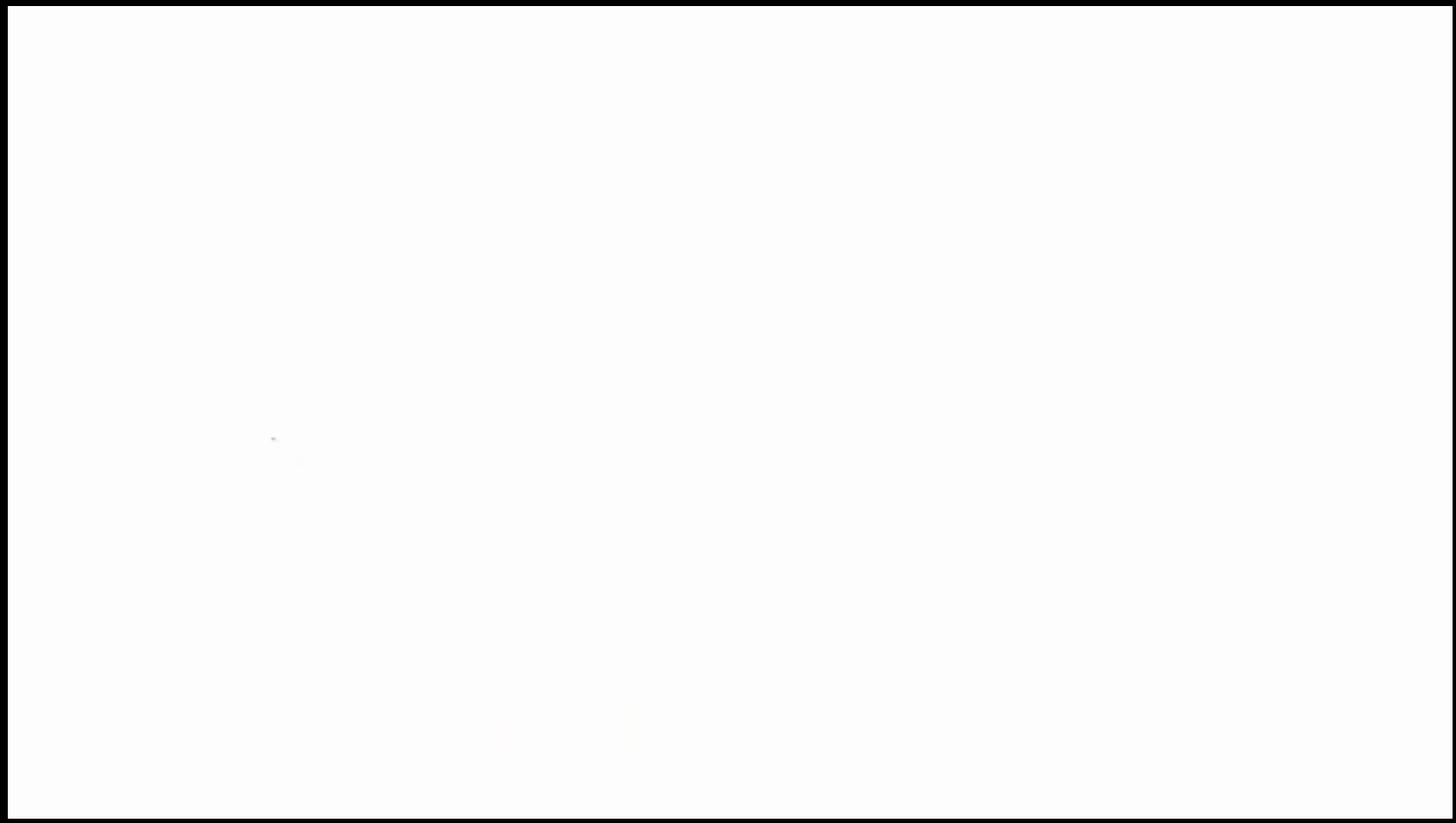
Tips for a Successful Video

Ralph Vituccio

Entertainment
Technology
Center
Carnegie Mellon

Independent
Filmmaker

Where Do Good Ideas Come From?

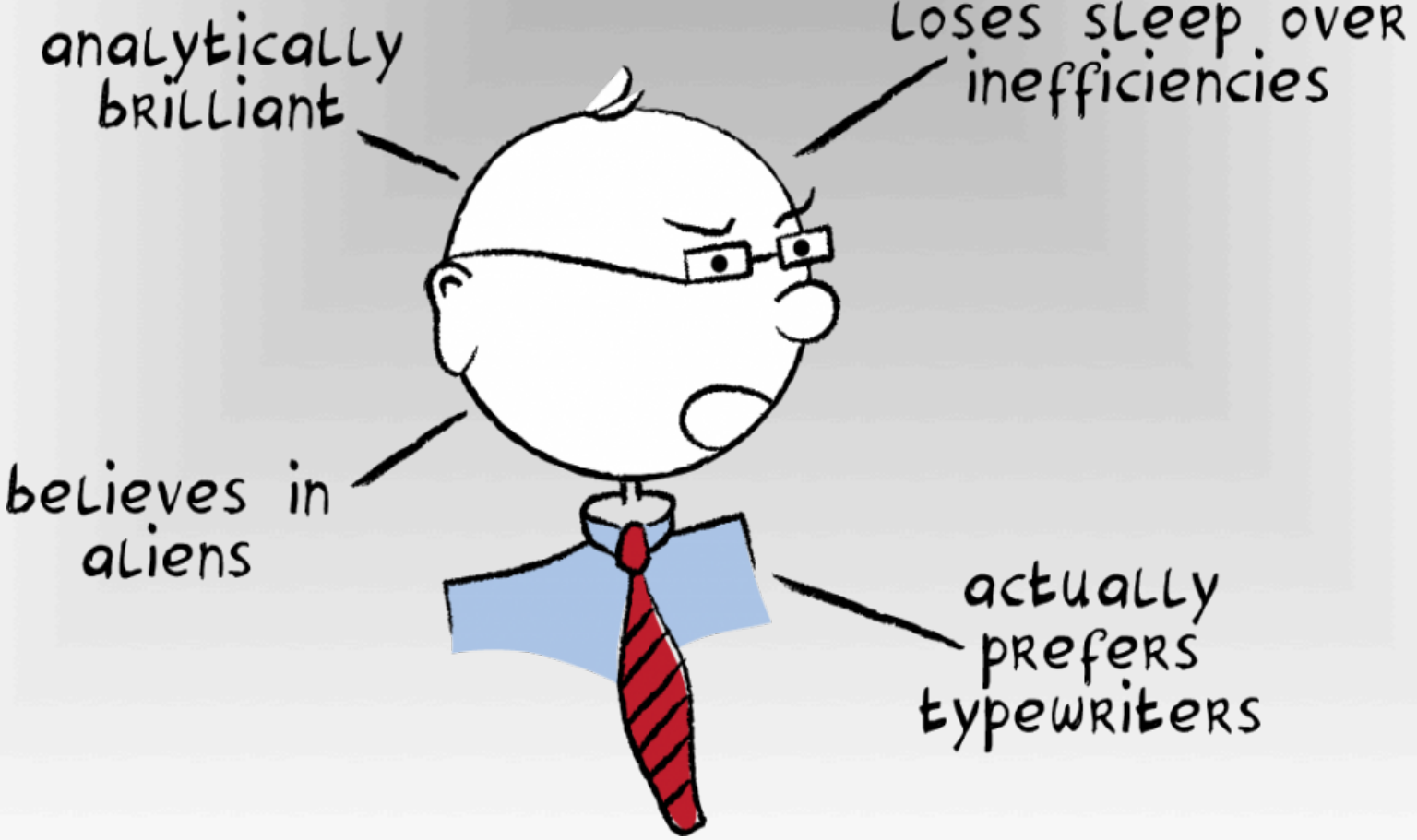


3 Basic Stages of Video
• PRE-PRODUCTION
– Script/Storyboards/Budget
• PRODUCTION
– Location/Camera crew/ Directing
• POST-PRODUCTION
– Video editing/Audio Voice-over/Graphics/ Music

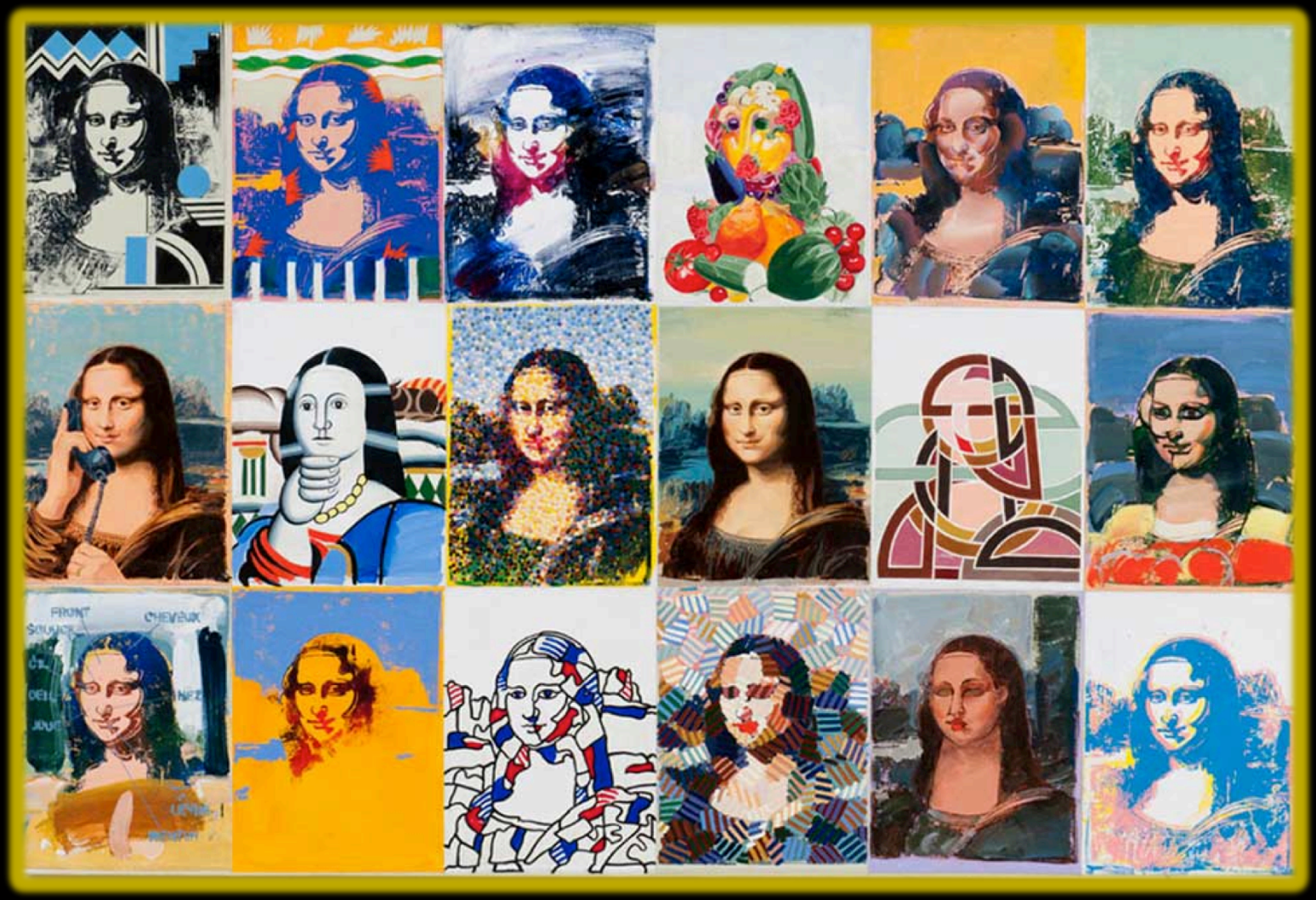
Real World Production
• Concept & Development
– Idea, story, producers, pitch, funding, commission
• Pre-Production
– Screenwriting, storyboards, previz, cast, crew, schedule, locations, costume, props
• Production
– Camera, lighting, sound, direction, talent
• Post-Production
– Rough cut, online edit, ADR, music, audio mix
• Marketing & Distribution
– Prints/copies, consumer/social media, festivals, promotion, press, broadcast, cinema
• Monitoring & Development
– Ratings, reviews, box office return, online web stats and sales

Strategy
Strategy
plan or method
achieve a goal or
organizational

1. Know Your Audience...



2. Choose A Video Style...

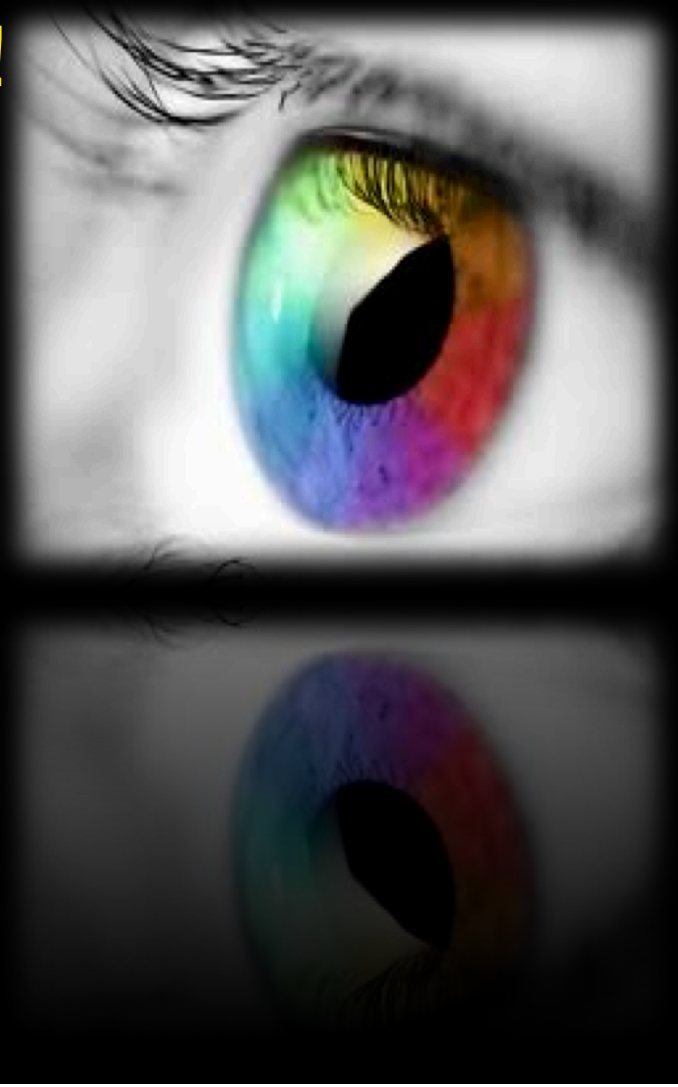


3. Actually Make It..

4. Get Eyes On It...

Concept & Development

- It's all about the message!
  - *What's the takeaway…?*
  - *What do you want people to remember…?*



The Elevator Pitch

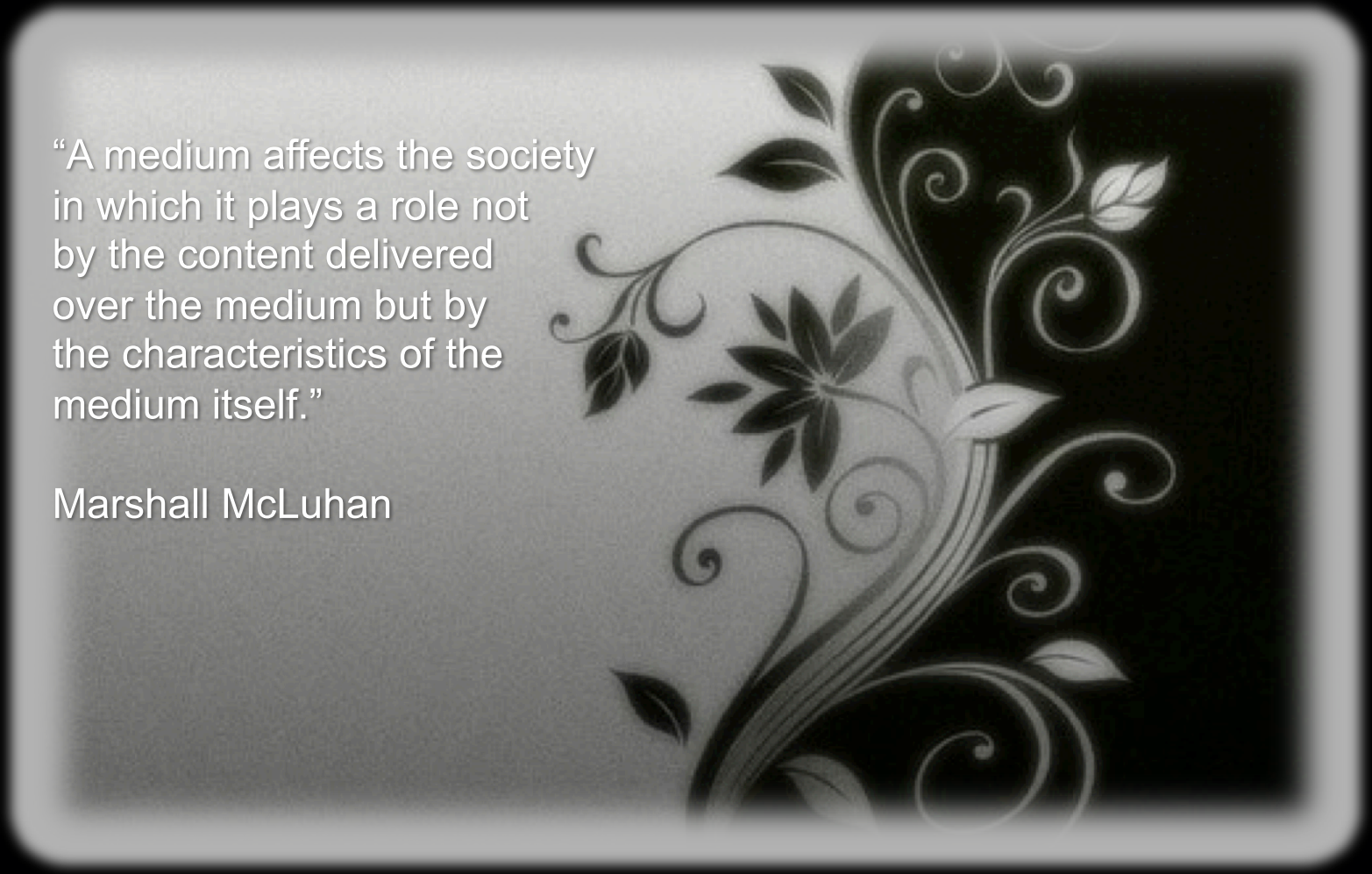
The fumbled response

“Interesting project…. What is the name of your company again?”

Know Your Audience

- **Write a Creative Brief**
  - **Purpose:** *What is my main core objective? Pick just one primary goal!*
  - **Single Thought:** *What is my main core message? Identify the key takeaway idea or action.*
  - **Who:** *Who is my primary target audience? Age? Sex? Interests? Income?*
  - **Reach:** *Where might I reach this audience? YouTube? TV Ads? Facebook? Video? Video Podcasts?*
  - **Call to Action:** *What is the single action you'll compel the viewer to make?*

Choose a Style that Best Fits the Idea



Promotional Video Style Elements

- **Tone:**
  - *Lighthearted or Serious?*
- **People & Speech:**
  - *'Talking Head' Interview style or Professional Actor?*
- **Production Quality:**
  - *Highly Polished Studio or Shot On-Location?*
- **Scripted or Unscripted:**
  - *Candid Q&A or Scripted and rehearsed questions?*
- **Video Quality:**
  - *Called production quality– do you want the video to look like simple online video, or big-budget?*

Popular Promotional Video Genres:

The genre of the video sets the tone and subliminal message about your idea, offering and brand.

- **Narrated Video:**
  - *A female or male narrator's voice talks over the video, informing and educating.*
- **Testimonial Videos:**
  - *Interviews with people about their needs and how their expectations were met.*
- **Company Spokesperson:**
  - *Have your spokesperson do a 'talking head' video where they speak to the camera about the product/service.*
- **Professional Actors:**
  - *Actors 'play out' scenarios, or talk to the camera about the benefits.*
- **Explainer Videos:**
  - *Combination of narration along with very simple animations to explain a message.*

Style + *Image* = Representation

- The choices you make will say a lot about the video's message and brand.
- Choosing the right mix of elements is important for your video so that the viewer doesn't get mixed messages!
- Genre & style will also affect budget – the least expensive video uses no graphics… just candid interviews.

Visual & Imagery Questions:

- **Graphics:**
  - *Will it be heavy on graphics and animation, and if so how will this affect your budget?*
- **Music:**
  - *Royalty Free Background Music, or no music at all?*
- **Imagery:**
  - *Animated custom graphics, or simple photo graphics?*
  - *Several websites offer basic templates for building animations and info-graphic presentations cheaply.* (Resources page later)

What best fits the projects personality!
What best tells your story!

Pre-Production

Write the Script

- How many times have you pitched and/or explained your project to others?

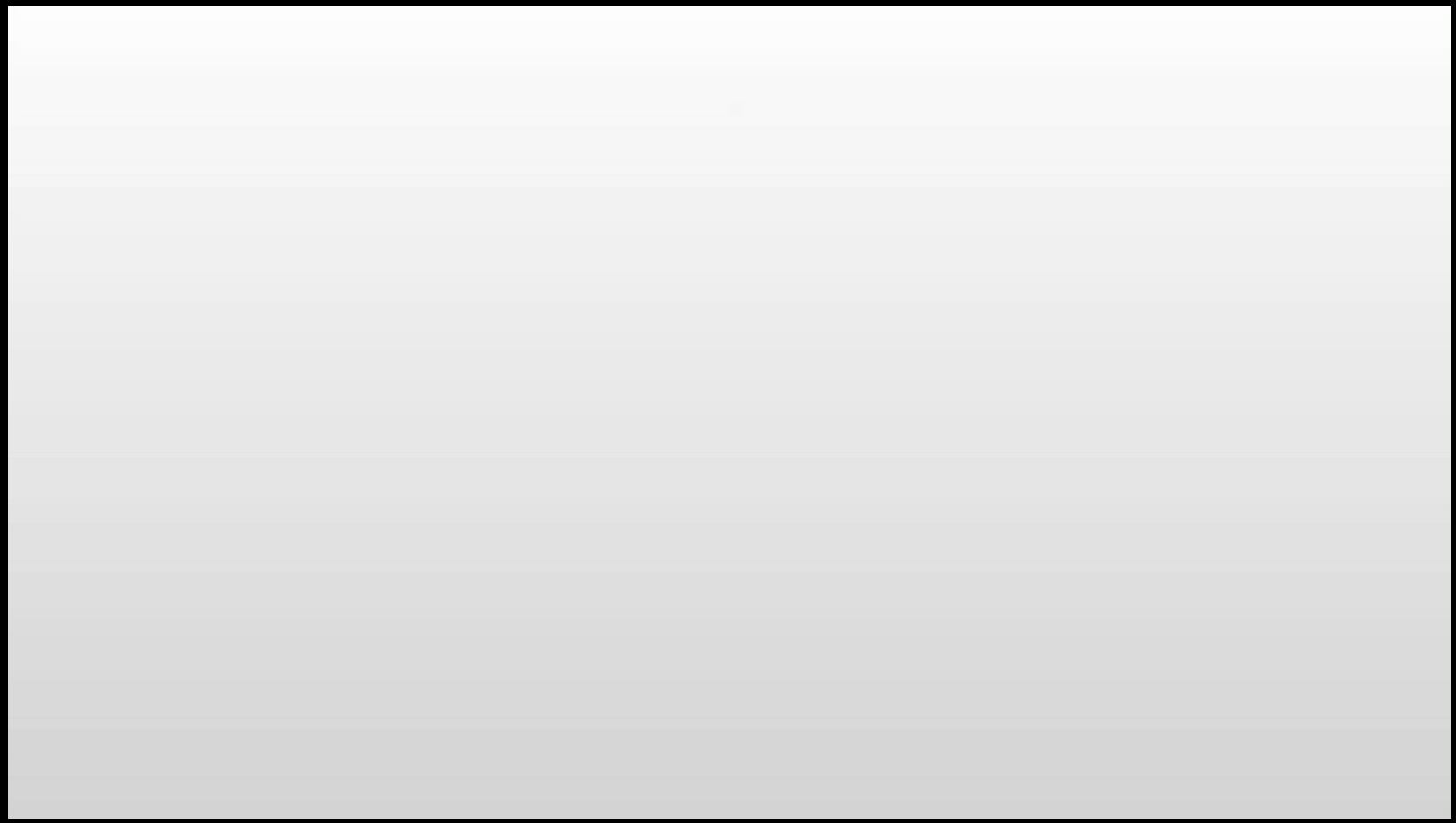
- Start with that basic pitch idea and write the script.
  - *Read it out loud to yourself.*
  - *Read it out loud to others.*
  - *Fine tune it further.*
  - *Then fine tune even further.*

Script

- Keep it Succinct
  - *Give them a tasty appetizer not a website worth of information. 1 – 2 minutes, 3 minutes max*
- Make Someone's Life Better
  - *Your product/idea exists because your making someone's life better.*
  - *Just like in movies, novels, video games the role of the antagonist is critical to your story*
- What's In It For Me factor
  - *Tell people what you can do for them not just what you can do… articulate the end benefits!*
- Humor Your Audience
  - *Humor makes ideas more approachable and friendly.*
  - *However, it needs to be well-suited to your target audience… if they don't get the joke then the jokes on you!*
- The Power of Emotions
  - *A key driver behind decision making. Humor isn't your only creative resource.*
  - *Appealing to your audience's heart through memories, nostalgia, dreams and aspirations. That "warm and fuzzy" feeling can make people more receptive to what you're communicating.*

Keep it Succinct

Make Someone's Life Better



What's the Problem?
I Can Fix It!

What's In It For Me factor

Humor Your Audience

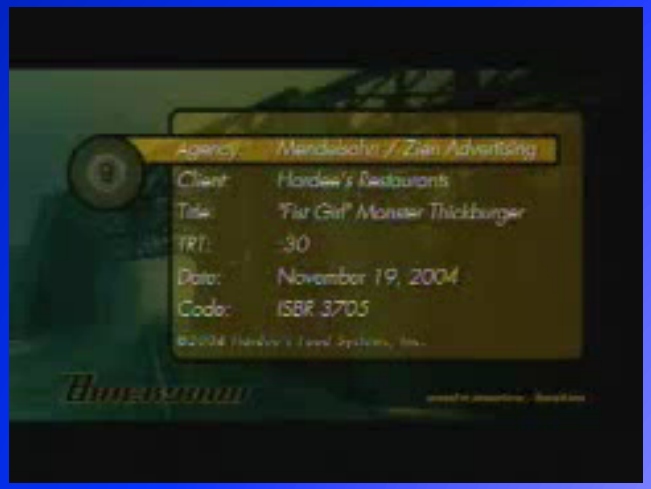
…more humor

Tap Into Emotions

Voted Worst Commercials

Go Daddy.com

Hardee's Burgers



Luv's Diaper

Assign Roles

- **Visionary:** ***The Story Teller***
- **Producer:** ***The Organizer***
- **Technician:** ***The Know-How***
- **Audio:** ***Well Recorded & Mixed Sound***
- **Visuals:** ***Camera, Graphics & Editing***

Tips From the Creative Side…

When to hire
a pro vs.
when to DIY

DIY

“DIY” Tips and Rules

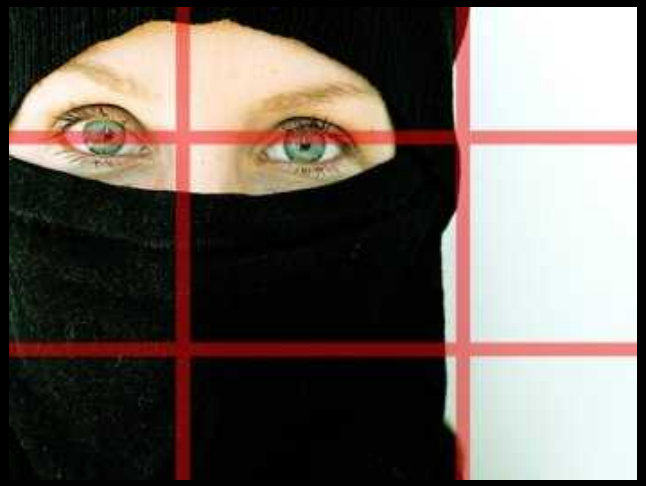
- Composition
- Camera Work
- Lighting
- Sound
- Editing
- Graphics
- Music

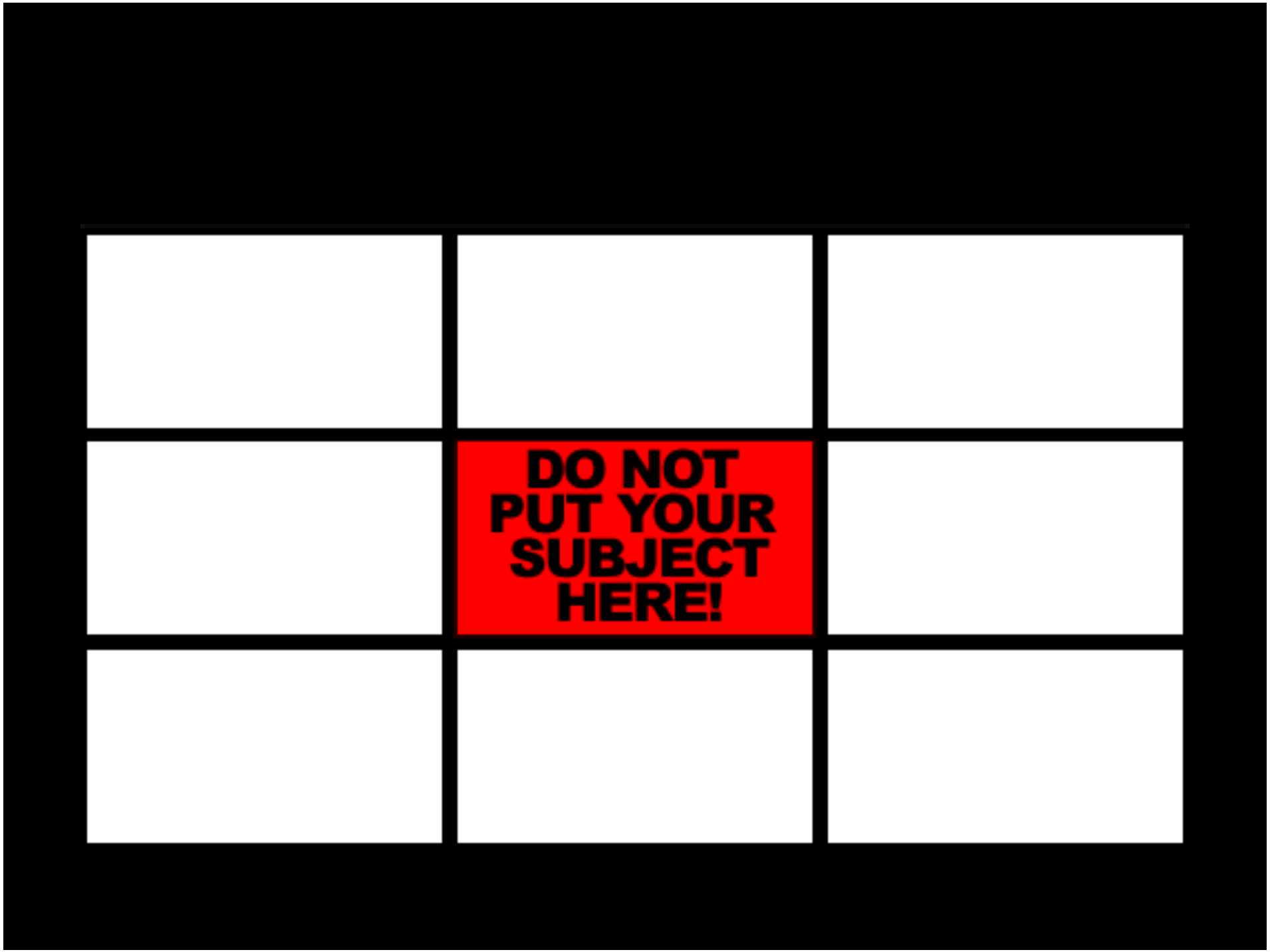
Production

Visual Composition & Design

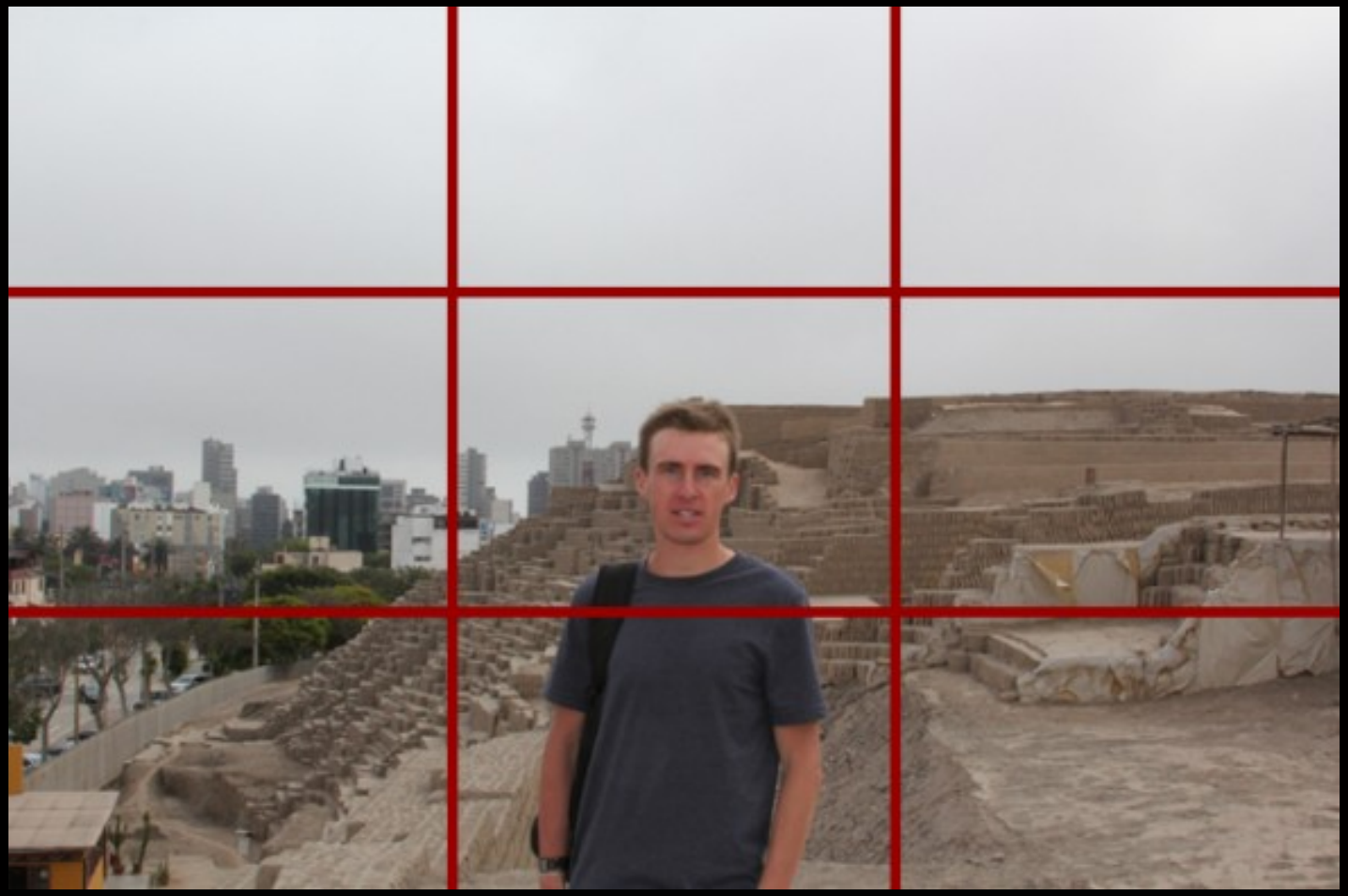
- Google the rule of thirds:
  - *Rule of thirds is a guideline which applies to the process of composing visual images.*
  - *The guideline proposes that an image should be imagined as divided into nine equal parts by two equally-spaced horizontal lines and two equally-spaced vertical lines, and that important compositional elements should be placed along these lines or their intersections*
- Divide the screen into thirds.
  - *Frame shots so subjects fall at the intersection of these imaginary lines.*
  - *Remember: DO NOT frame subject dead center.*

Rule Of Thirds




DO NOT
PUT YOUR
SUBJECT
HERE!

Good or Bad Composition?



Get Physically Close to Subject

- Use ZOOM as little as possible:
  - *Shoot wide and physically move into subject.*
  - *This will eliminate camera shake.*
- Get physically close to on-camera talent as well:
  - *Do not shoot on-camera talent in wide shot.*
  - *Always frame for a head and shoulders shot.*

Shooting Interviews

- *Unless you're going for a dramatic effect, have the camera lens at same height as subjects eyes.*
- *If using on-cam talent either have them facing the camera directly or looking slightly off lens center.*
- *Use a tripod.*
  - *Unless you want the ' shaky cam' look, the shot needs to be locked down*

Shoot More then One Shot

- Film scenes using more then just one shot:
  - *Use multiple shots giving different perspectives to what's being viewed.*
  - *Use different angles and different shot sizes.*

Shoot Lots of B-Roll

- Spend as little OC time as possible with talent.
  - *Have them introduce the project with a short declarative statement of project.*
  - *As they continue to explain the project move to B-roll footage.*
  - *Visually show what is being described.*

Lighting

- You need light to make a decent picture.
- If you do shoot a talking head:
  - Go where there is plenty of natural light.
    - *End of hallways are great places to shoot.*
    - *Use a white bounce card for shadow side.*
- Make sure the camera is White Balanced to the type of light your shooting under:
  - *Is it daylight or tungsten?*

Titles

- Make sure the piece has a title followed by the introduction:
  - *The title sequence and introduction can be brief but it should be visually interesting.*
  - *Use DYNAMIC graphics or effects for impact.*

Sound

- How can you improve the sound from the built-in mic?
  - *Place camera as close to sound source as practical.*
  - *Face camera away from loud background noise.*
  - *Always use headphones to check sound quality.*

Music

- Music can really help with:
  - *Sustaining interest.*
  - *Conveying excitement/energy/emotion.*
  - *Choose music that best fits your visual concept.*

Music

- Be careful that music does not interfere with voice over (VO).
  - *Music works really well for openings and closes.*
  - *Don't use music the whole 2 minutes.*
  - *Bring it in and out only when it helps tell or underline the message.*

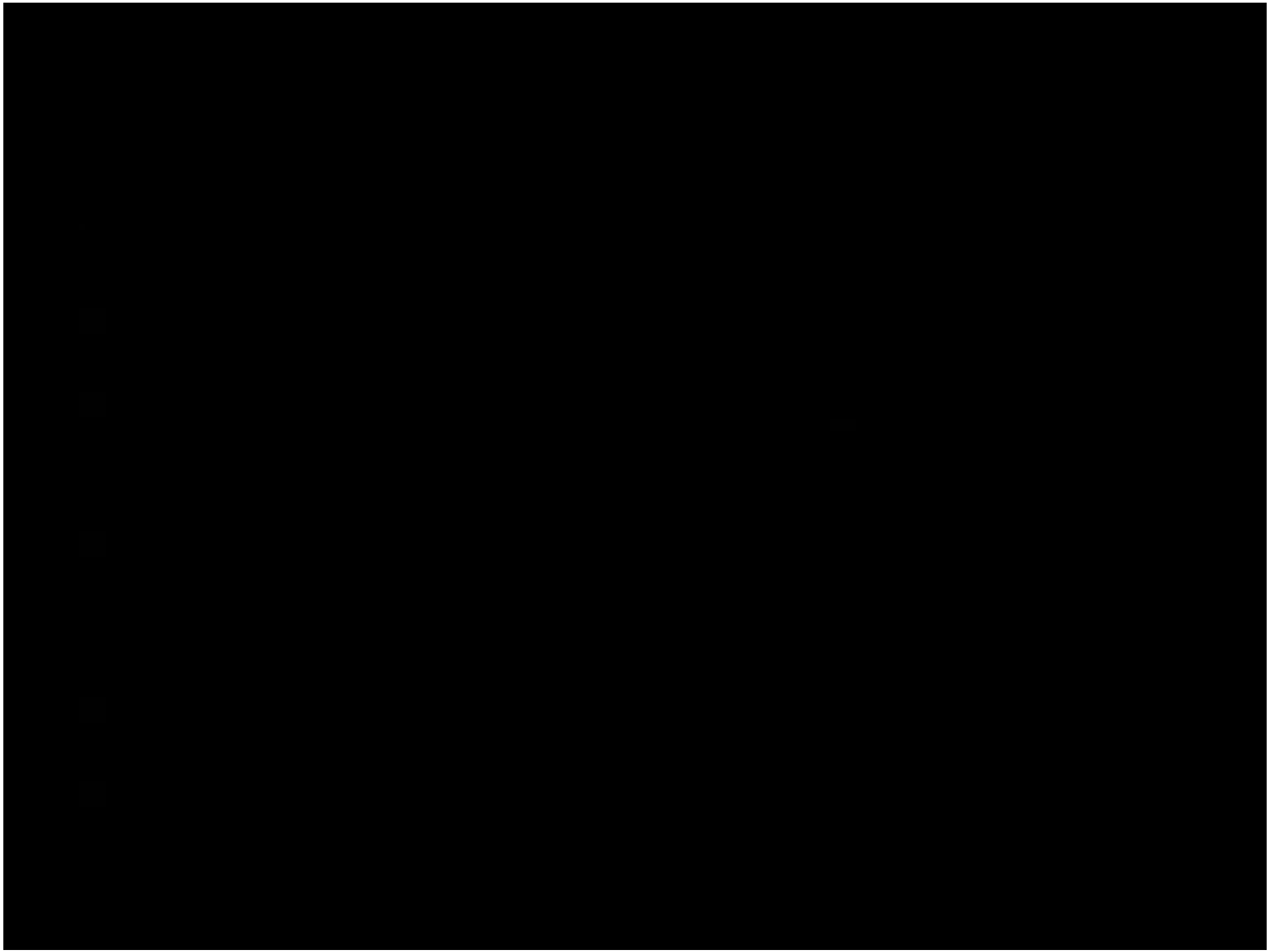
Editing

- iMovie
- Premier
- Final Cut
- Free edit software
  - ***Windows Movie Maker 2012***
  - ***MPEG Streamclip 1.2.1b6***
  - ***Kate's Video Toolkit***
  - ***Lightworks (windows)***
  - ***Avidemux (Windows/Mac/Linux)***
  - ***VSDC Free Video Editor***

Case Study:

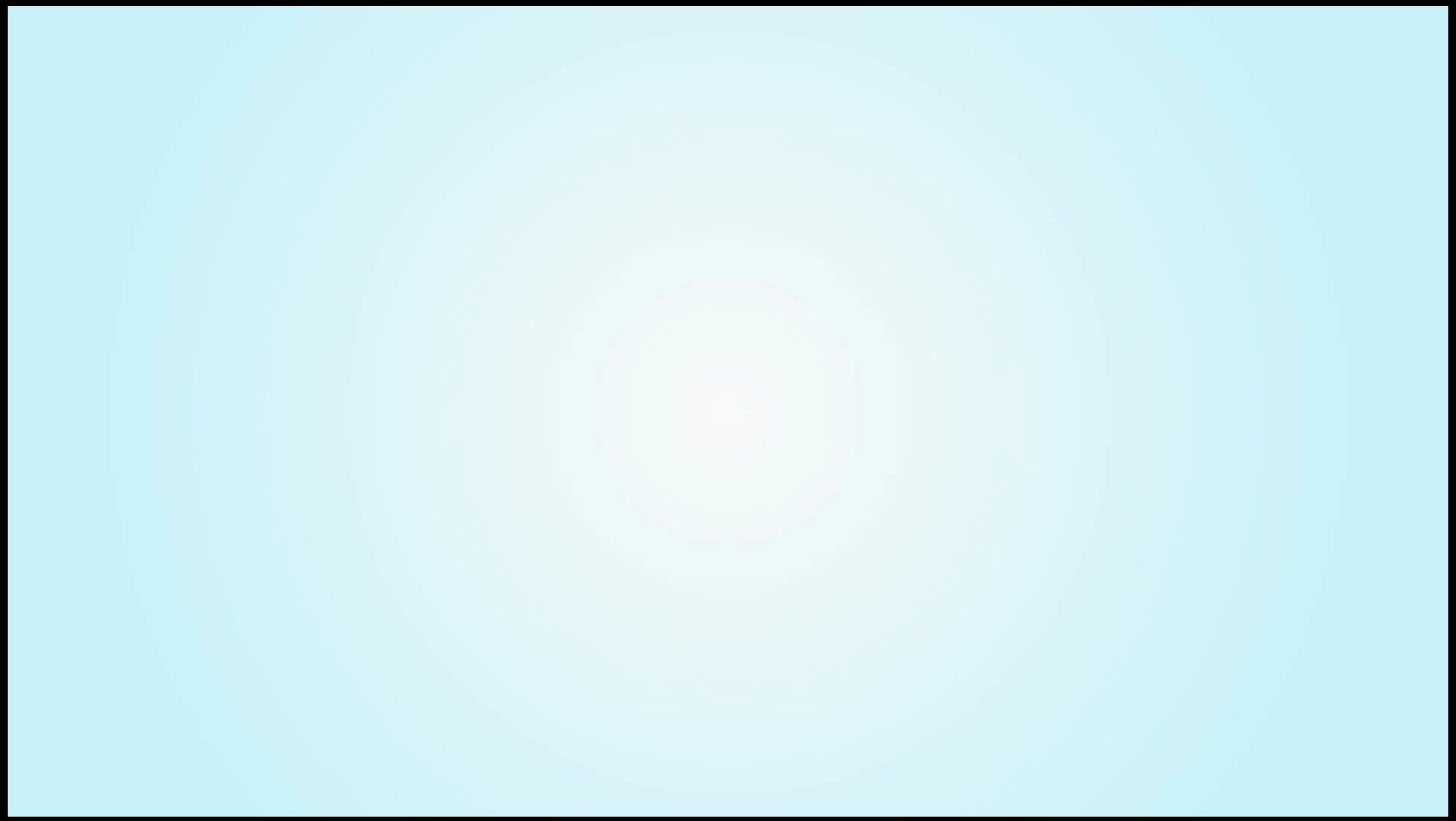
Search man SEO playon Superman theme

- How to make good-enough demo/ explainer videos for your App for $5
- We just made our explainer video for SearchMan (AppStore SEO for developers) & got several inquires from customers asking us how we did it. So we decided to share...



Don't hire Spielberg.
Spend $ wisely. 10 step how-to:

1. Write a script in Google Drive (160 words=1 minute)
2. Hire voice-over artist on Fivver ($5) to read script
3. Import voice-over MP3 file into PowToon
4. Create & synch ppt slides in PowToon
5. Export the combined voice+visual MP4 to iMovie
6. Add sound effects, normalize audio, etc in iMovie
7. Post to YouTube
8. Add Titles/Tags inspired by Google Keyword Tool
9. Embed & Share link with your community
10. Rinse repeat. Time cost = 3-4 hours



“Sorry for the plug but I just launched my company and we had our video made months in advance of launch and it helped up sell an idea way before we had a MVP/Beta to show. Very effective.”

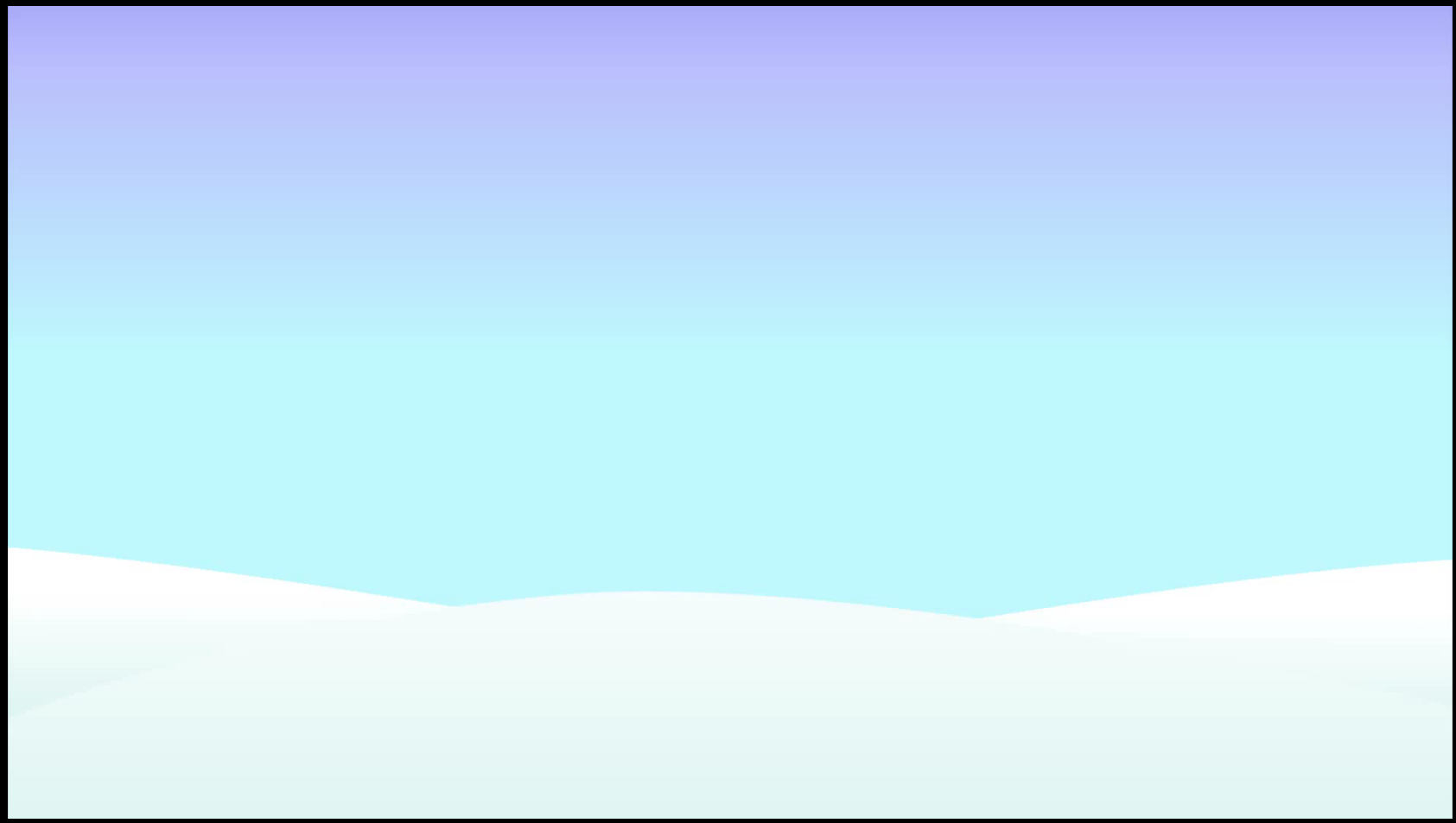
Trace Cohen, President/Co-founder of Launch.it

Websites that offer video-presentation templates at very low-costs.
Just add your own texts/images/voices.

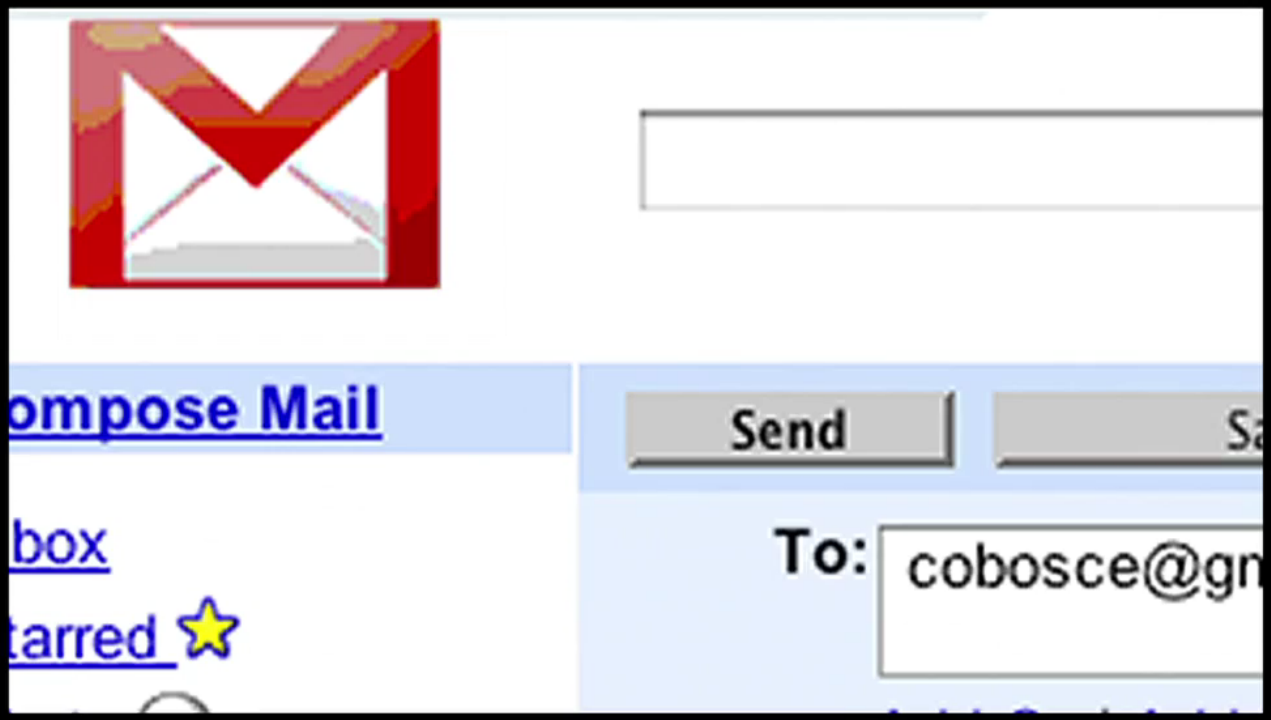
- http://videohive.net
- http://www.motiongraphicsbank.com/
- http://www.dropdrop.com/index2.phphttp
- www.fluxvfx.com/
- http://www.professional-video-templates.com
- http://www.revostock.com/After-Effects-Project/224743/Infographics-Version-2.htm

revostock
AFTER EFFECTS PROJECTS

“7’s Wild Ride” ETC student video



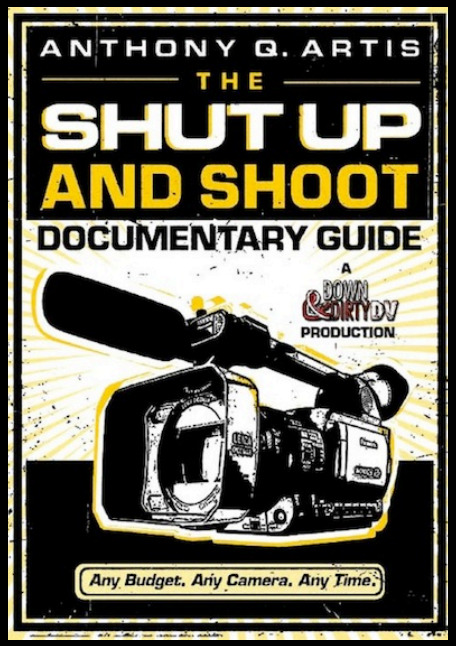
Simple idea... move an object through time and space.



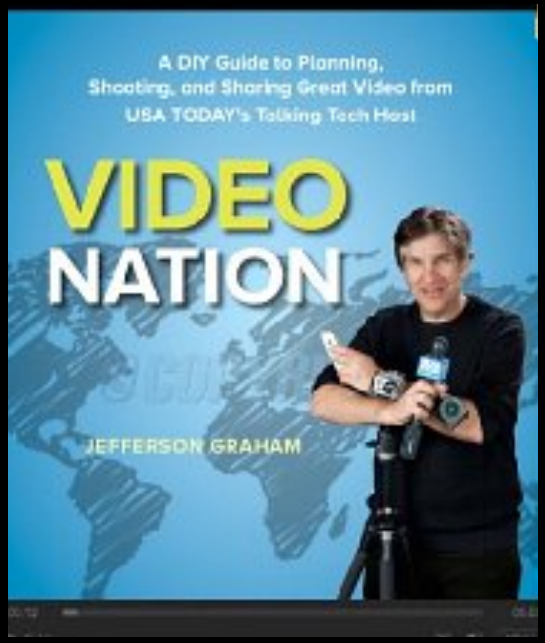
Box Crunchies

For Inspiration & Ideas

- http://www.quora.com/Demo-Videos/What-are-some-good-examples-of-startup-product-demo-videos-and-who-made-them
- http://blog.kera.io/post/41798499218/kera-definitive-list-top-50-product-tour-videos-and-prod



http://www.amazon.com/Shut-Shoot-Freelance-Video-Guide/dp/0240814878/ref=pd_sim_b_31



http://www.amazon.com/Video-Nation-planning-shooting-sharing/dp/0321832876/ref=pd_sim_b_40