

WEEK 1: TELLING A STORY AND INTRODUCTION TO POST PRODUCTION

DIGITAL MEDIA E-5

EXPLORING DIGITAL MEDIA

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WHAT IS THIS CLASS ABOUT?

This is a **practical, introductory** course that gives a fast-paced overview of a broad range of topics related to contemporary media.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

- Digital media allows a multitude of ways to express ideas.
- The decisions we make will either support or detract from those ideas.
- Choices can range from visual and compositional choices to logistical and workflow choices.
- Our intentions and our required deliverables will define the options available to us.

"THERE IS NO FREE LUNCH!"

- We should be proactive decision makers who manage visual and narrative choices to support our goals.
- Every decision is a trade off.
- Choices either support or detract from our intentions.
- You must understand and serve our narratives with our choices.

TRADE OFFS

Speed

Cost

Quality

TRADE OFFS



Speed

Cost

Quality

TRADE OFFS



Speed

Cost

Quality

TRADE OFFS



Speed

A diagram illustrating trade-offs between three factors: Speed, Cost, and Quality. The factors are arranged in a triangle. Speed is at the top, enclosed in an orange circle. Cost is at the bottom left, enclosed in a green circle. Quality is at the bottom right, enclosed in a green circle. All text is in a yellow, monospace-style font.

Cost

Quality

TRADE OFFS

- The trade offs also manifest themselves visually or aurally.
- Technical choices in acquisition, processing and delivery affects how an image or sound is reproduced.
- We will discuss these artifacts in greater detail when we cover the related topics.





INTENTION AND STORYTELLING

CAVEATS

- For the following discussion we will be focusing on narrative cinema to discuss the elements of storytelling.
- However these concepts apply equally to other modes and genres of media production.

STORY VS PLOT

- Story is the unfolding of events.
- Plot is the unfolding of events with an understanding of why it is happening.
- E. M. Forrester
 - Story: "The King died and then the Queen died."
 - Plot: "The King died and then the Queen died of grief."

PLOT

- Plot is the motivated actions of characters in a believable world.
- This doesn't preclude fantastical elements but rather that we believe the relationships and ramifications of decisions within that world.
- The willful suspension of disbelief.

CHARACTERS

- What does the character need? What are they trying to achieve?
- How does the character change throughout the story?
- What is preventing the character from achieving their goals?
- What must a character give up to overcome an obstacle?
- How does the character resolve their attempt to achieve their goals?

GOALS VS STAKES

- Your character's goals are defined as actions that they can make.
- Stakes are the why behind the goals.
 - They are central to the motivation of the character. While the action for different characters may be similar the motivation is different for each.

STAKES

- Stakes should be known early. They help the audience frame the narrative and drive the building of tension.
- Large stakes are often less effective than smaller more personal stakes.
- The end of the world vs rebuilding a relationship.
 - Personal and identifiable stakes allow the audience to empathize with the character.

BUILDING EMPATHY

- Relatable moments and situations
 - Vulnerability
 - Injustice
 - Fear
 - Loss
 - Lost and adrift
- What are some other ways in which we can build empathy?

CONFLICTS

- These are the characters and elements that are standing in the way of the character achieving their goals.
- These can often be embodied by another character, or a situation.
- Overcoming a conflict must result in some fundamental change in your character.
 - This can be a negative or positive change.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- Power differentials
- Who is in control?
 - How do they exercise control?
 - When does it shift?
- Who are we with?
 - Where is the visual focus?
 - What does the proximity of the characters suggest?

FOREGROUND CHARACTER



15mm

SIMILARITY



50mm

BACKGROUND CHARACTER



BUILDING TENSION

- In order for the audience to feel tension there must be some uncertainty.
- A character with conflicting desires.
- Uncertainty about the character overcoming a goal successfully.
- Uncertainty about who to trust in a relationship.
- Uncertainty about their relationship to the stakes at large.

RESOLUTIONS

- How does the character change?
- Did they achieve their goal?
 - If so is it what they imagined?
- Are they better off or worse off?

THREE COLORS: BLUE (1993)

- Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski
- Cinematography by Slawomir Idziak
- Editing by Jacques Idziak
- This is the first in a trilogy of films Blue, White and Red. Named for the colors of the French Flag.

COLOR TEMPERATURE



MYSTERY





ANONYMITY



DRAMATIC IRONY



Get back in.

MISSED CHANCES



CONTRAST



LOSS OF INNOCENCE



EDITING

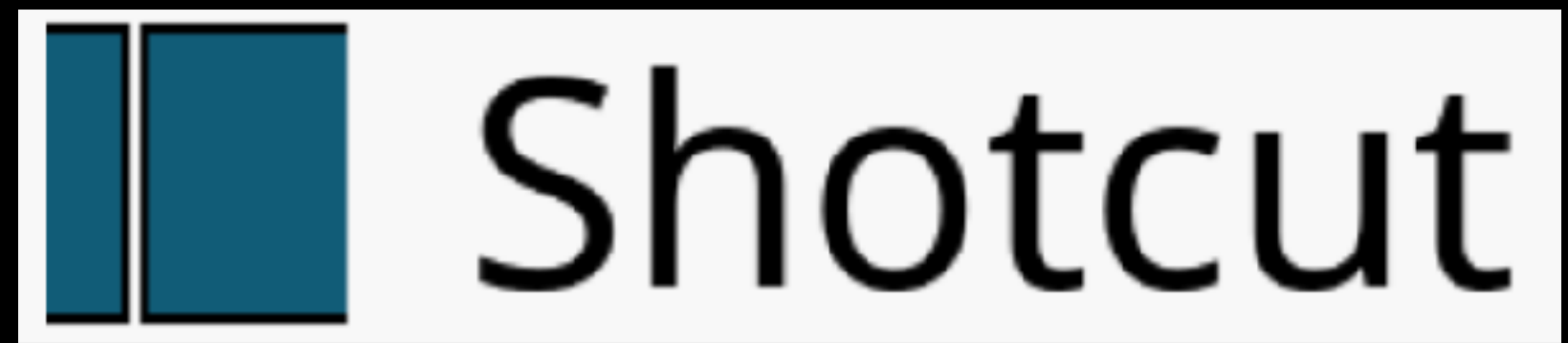
WHAT IS EDITING

- filmmaking is telling a story, taking it from conflict to resolution
- editing is deciding *how* to tell it
- as an editor it's your job to build the tension and resolve it
- your job is to get a specific reaction from your audience

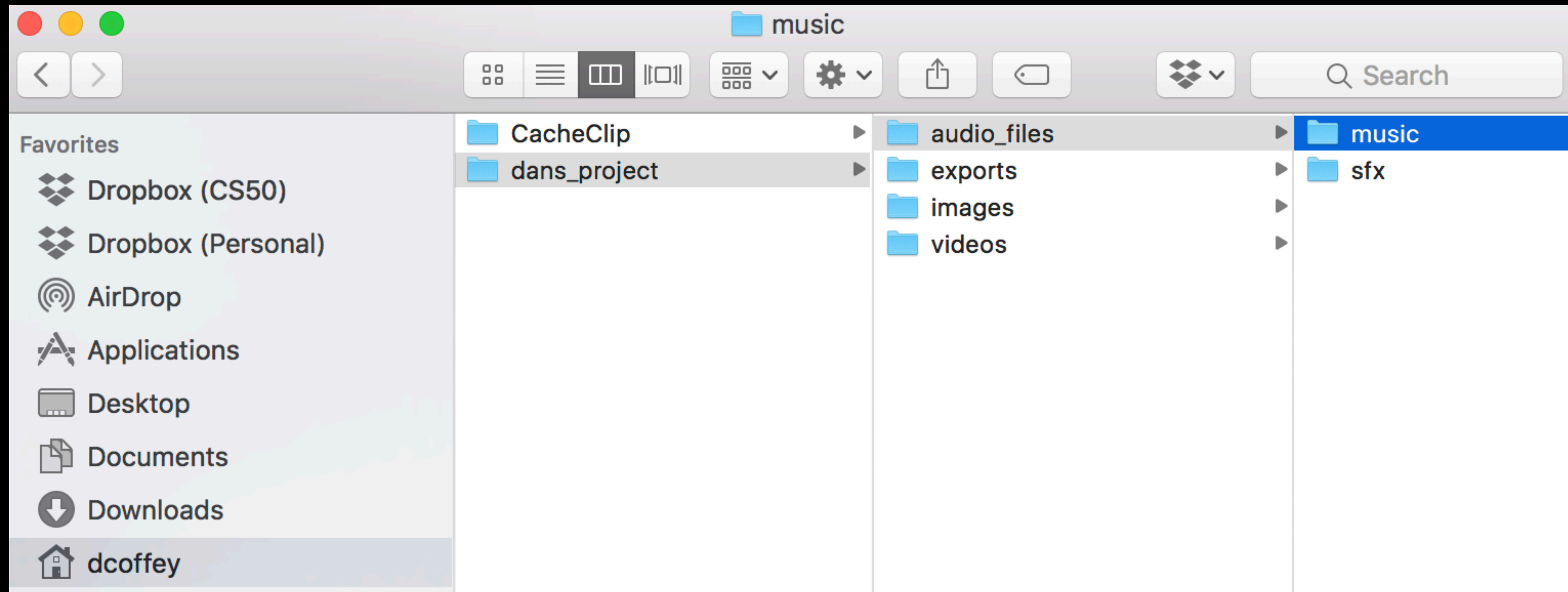
HOW DO WE EDIT?



NLE (NON-LINEAR-EDITOR)



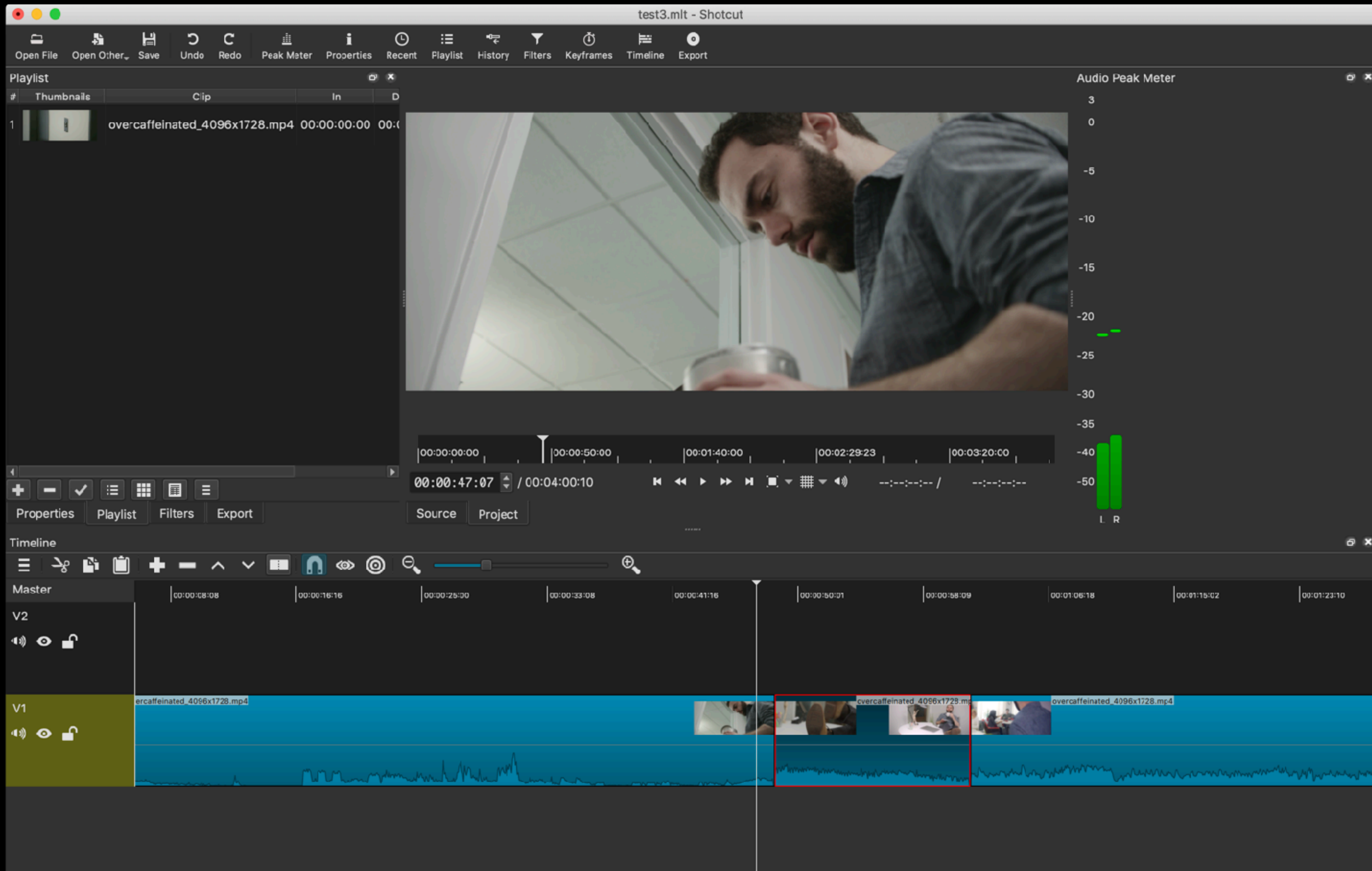
STAYING ORGANIZED



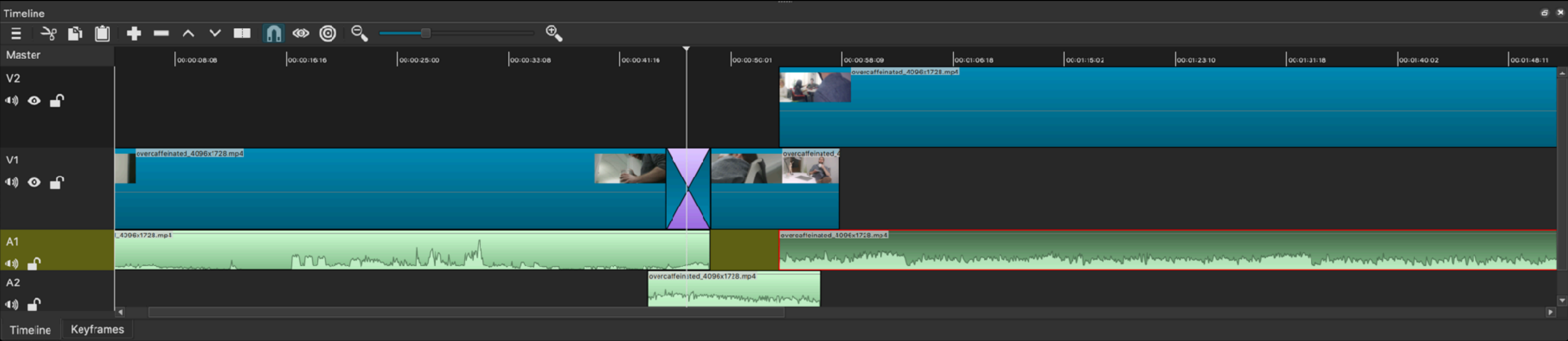
ORGANIZATION STARTS ON SET



NLE (NON-LINEAR-EDITOR)



SEQUENCE / TIMELINE

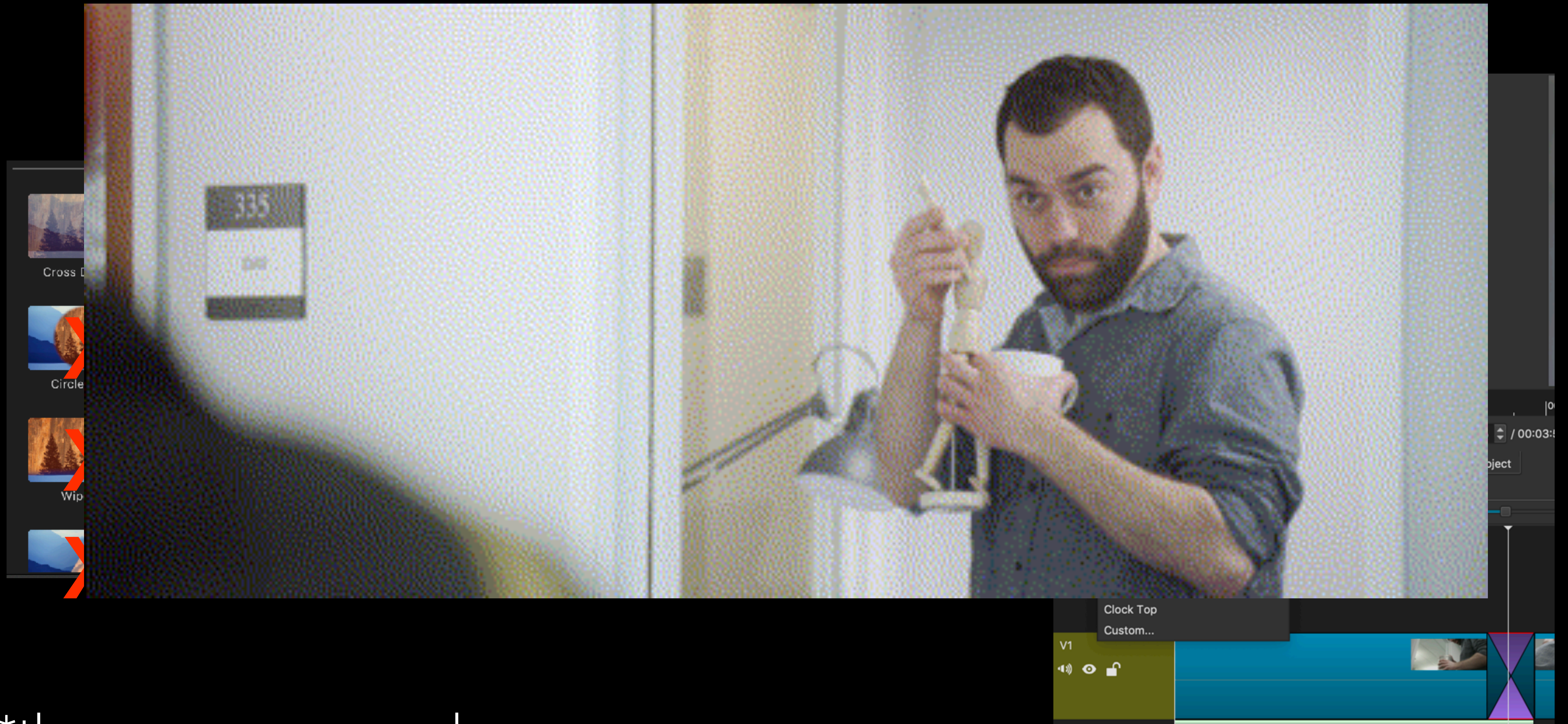


EDITING

- The sequence is our canvas
- The clips are our paint
- Transitions are our brushes

TRANSITIONS

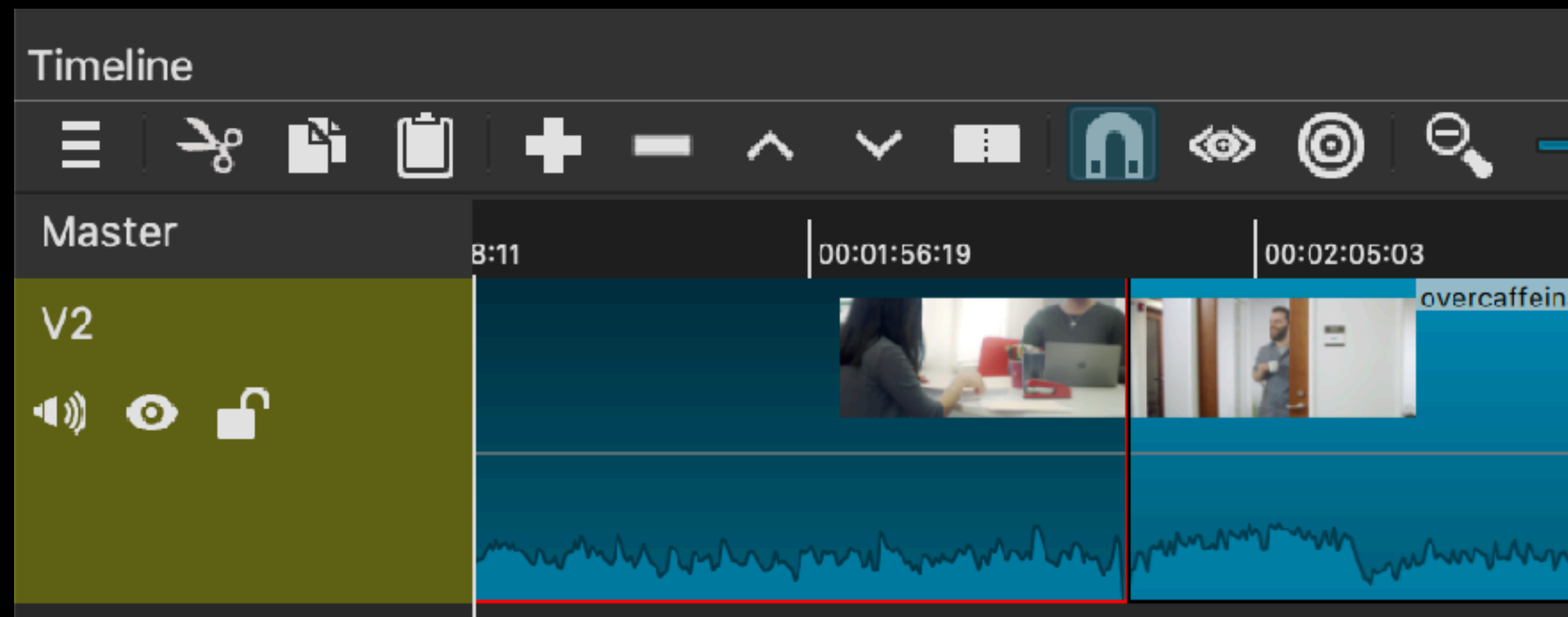
TRANSITIONS



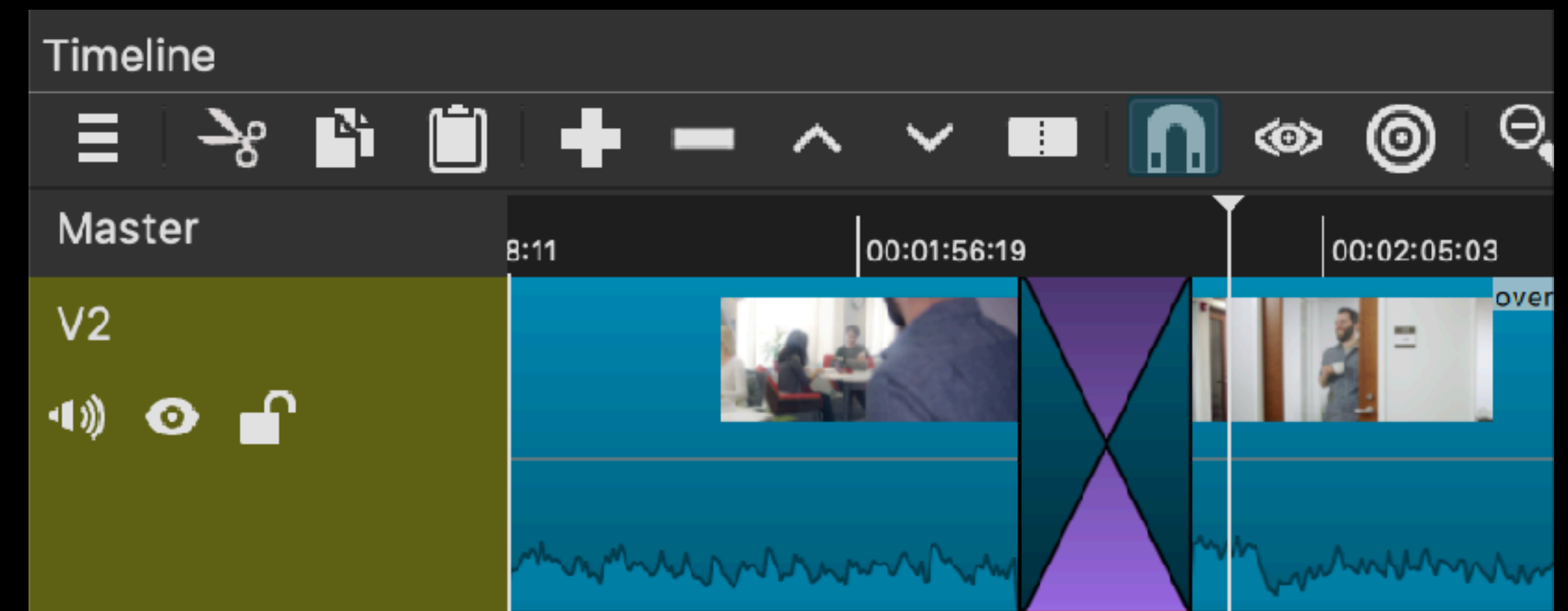
*these are my own rules

CUTS AND DISSOLVES

- bread and butter of editing



CUT



DISSOLVE

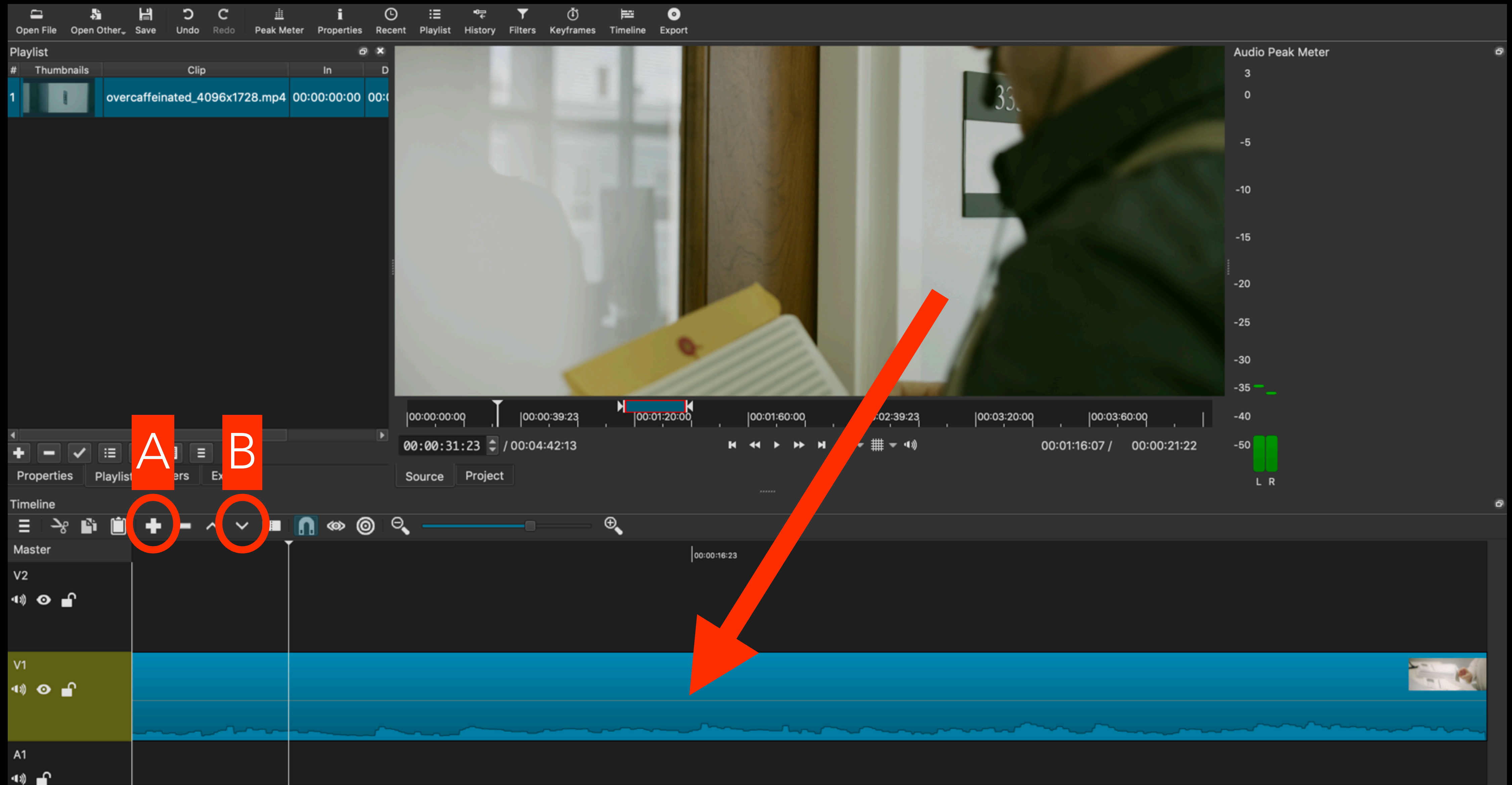
THREE POINT EDITING

- choosing a starting point of a clip (in point)
- choosing an ending point in a clip (out point)
- deciding where to insert in timeline

IN/OUT POINTS



INSERT ('A' OR 'B' KEY)



HOW DO WE ORGANIZE OUR
STORY VISUALLY?

WHY CUT?

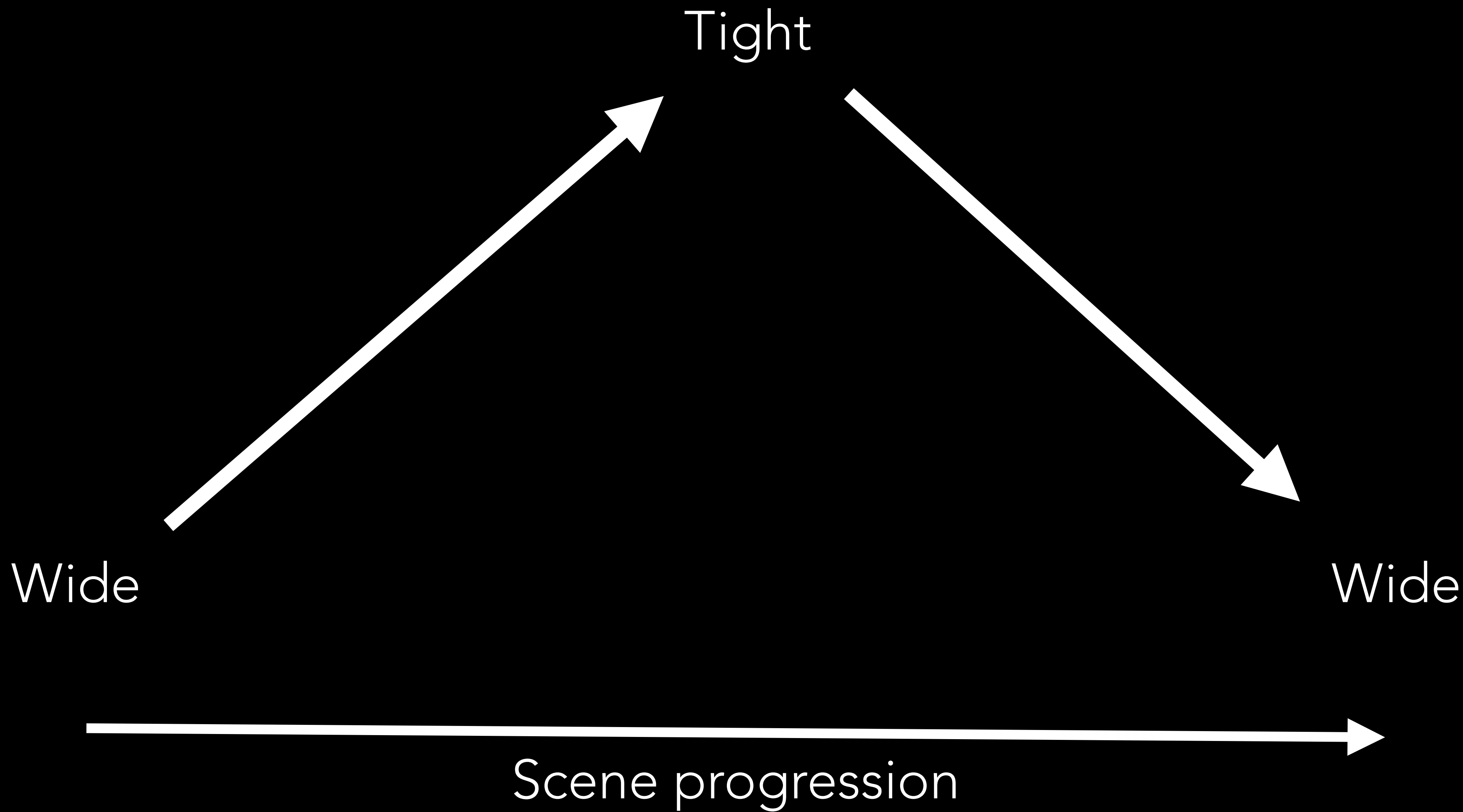
WHY CUT?

- There is some information that is not in the scene that you want to see
- There is some information not in the scene that you want to see
- There is nothing else to gain from the current shot
- Every time you make an edit you're saying something, so choose wisely!

SHOT PROGRESSION



SHOT PROGRESSION



HITCHCOCK RULE



HITCHCOCK RULE



HITCHCOCK RULE



SHOT PROGRESSION



SHOT PROGRESSION



SHOT PROGRESSION



THE KULESHOV EFFECT

Viewers derive more meaning from the interaction of two sequential shots than from a single shot in isolation.

THE KULESHOV EFFECT



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNVf1N34-io>

HOW DO WE MAKE OUR EDITS
MORE NATURAL?

DISSOLVE

SMASH CUT

- from quiet to intense
- vice versa
- unexpected

SMASH CUT

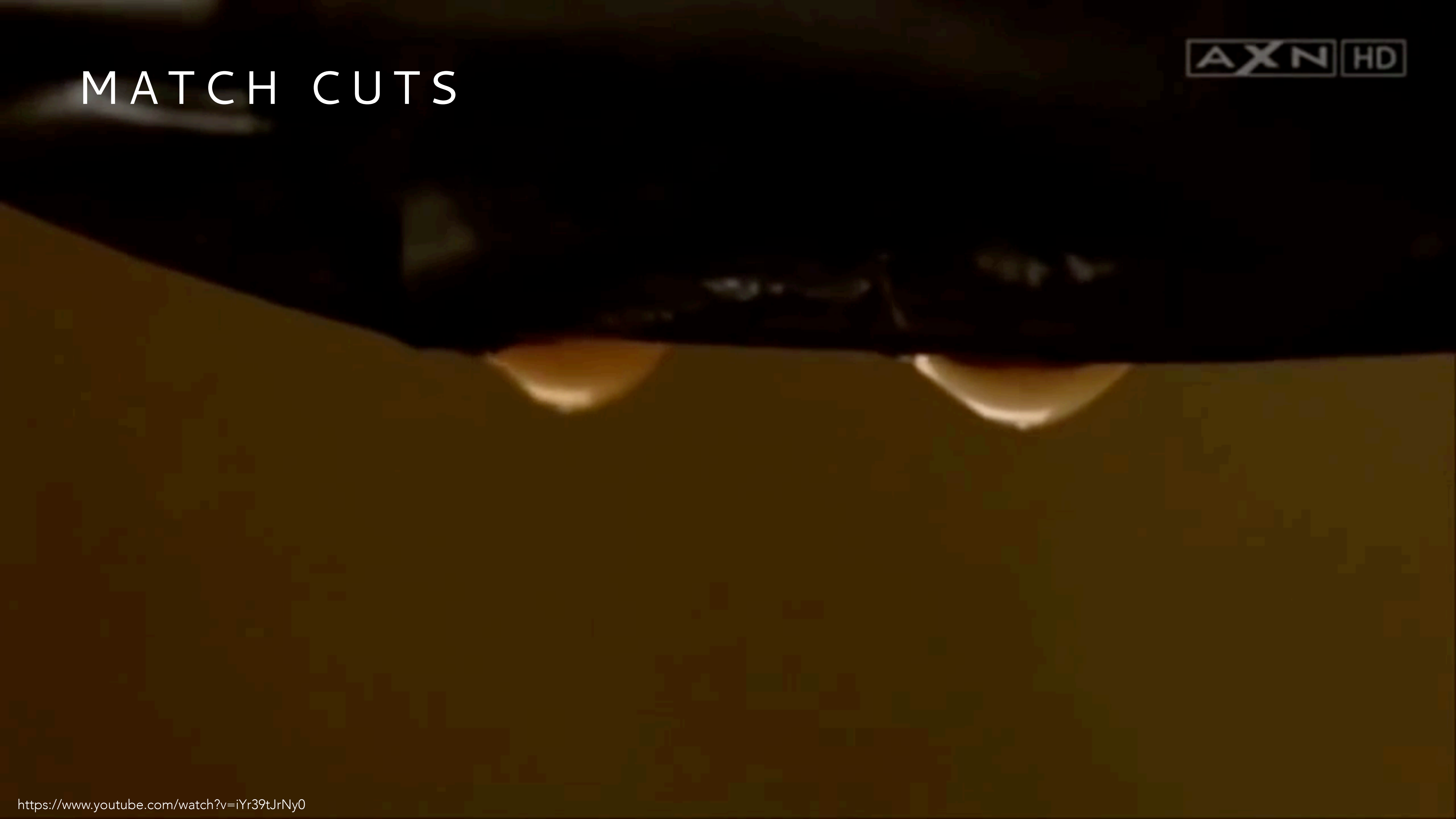


MATCH CUTS

- cut between 2 frames that are framed the same way
- match action or composition
- good scene transitions

MATCH CUTS

AXN HD



MATCH AUDIO

FRAMELINES

CUT ON ACTION (MATCH ACTION)

- The most effective way to make edits match
- Hides slight discrepancies in performances

HIDING CUTS

- invisible cuts (transition in black or color)
- hidden in whip pans

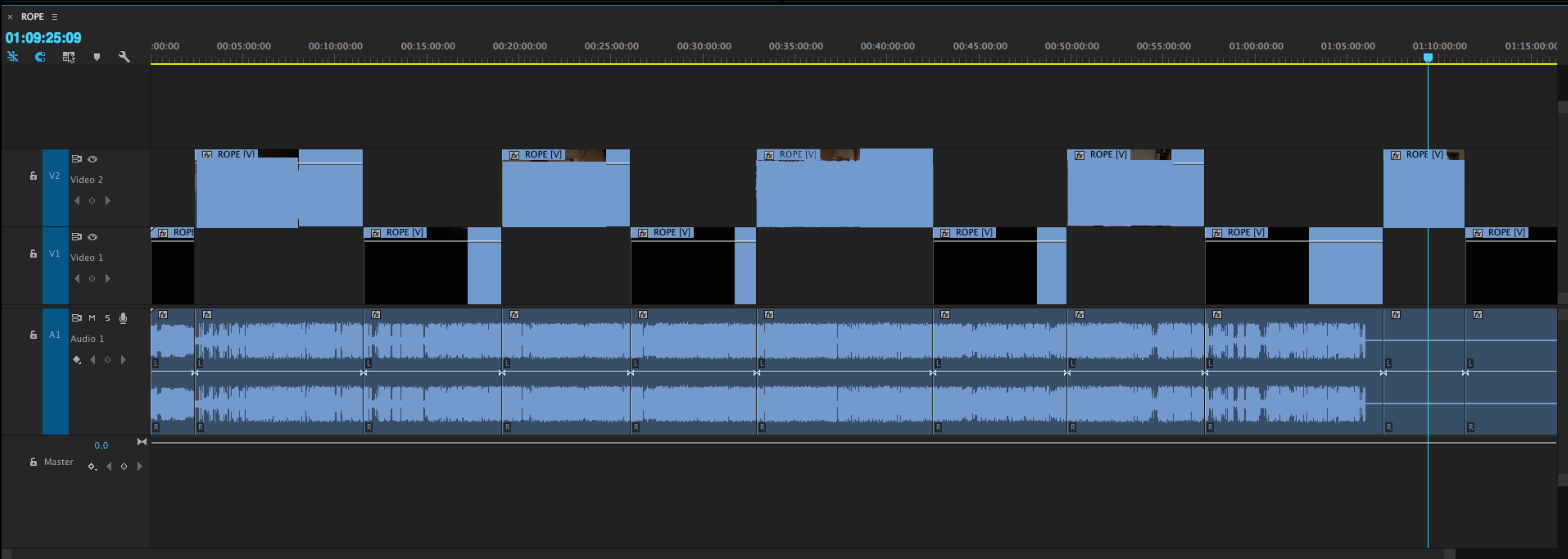
WHIP PAN



HIDDEN CUTS



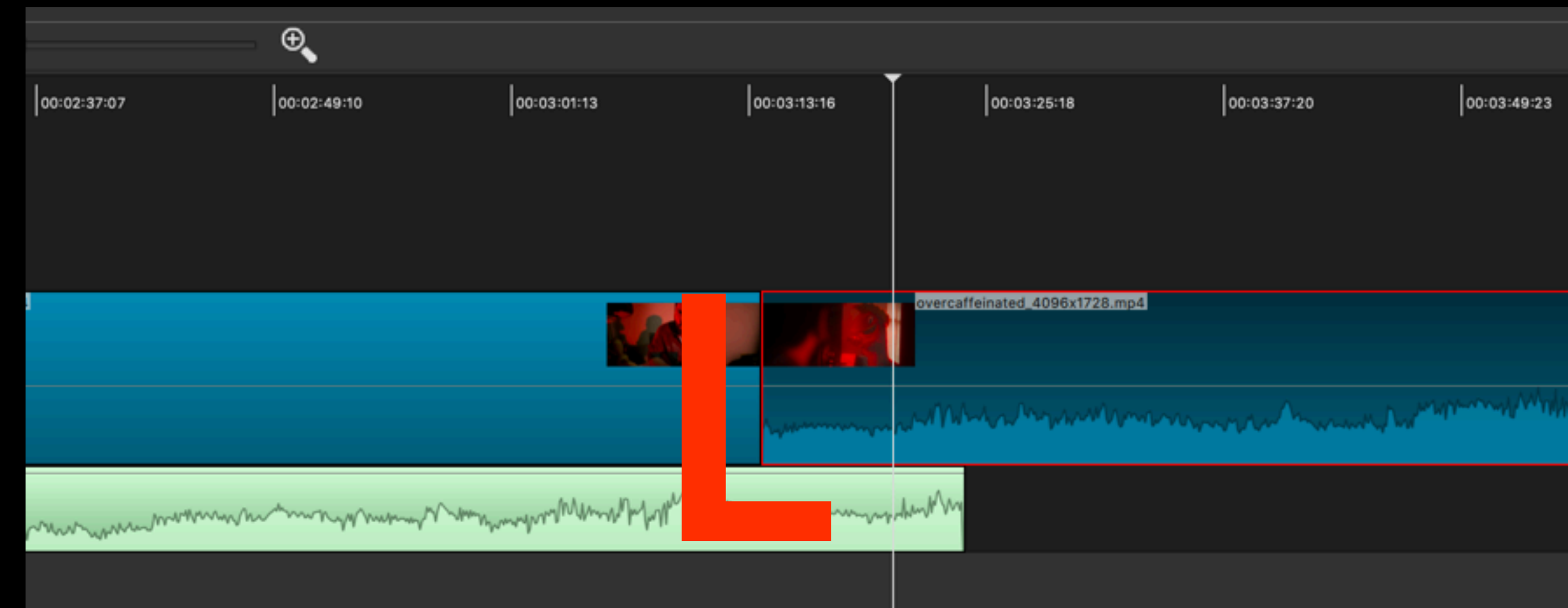
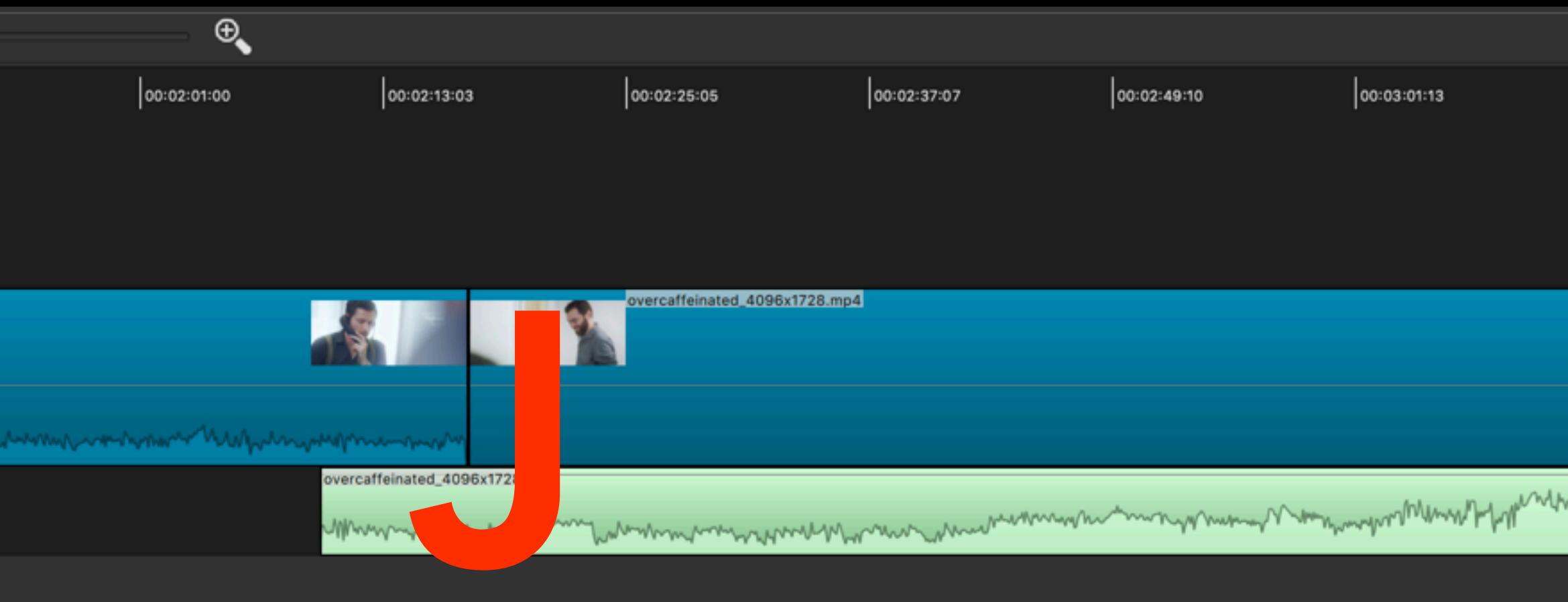
HIDDEN CUTS



CUT ON ACTION (MATCH ACTION)



L-CUTS/J-CUTS



- Sound transitions before/after video transitions
- Video transitions before/after sound transitions
- easily include reactions
- provides seamless transition



L CUT

Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)



EDITING DIALOG

- Easiest to join two pieces of dialog in space between words
- If you have to slice a word, to make edits at sharp consonant sounds
- Pacing and tempo, the natural rhythm of speech is critical
 - listen for breaths, make sure they exist where they should

CONTINUITY

- When a discrepancy in a detail is made between shots
- if there must be a continuity mistake, try to distract the viewer

CONTINUITY



CONTINUITY



CONTINUITY



CONTINUITY



PACING

- Once you cut away to another shot, don't cut back to the same sized shot, change the frame
- Have pacing match the emotion of the scene
- Staying on a shot longer adds more emotional weight to it

STORY ARC

- What is (who is) the story really about?
- Determine who the film/scene is about
- From beginning to end, what changes occur?
- What causes the change, where does it take place
 - helps chart the course from the beginning to end

WHO'S SCENE IS IT?!

MUSIC

- Music/sound is one of the most important ways that you can effect your audience's emotions

APPROACHING EDITING

- just like the rest of production, be organized!
- review the footage, take notes
- mark up a copy of the script, note important moments

TAKE A BREAK

It will become harder to judge edits the longer you sit

RESOURCES

- free sound effects
 - <https://www.freesound.org/browse/tags/sound-effects/>
- many free non-vocal tracks
 - <http://fesliyanstudios.com/>
 - <http://incompetech.com/>

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