Capcut and Hitfilm.

All of these have a learning curve, in other words, they require an investment of time to learn, but they will yield great results once you learn them.





Free editing programs you should consider for Android devices include: FilmoraGo, Adobe Premiere Rush, VideoShow, PowerDirector and iMovie.

Like the previous list, these have a learning curve, in other words, they require an investment of time to learn, but they will get the job done, once you learn them.

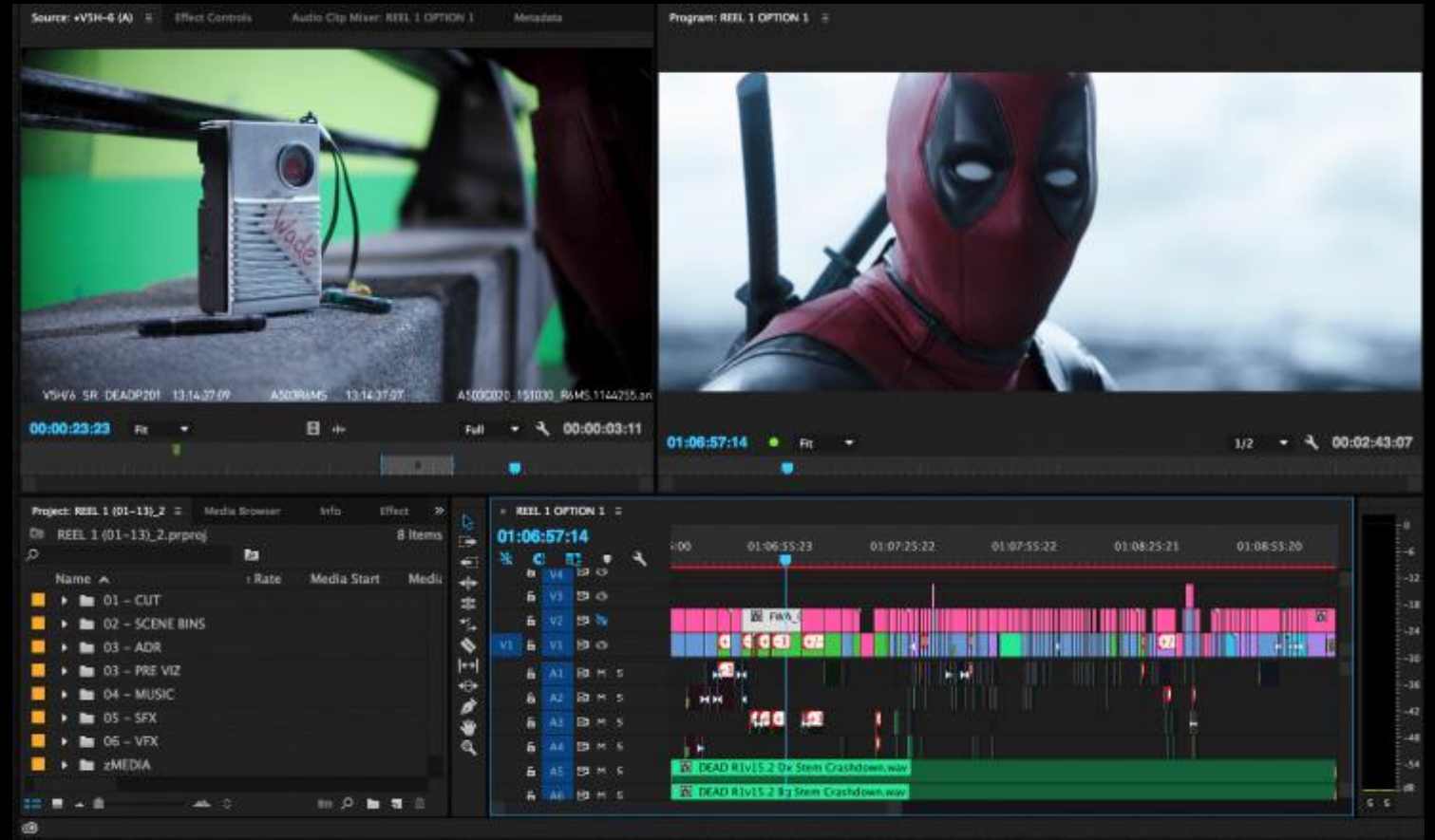
CUTS & TRANSITIONS

Film cuts among the most important elements in filmmaking. Cuts are used to bring us from one image to the next. Unlike dissolves, cuts are instantaneous transitions; they don't occur gradually but directly from one shot to the next, or one scene to the next.

Transition refers to how one shot replaces another. Different types of transition have been employed since the beginning of cinema. Some are outdated, but others are still used today. Each type invokes a different emotion. Understanding those emotions is essential to master editing.

Let's see some common cuts and their meaning in film language:
Types of cuts used in films include:

- Basic Cut
- J Cut & L Cut
- Cut-In
- Jump Cut
- Match Cut

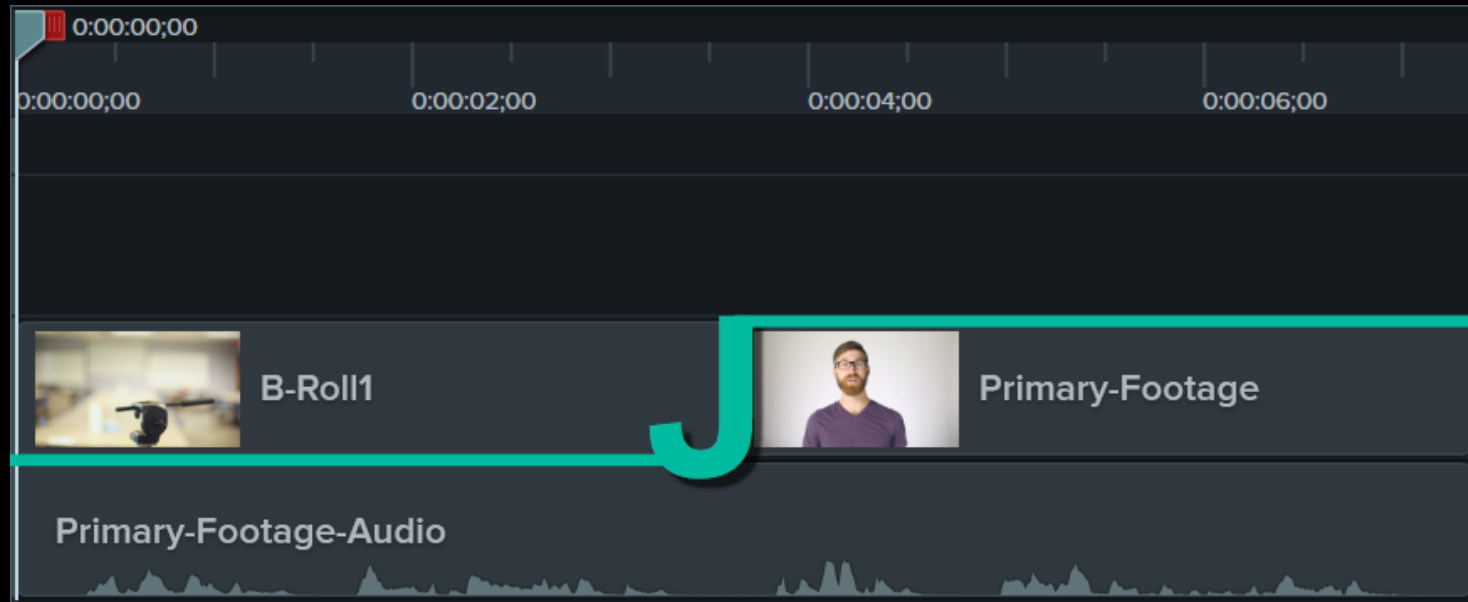


BASIC CUT



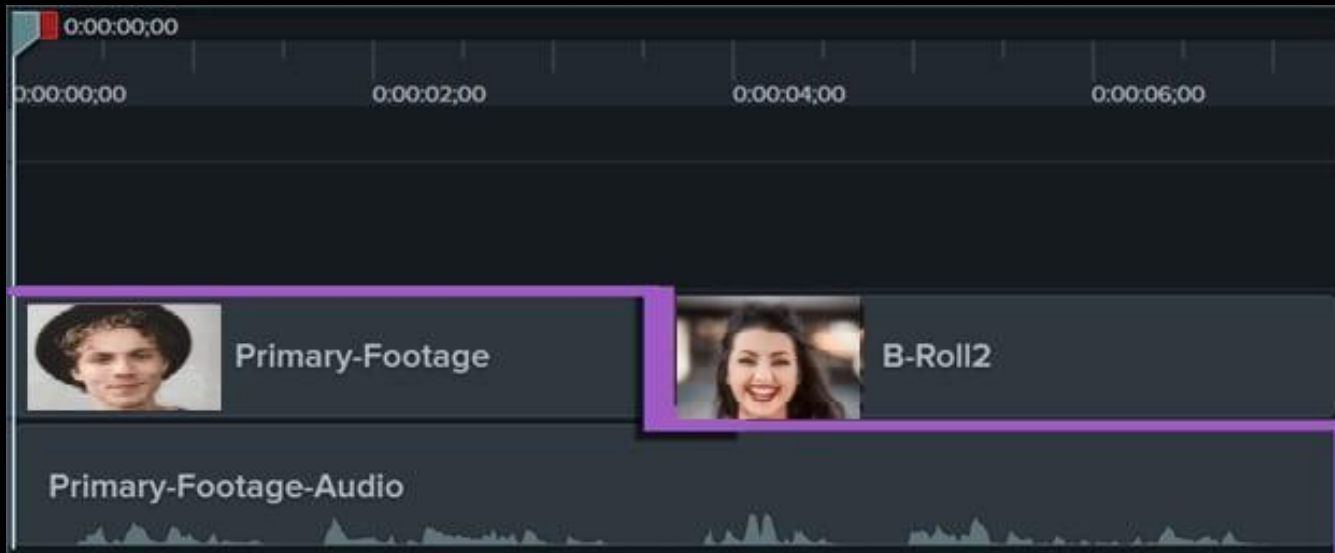
The basic cut — sometimes referred to as a hard cut, straight cut in film, or simply “cut” — is when we transition between two shots (audio and video) with no crazy emphasis. the basic cut is the foundation for nearly every edited scene.

J CUT & L CUT



J Cuts and L Cuts are audio/video transitions that are defined by trailing audio or video. A J cut is when the sound of a shot or scene plays before the next shot. In other words, it's when the video trails the audio.

L cuts are when the sound of a shot or scene transitions over to the next shot even though it no longer matches the video. Oftentimes, it's when the audio trails the video. Switching from one scene to the next can be somewhat disruptive to the audience. To combat this, overlapping either the video or the audio helps bridge the gap.



CUT-IN



Cut-ins, AKA insert shots, happen when we cut from a shot into a closer element of that same shot. For example: say we have a wide shot of a character holding a book. If we want to emphasize what the character is reading, we may cut-in to a shot of the book.

JUMP CUT



Jump cuts are “attention seeking” edits. They’re defined by quick, jarring transitions from shot to shot. This jump cut from 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) is one the most famous in film history.

MATCH CUT



Match-cuts are cuts that take visual, narrative, or symbolic compositions and transition them to a different frame. They're great for generating seamless flow. It may seem like an oxymoron to say that a cut that calls attention to itself can create something seamless; but it can.

Other non-cut transitions used in films include:

- Fade (in/out/to a color)
- Dissolve/Cross-fade
- Wipe
- Iris
- Others...



FADE (IN/OUT/TO A COLOR)



Fade ins and fade outs are the second most common transition. In fade outs the image is gradually replaced by black screen or any other color.

Usually, fade outs are used to conclude movies. Fade ins are the opposite: a solid color gradually gives way to image, usually at the beginning. Fades imply the end of a major story segment. Also, fades give viewers time to catch their breath after an intense sequence.

DISSOLVE/CROSS-FADE



Also known as overlapping, dissolves happen when one shot gradually replaces by the next. One disappears as the following appears. For a few seconds, they overlap, and both are visible. Commonly used to signify the passage of time.

WIPE



Wipes are dynamic. They happen when one shot pushes the other off frame. They are very old fashion. George Lucas deliberately used them throughout the Star Wars series because he was paying homage to the old cinema serials of his youth.

IRIS



An old-fashioned transition hardly employed nowadays is the iris, when a circular masking closes the picture to a black screen. Irises are found in some cartoons like this example from Betty Boop.

OTHERS...



Making transitions work isn't just the role of the editors, but also of the cinematographers who are leading the composition and style of shots.

You can find out [here](#) about newer transitions that help filmmakers express their creative visions and continue pushing forward the craft.

RESHOOT

1. Name and describe the “cuts” of a film.
2. Name and describe the various film transitions.
3. Using any NLE you want, edit a 20 - 30 second project of your choice and show it to your teacher the day after tomorrow. If you do it in a PC, bring your work in a flash drive. The project can be an ad, a skit, a music video, a short message, an intro, or any other thing that would think up. You can even use your smart phone or tablet.



Next:

SFX & VFX

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