Sightline Field Guide

Your first project, start to finish — and then everything else.

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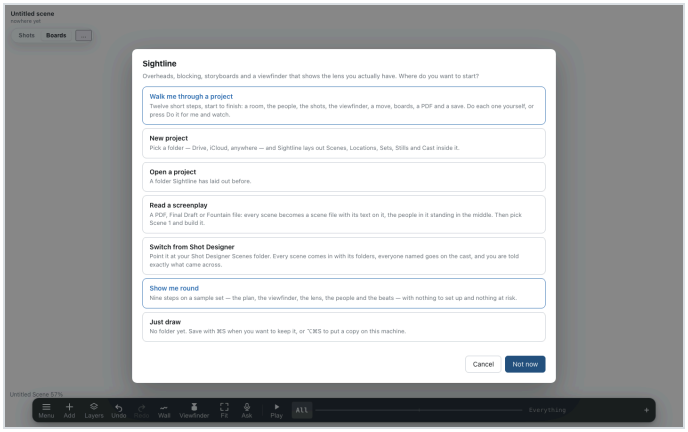
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START HERE

Quick start: your first project, start to finish

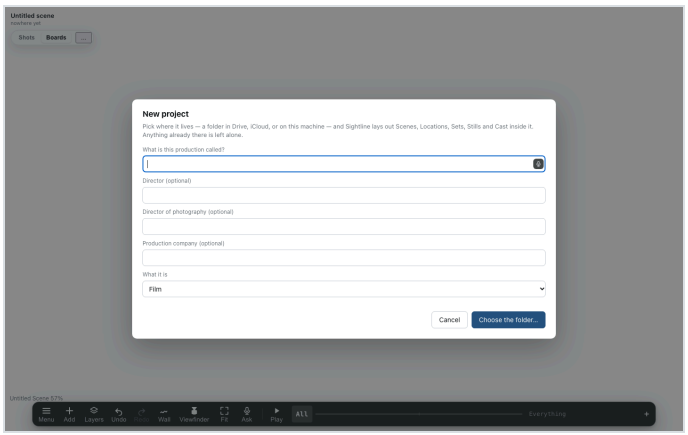
These are the frames of the video tutorial, in order — the same twelve steps as Walk Me Through A Project inside the app. Follow them once on an empty scene and you have made a project: a room, the people, the shots, the finder, a move, boards, a PDF and a save. Every step is covered properly in the chapter named after it.



01

The first screen

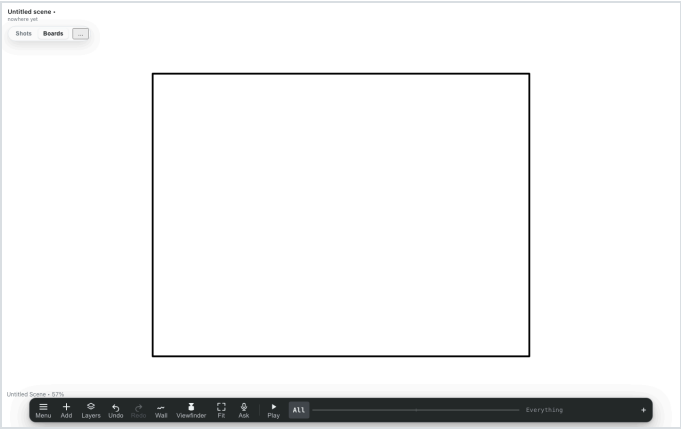
The first time Sightline opens, this is what you get. **Walk me through a project** is these twelve steps inside the app, with a **Do it for me** button at every one; it is in the menu afterwards as ≡ ▸ **Walk Me Through A Project…** and picks up where you stopped. **Show me round** is a quicker look at a finished scene.



02

A home for the work

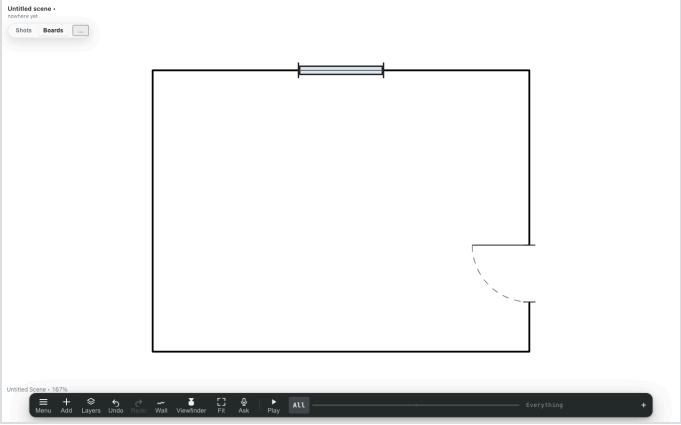
≡ ▸ **New Project…** picks a folder — Google Drive, iCloud, or this machine — and lays out Scenes, Locations, Sets, Stills and Cast inside it. Open the same folder elsewhere and it is all there. Skip it and just draw if you like; ⌘S asks where later.



03

Draw the room

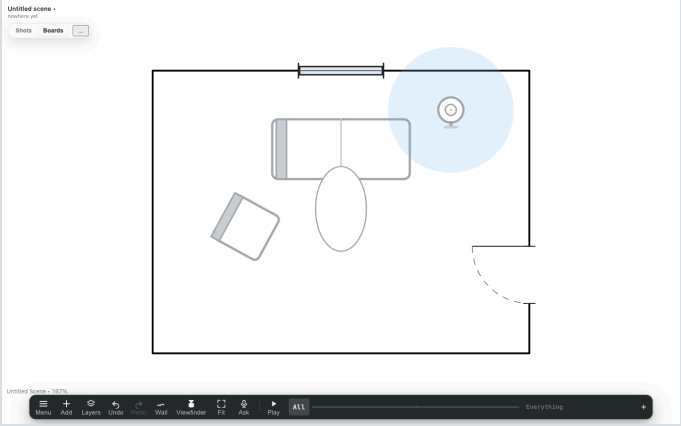
Press `W` and click the corners; click the first one again to close it. One grid square is a foot, so everything after this is at real size.



04

A door and a window

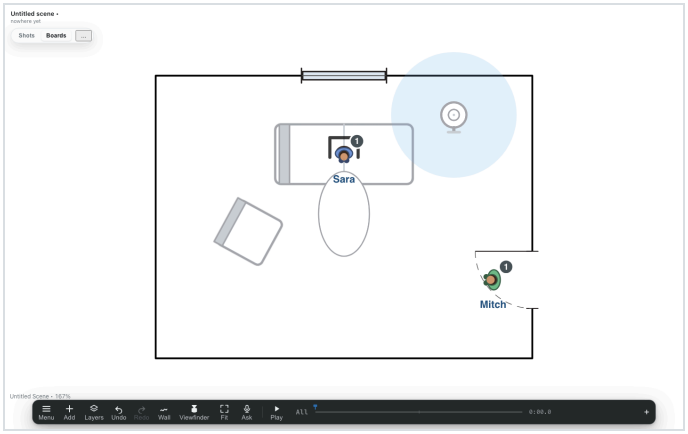
The **+** button is the kit. **Add Set Pieces…**, pick a door, click near a wall and it seats itself in the wall. Then a window. Drag either along the wall to move it.



05

Furniture

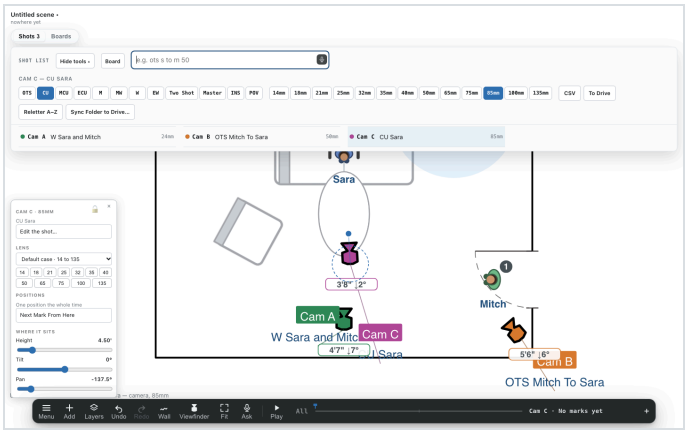
+ ▸ Add Furniture…, pick a sofa, click where it goes. Drag to move; the small handle turns it. A table, a chair, a lamp — each at its real footprint. Vehicles, lights, grip and outdoors are in the same menu.



06

The people

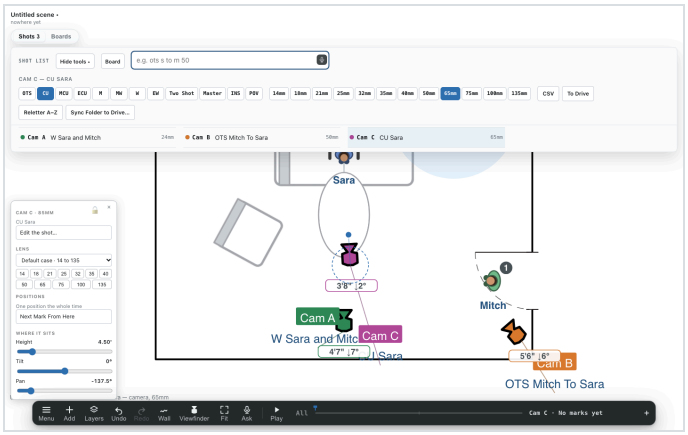
+ ▸ Add Character… ▸ A New Person…, click where they stand. Right-click them ▸ **Who Is This…** names them, and the name goes on the cast list for every scene after.



07

Type the shots

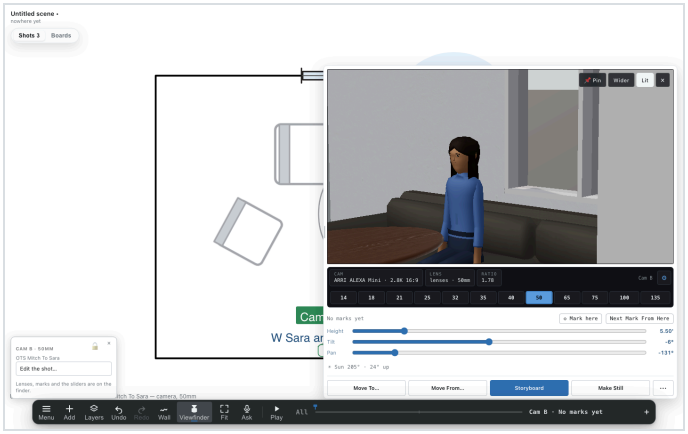
Open **Shots** at the top and type each one the way you would say it — `w sara to mitch 24`, `ots mitch to sara 50`, `cu sara 85`. ⏎ places the camera, aims it, letters it and adds the row. Then drag it to taste.



08

Size and lens are a click

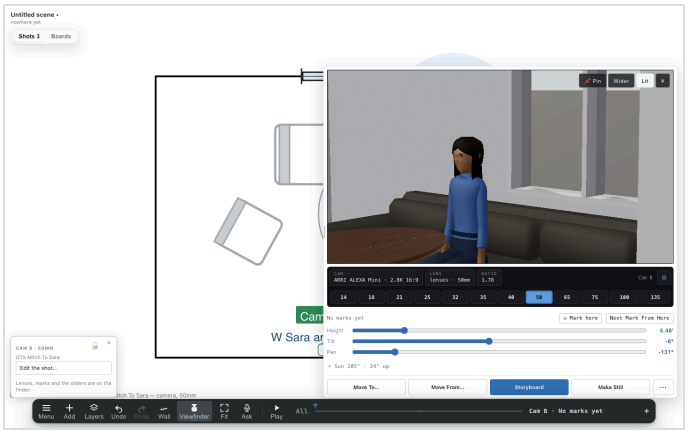
Under the line are two rows for the shot in hand: the sizes, and the lenses in your package. One click sets either.



09

Look through it

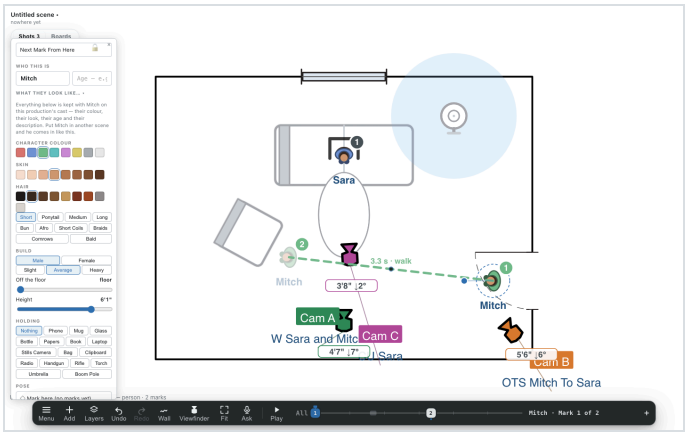
Select a camera and press V. The finder is the frame that lens gives from that height in that room — **Lit**, or **Flat** as a measured diagram. The sliders are height, tilt and pan; the lenses are under the frame, always.



10

Operate it

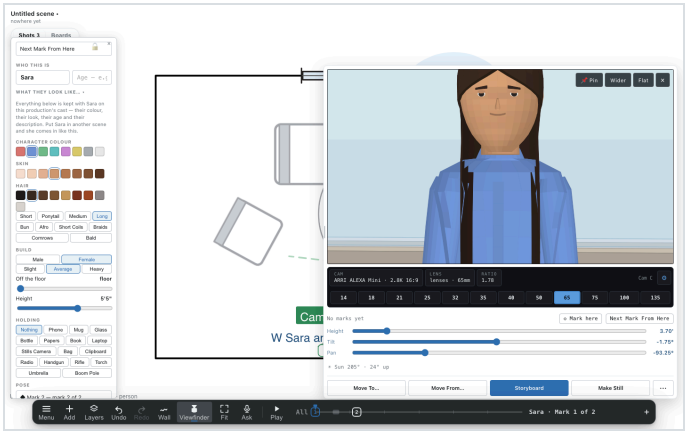
Drag the picture to pan and tilt. W A S D fly the camera; the wheel changes the lens. The plan follows, so the overhead is always the truth.



11

A move is marks

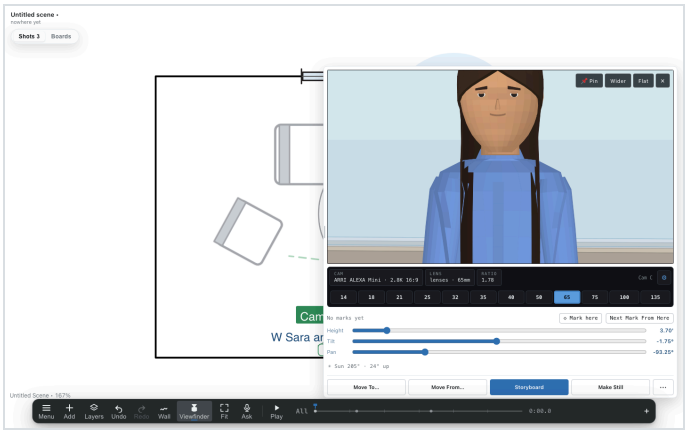
Right-click Mitch ▸ **Walk To…** and click where he ends up: that is his mark 2, and the faint figure is where he goes next. His keys sit on the bar — drag one to re-time it, drag the handle between two to stretch the run, click one for its window: how fast, a pause, a copy, how it eases, a name. Nothing he does moves anyone else.



12

A pose is a mark too

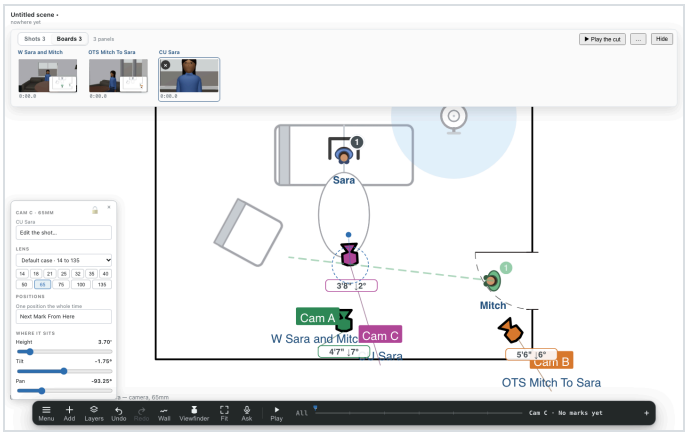
Change a pose and they get into it over time: Sara is sitting; pick **Standing** and she stands up over a second, at her key 2 — on the plan and in the finder.



13

Play it

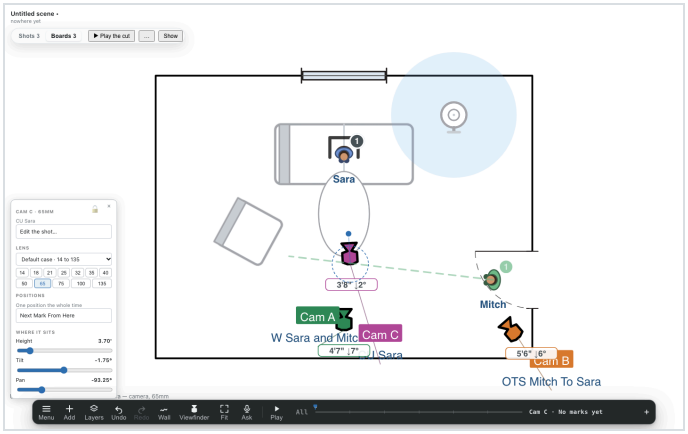
`Space` plays and stops. The plan, the bar and the finder show the same moment; pause anywhere and the next thing you change is keyed right there.



14

Storyboards

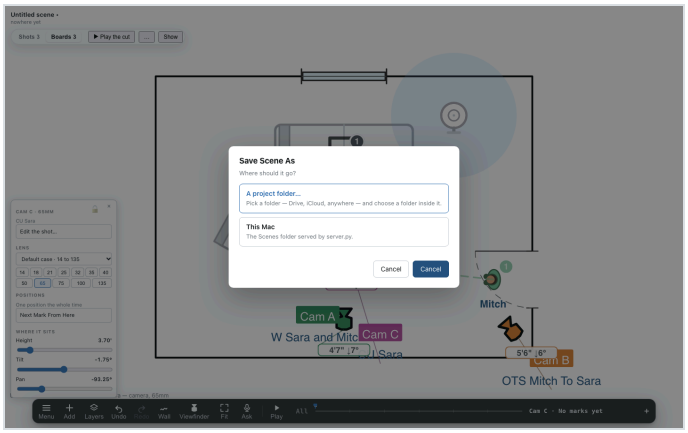
With the finder open on a camera, `S` takes its frame as a storyboard panel of that moment. Do it for each camera; **Boards** at the top is the scene as pictures, in order.



15

Out on paper

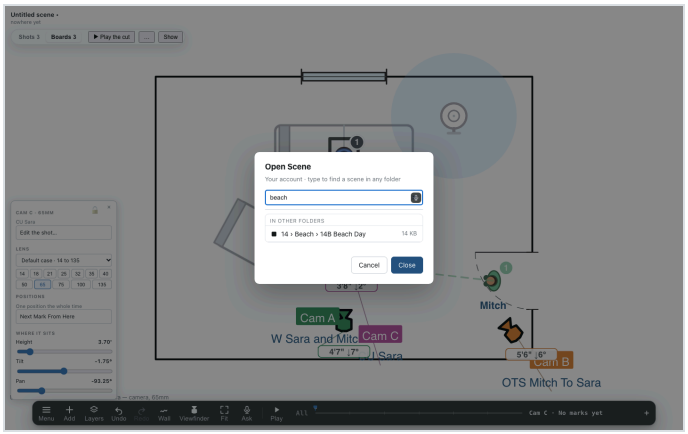
≡ ▸ **Export The Storyboards — frames only, paginated (PDF)**: a page of frames with the slug and lens under each. Beside it, shot cards, **Export The Beat Board** with the overhead next to every frame, **Export The Blocking List** — every part's keys in order with what happens at each — and the shot list as a spreadsheet.



16

Save it

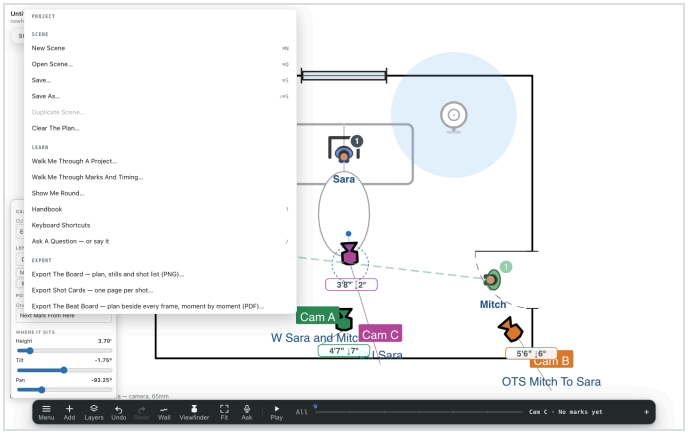
⌘S. The first time it asks where — the project folder, your account, or this machine — and for a name. Every scene is a Shot Designer file you can open anywhere; after this it saves itself as you work.



17

Find a scene

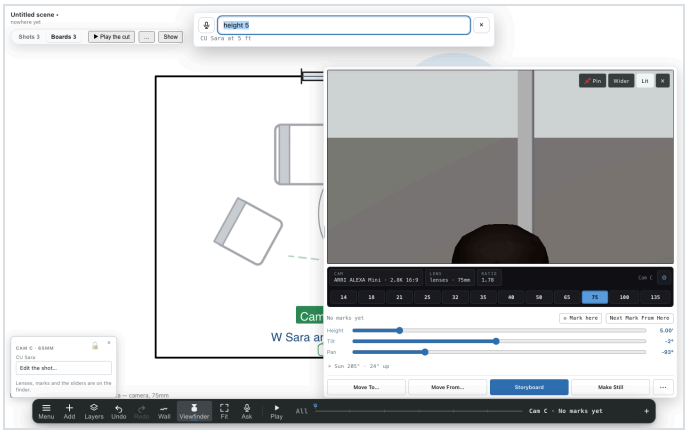
Open Scene has a search box at the top. Type a word and it finds the scene in any folder — on the iPad too, where scenes live on the account. ⏎ opens the first hit.



18

When you are stuck

The handbook is under ? and searchable. ≡ ▸ **Walk Me Through A Project…** and **Walk Me Through Keys And Timing…** are there whenever you want them. ≡ ▸ **Report** sends exactly what you were looking at, so it gets fixed.



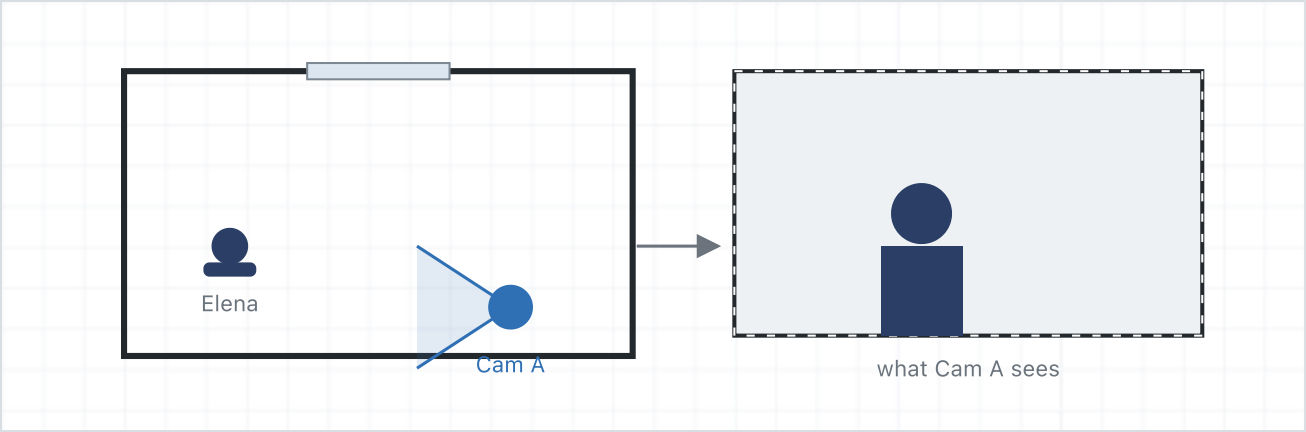
19

Or say it

Press / and type or speak a command — *tighter*, *height five*, *night*.

CHAPTER 1

Getting around



The plan on the left is the set from above — one square is a foot. Put a camera on it and the viewfinder on the right is what that camera sees.

The canvas is the set from above. One grid square is **one foot** and every fifth line is drawn heavier, so five feet reads at a glance — and everything in the app is drawn to that: a person is two feet across, a 12×12 frame really is twelve feet.

`G`, or the grid button on the bar, turns snapping on and off — position *and* angle, everywhere. With it on: dragging anything lands it on the foot and a selection moves as one, keeping its spacing; a wall corner lands on the foot; turning goes in fifteens; the arrow keys step a foot, or five with `⇧`; and a run within about four degrees of square is taken to be square, which is what stops a wall stepping past straight and out the other side. Hold `⌥` during any drag to ignore the grid once. With it off, everything moves freely and arrows go back to fine two-unit nudges.

Pan

Two-finger scroll, or hold `Space` and drag.

Zoom

`⌘`-scroll, or `⌘+` / `⌘–`.

Fit the whole scene

`⌘0`.

Select

Click. `⌘`-click or `⇧`-click adds and removes. Drag across empty space to sweep up everything inside. A second click on the thing you already have steps to whatever solid thing is under it — two cameras on the same spot are two clicks apart — but never to its own track, arrow or label; click those where they stand on their own. A camera or a person with a move is one thing with several positions: the first is the

camera, the others are where it goes at each beat. Parked on one beat the others are drawn dim, and clicking a dim one goes to it — it is selected and the beat bar parks on its beat, so the plan, the finder and the panel all show that moment.

People are a head on a pair of shoulders, seen from above. The head carries the original's own marks — one line for a man, two for a woman — so the thing you already read at a glance is unchanged; it's just the size a head is, sitting in front of a shoulder bar. A ball in front of a wider bar reads as a person however small the page gets, and takes up far less room than a two-foot circle, which is what stops a crowded plan turning to soup.

≡ ▸ **Appearance…** has two alternatives: solid head and shoulders, or the original circles.

Clicking always goes for the thing you can see. Labels never steal a click from whatever is underneath them, so the numbers you write on a beat don't get in the way of grabbing the person.

CHAPTER 2

Your first project, start to finish

Twelve short steps that make a scene from nothing — a room, the people, the shots, the viewfinder, a move, storyboards, a PDF and a save — in the app, on a real scene, with you at the controls. It is the first door on the first screen, and it is in the menu whenever you want it: ≡ ▸ **Walk Me Through A Project…**. It remembers where you stopped and picks up there.

At every step the card in the corner says what to do and a ring shows where. Do it yourself and the card notices and ticks it. Or press **Do it for me** and watch it happen on the plan, then carry on. Nothing goes dark and nothing is locked; the whole app is yours throughout, because the point is to use it. **Stop** puts the card away; **Back** is a step back.

The same twelve steps are the video at *cinesmith.app/start*, and the scene they build — a 24-by-18 living room, Sara on the sofa, Mitch at the door — is the one the video builds, so the two agree.

The twelve steps

1 · A home for the work. Sightline keeps scenes in a folder you choose — Google Drive, iCloud, or this machine — with Scenes, Locations, Sets, Stills and Cast laid out inside it. ≡ ▸ **New Project…** picks it. Skip it and just draw if you like; ⌘S asks where later. (Chrome or Edge on a computer can open a folder; Safari and the iPad save to your account instead.)

2 · Draw the room. `W`, or the wall button. Click the corners of a room about 24 by 18 feet — one grid square is a foot — and click the first corner again to close it. Walls are to scale, so everything after this is too.

3 · A door and a window. The **+** button is the kit. **Add Set Pieces…**, pick a door, click near a wall and it seats itself in it. Then a window. Drag either along the wall to move it.

4 · Furniture. **+** ▸ **Furniture…**, pick a sofa, click where it goes. Drag to move; the small handle turns it. A table, a chair and a lamp the same way, each at its real footprint.

5 · The people. **+** ▸ **Character…** ▸ **A New Person…**, click where they stand. Right-click them ▸ **Who Is This…** to name them, and they go on the cast list for every scene after. A new scene comes with two unnamed people; name them or delete them.

6 · Type the shots. Open **Shots** at the top. Type a shot the way you would say it — *ots mitch to sara 50* — and press Enter. A camera is placed, aimed and lettered. Then *cu sara 85*. The chips under the line change size and lens with a click.

7 · Look through it. Click a camera and press `V`. That is the frame the lens gives you from that height in that room. Drag the picture to pan and tilt; the wheel changes the lens; the sliders are height and tilt. **Lit** and **Flat** switch the render.

8 · A beat and a move. Press **+** at the end of the beat bar for beat 2. Right-click Mitch ▸ **Walk To…** and click where he ends up. One person, two positions, joined by the line he takes.

9 · Play it. `P`, or ▶ on the bar. The scene plays beat to beat and the viewfinder follows; the numbers on the bar step through it by hand.

10 · Storyboards. With the viewfinder open on a camera, `S`. The frame becomes a storyboard panel on this beat. Do it for each camera, then **Boards** at the top is the scene, as pictures, in order.

11 · Out on paper. ≡ ▸ **Export The Storyboards — frames only, paginated (PDF)**: a page of frames with the slug and lens under each. Beside it, shot cards, the beat board with the overhead next to every frame, and the shot list as a spreadsheet.

12 · Save it. `⌘S`. The first time it asks where — your project folder, your account, or this machine — and for a name, like *12 INT LIVING ROOM - DAY*. Every scene is a Shot Designer file you can open anywhere. After this it saves itself as you work.

Then: ≡ ▸ **Show Me Round…** is a quicker look at a finished scene, the sample set; the chapters after this one are the detail; and if something is wrong, ≡ ▸ **Report** sends exactly what you were looking at.

CHAPTER 3

Walkthrough: the sample set

Shown, not read. ≡ ▸ **Show Me Round…** builds this scene and walks you through it — the plan, the viewfinder, the lens, the people, the beats and the bar — doing each thing for you and saying what just happened. Nine steps, skippable at any point; the scene on its own is ≡ ▸ **Open The Sample Set**. (The one that has you make a scene yourself is the chapter before this: **Your first project**.)

This handbook is searchable. Type a word into the box at the top left and it lists the chapters that hold it, most mentions first, with a line of context; the word is marked wherever it appears in the page. Esc clears it.

The quickest way to learn the app is to take a scene apart that is already built. ≡ ▸ **Open the Sample Set** loads one: a beach house — a living room with a deck, sand and water beyond it, two people, a short walk and four cameras with their boards already taken. It is a scene like any other, so everything below is done to it directly. Nothing you do to it touches your own files; it is not saved anywhere until you save it.

Each step names the thing to try and what to look for. Ten minutes end to end; the numbers are the order that builds on itself.

1 · Look around

Two-finger scroll pans, ⌘-scroll zooms, ⌘0 fits the whole scene. One grid square is a foot. Click the sofa, then ⌘-click the lamp: two things selected. Click empty floor to let go. Drag across the deck from empty space and everything inside the sweep comes with it.

2 · The room

Click a wall. Its panel opens on the right: height, thickness, the **ceiling** switch and whether the loop is closed. Turn the ceiling off and watch the corner finder — the room opens to the sky. Turn it back on. Drag a corner point to reshape the room; drag the wall itself to move the whole run. The door and the window sit on the wall and slide along it; pull the window wider from its edge and the solid finder shows the mullion move.

3 · Ground, sand and water

The deck, the sand and the water are walls that were told to be ground. Right-click the sand: **A Wall Again** stands it up, and the finder shows a low wall of sand. Right-click it once more and **Make It Ground…** lays it back down; pick *Water* and it shines. The plan draws water with a dashed shoreline so you can tell it from land at a glance. Overlapping grounds stack in the order you drew them, so the deck sits on the sand and the sand on the water. Camera D looks out through the door at all three; switch its finder to Lit and the water is still water. Right-click the water once more: **Water Depth…** sets how far anyone standing in it goes under. Drag Marcus's last stop out into the water at waist deep and Cam D shows him from the waist up, in both finders.

4 · Furniture

Kit on the bar opens the catalogue — search *lamp*, drag one onto the plan. `[` and `]` rotate it fifteen degrees, arrow keys nudge it. Click the armchair and drag Elena onto it: she sits, because a chair is under her. Drag her onto bare floor and she stays seated, on the floor, legs out. Her panel has the posture switch — standing, seated, crouching, lying — and a **lock** so a finished blocking cannot be nudged by accident.

5 · The walk

Marcus walks in from the deck door to the sofa. The bar at the bottom shows his three marks; click each and he stands on it. Drag him while standing on mark two and only that mark changes. Press `Space` to play the walk; the finder follows whichever camera is chosen. **Walk To…** again gives the walk a fourth mark.

6 · Cameras and the frame

Click Camera A. The corner finder shows its frame; **Lit** and **Flat** on the finder's toolbar switch between the lit render and the measured drawing. The panel carries lens, height and tilt. Slide the lens from 25 to 50 and watch the room fall away; take the height to two feet and the coffee table crowds the frame. Drag the camera's front handle to pan it, the body to move it. Camera C is outside on the deck looking back through the window — the glass, the sill and the room beyond are all in the solid view.

7 · Shots and their words

Each camera is a shot. The panel's **description** is what the shot list and the beat board print, big and bold; the nickname is the short name the plan shows. The **Shots** tab at the top opens the list; **Colour Cameras Apart** gives each its own colour.

8 · Boards

Shots on the bar shows the storyboards already taken for A to D; they were taken in Lit, so they are lit. Change Camera B, then press **Take** on its panel to retake. Boards are taken in whichever finder is showing, Lit or Flat. Drag a board down onto the plan to leave a copy there; drag the copy back up to remove it; hover a board for its ×. The **…** menu prints the **Board PDF** and lays out the **Beat Board**, one row per shot with the description set large.

9 · Location photos, stills and the plan under the plan

Location and **Stills** on the bar are empty in the sample — drop any photo onto the page and three targets appear: *Location photos*, *Stills*, and *Under the plan*. Under the plan puts a floorplan or a survey beneath everything, centred where you dropped it, to trace over. A photo's tile menu can also **Make It The Background**, pin it beside the plan, or stand it up in the 3D as a **backdrop** the cameras see.

10 · The sun

≡ ▸ **The Sun…** sets where the light comes from and how high it is. The sample's sun is low over the water; bring it to noon and the shadows through the window shorten. The sun lives with the scene, not the finder, so every camera and every board agrees.

11 · The iPad

Open the same scene on an iPad (sign in, or open the same folder) and press **Use as viewfinder**. From then on it follows the camera you choose on the laptop, and follows you to the next scene. **Finder / Board / Plan** at the top of the iPad picks what it shows; ⛶ fills the screen; it stays awake.

12 · Files

Save asks for a place the first time. With a project folder open, **Save As…** shows its folders, can make a new one, and saves the scene into it; **Rename Or Move…** changes the number or the folder later and carries the stills along. **Open Scene…** browses by folder with the most recent at the top. Leaving a scene always asks — Save, Don’t Save or Cancel — changes or not, even from an empty page.

Then

New Scene, draw four walls, drop a person and a camera, take a board. That is the whole app; the rest of this handbook is the detail.

CHAPTER 4

Pages

A scene can hold several plans of the same set — blocking on one page, lighting on another, a camera plan on a third. It's how a busy location stays readable without splitting into separate files, and it's the original's own feature: objects carry the pages they belong on.

The **page button** at the bottom right shows where you are — `1/5` — and opens the list. Pages can be named. **All pages at once** shows everything stacked, which is occasionally what you want and usually isn't.

Put something on a page
Select it, then **Put Selection On Page N** from the page menu.

Something that belongs everywhere
Put Selection On Every Page — the set, the walls, the furniture. That's the default for anything new.

Scenes you already made come in with their pages intact; the app reads the assignments that are already in the file.

CHAPTER 5

Moving and shaping things

Drag to move. Arrow keys nudge two units, ⇧ plus arrows moves twenty. [and] rotate fifteen degrees at a time.

Walking somebody through a scene

Walk To… on a person, then **click wherever they go next**. Each click is where they stand on the next beat — beat 2, then 3 — one figure with a position per beat, the run between drawn as a dashed line with a numbered dot at each stop. Keep clicking for as long as the move goes on; Esc stops, and so does clicking on the figure. Beat 1 stays where it is. **Walk To In Between…** puts a position on a tenth of a beat (1.1, 1.2…) that is theirs alone, nobody else's numbering changes; **Walk From…** is the way in (see below). Turn, sit, change what they hold on any beat: it is the same person throughout.

Older scenes had a walk as a *chain* — a copy of the person at every beat joined by arrows. The first time you Walk To, Turn To or pose somebody who is still a chain, the chain folds into one figure: same spots, same facings, each copy's pose as that beat's look, the copies gone. Nothing moves on the plan.

Under All every beat shows at once, numbered. Step to a beat and it is **one person** standing there; play and they walk the run, on their feet for the walk whatever they do when they arrive.

Moving a camera

Move To… on a camera, then **click where it goes next** — exactly the way Walk To works for people. Beat 1 stays where it is; each click drops another camera there, numbered, joined by a dashed line in that camera's colour. Keep clicking for as many beats as the move has; ⏎ stops.

Every one of them is a real camera. Grab it, drag it, swing it, change its height and tilt — change your mind as often as you like. Playing the move runs between them and carries **everything**: it travels, swings, rises and tilts from one beat to the next.

On the timeline the beats stop being separate cameras and become one camera making one move, so it doesn't matter which of them you have selected — press play and you watch the whole move from the top, through the lens, from wherever the camera has got to. Park on a beat and the sliders drive *that* beat, so you can land on beat 2 and finesse it.

The other way — beats on one camera

You don't have to plan a move before you place the camera. Put the camera where it starts, then **Add a Move…** — or `M`. That pins where it stands as **beat 1**, adds a second beat and drops you on it. Now just **drag the camera where it ends up**: that becomes beat 2.

A camera move is a move in three dimensions: each beat holds the **lens height** and the **tilt** as well as where it stands and which way it points. **Height & Tilt…** takes both as numbers. Set a jib low and level at beat 1, high and tilted down at beat 2, and it rises and tilts through the move — the plan writes the height and the tilt under any beat where they change, and the through-the-lens view follows them.

While you are parked on a beat the camera really is at that beat, so panning it, tilting it and dragging it all behave exactly as they do on a camera with no move at all — and whatever you do is recorded to that beat. There is nothing to press: adjust it at any beat and that beat keeps it.

Setting the beats by hand

Dragging things about and tagging where they stand covers most of it. What it cannot say is **wait here**. Right-click anything with a move and choose **Beats…**: every mark it carries, with the beat it sits on.

On beat
Change it. A mark set as 3 becomes 4 because that is what you worked out afterwards.

Held through
The beat this mark covers up to. Set a mark on 1 and hold it through 4 and nothing moves until 4 is past — then it goes. Somebody waiting by a door for two beats and then crossing is one mark held, not a slow drift from the moment the scene started.

×
Drops that beat. Struck-out rows come back if you click again before you set them.

A beat nothing is pinned to leaves everything where it already was, so you only have to say what changes.

Say it, or type it

Press `/`, or the microphone on the toolbar, and a bar opens at the top. Type a line and press Return, or press the microphone and say it — the words are the same either way, and the bar says what it heard and what it did. *beat 3 · next beat · all beats · 50mm* or *fifty mil · wider / tighter · open the frame · storyboard · pin / unpin · lit / flat · night / day · select Cam B · select Dylan · label this the good lamp · lock /*

unlock · height 4.5 · tilt -6 · pan 90 · move to · beat from here · play / stop · undo · save · fit. Something it did not get, it says so and suggests.

Dictating. Every text field grows a small microphone while it has the focus — a shot's description, a label, a location's name. Click it and speak; the words land where the cursor is. Listening is the browser's own (Chrome and Safari have it; the iPad too); nothing is recorded by Sightline, and the first time it asks for the microphone, allow it in the address bar.

The viewfinder panel

The frame, and under it everything you do to the shot, top to bottom: the camera and lens line, the beat, the height, tilt and pan, the lenses you carry, the sun, and the buttons. It never goes under the toolbar — dragged low it is pushed back up, and in a short window the middle scrolls while the buttons stay put. Drag it by its caption; double-click the caption to put it back in the corner; drag its left edge to resize.

On the frame itself: 📌 **Pin** keeps the finder on this camera whatever you click next — a chair, a lamp, another camera — so you can move things on the plan and watch the shot; the caption says *pinned* and the button reads **Pinned**. Click it again, or ⇧V, and the finder follows the selection again. **Wider** shows outside the taking frame; **Lit**/**Flat** switches renderers; **×** puts it away. Below, **Storyboard** is the lit button — it is the one you press most.

Flying the camera from the lens view

The through-the-lens panel has three sliders: **Height**, **Tilt** and **Pan**. They move the real camera, so the overhead turns and the frame updates as you drag — find the shot by looking at it rather than guessing numbers on the plan. On a camera with a move, whatever you land on is kept as that beat.

Swivelling

Three ways, so you never have to hunt: the handle on the end of the direction line, ⇧-drag anywhere on the camera, or [and] for fifteen degrees a press — ⇧ with those for one degree.

It saves itself

A scene that has a name on disk writes itself a couple of seconds after you stop working. Undo still goes back as far as it ever did. Because it is writing your real scene file, don't have the same scene open in another app at the same time.

From then on, dragging that camera while parked on a beat re-pins *that* beat, so you can keep adjusting either end without starting over. **Add Beat 3…** extends the move, `M` pins the current beat, and **Clear Move** puts it back to a camera that just sits there.

The move draws on the plan as a dashed run with a numbered dot at each beat, in that camera's own colour, so the whole thing reads without pressing anything. `P` plays it, and the camera travels and turns between the marks rather than jumping. People work the same way.

Your camera package

Camera Package… sets what the whole app measures against, and it is set up the way Frameline sets a viewfinder up. Two decisions first, as chips: **Super 35** or **Large format**, and **Spherical** or **Anamorphic**. Each one puts the body, the gate and the glass below onto a combination that lands where it should — a 2.39 picture for anamorphic, 16:9 for spherical — and the pickers are still there to be moved off it.

On the finder, the **LENS** deck is the same choice one click away: pick a set there and the chips under the frame become its focals, the way Frameline does it; a camera on a focal the set does not have moves to the nearest one. The camera's own panel has the same picker above its chips when the finder is down.

Then the **lens set**: Cooke S4/i, Master Primes, Signature Primes, Panavision C-series, the Optimos, forty sets with the focals each one actually contains. Picking one fills the case and sets the glass to what the set is, so a Cooke Anamorphic/i turns the app 2x on its own. The list stays yours to edit — you may not have every focal on the truck. Under it the app says whether the set **covers** the sensor: an S4/i on an ALEXA 35 in 4.6K 16:9 is two percent short of the corners, which is "check it wide open", not "no"; an S4/i on a Mini LF is no.

Camera and mode is the same table Frameline carries — each body by the mode you record in, at the maker's published active area, ARRI first — with the old table under **Older bodies** so a package saved years ago still means what it meant. The **recording gate** cuts that area further when you need to; the **glass** is spherical or 1.25x to 2x anamorphic.

It tells you what the combination gives you as you set it, because on anamorphic the numbers on a sensor and the shape of the picture are two different things. The ALEXA 35's 6:5 anamorphic mode through a 2x is 20.2×17.0mm of sensor and a 2.39:1 picture, and a 50mm covers 44 degrees across it — a 45mm on full frame, which is the number a viewfinder app has to hit. The lens cones on the plan, the finder's frame and the lit view all follow it, and the caption under the frame says the mode and the squeeze.

Two ways to draw a light

Lights: Diagram Style in the menu draws every fixture as a small symbol with its name beside it and the throw it covers, the way a lighting plan does — rather than its own artwork at the size the file measures it by. It changes nothing on disk: a scene drawn either way is the same scene, so you can work in one and hand over the other.

The timeline

Positions used to be a running order — 1, then 2, then 3, everybody in step. A scene isn't like that. Open the **timeline** from the menu (≡ ▸ **Tools**) and every move gets a bar on its own lane: **drag a bar** to make that move happen later, **pull its right edge** to make it take longer, and **line two bars up** to make them happen together. One person can cross while another waits; a camera can start its move halfway through somebody's walk. Click an empty part of a lane to scrub.

The beats are the keyframes — 1, 2, 3, the same numbers as on the plan. Each is a bar on its lane. **Drag the bar** to move that beat, **pull either end** to stretch it, and the **gap between two bars is a hold**: somebody has arrived and is waiting. Holds draw as a hatched span with their length on them, so the waiting is as visible as the walking.

Beats land on quarters as you drag; hold ⌥ for anything in between. If dragging isn't precise enough, **click a bar** and type the numbers.

Nothing has to be set: a beat numbered 2 starts at beat 1 and takes one beat unless you say otherwise, which is what everything did before.

Turning on the spot

Turn To… gives somebody a beat where they are, so all you do is swing it. A turn is a beat like any other — somebody facing the door is a move, it just doesn't go anywhere — and it draws as an arc round them from where they were looking to where they end up. It is the same figure on both beats, not a copy: step to the next beat and they have turned, on the plan and down the lens; play it and they turn as the clock crosses the beat.

Stills for every beat

Stills For Every Second… in the menu walks the whole scene and writes a picture of each beat: the overhead, and what every camera sees. They land in `Stills/<scene>/` next to your scenes, so you end up with a folder to hand somebody rather than screenshots.

Bending a move

Select a walk arrow, a track, or a camera with a move on it and you get a **hollow handle in the middle of each run**. Drag one and it becomes a real control point, so a straight move bends into whatever shape you want. Every bend you add gives you two more handles, so you can keep going. Drag the solid points to reshape it, ⌥-click one to take it out, and ⌥-click the last one to go straight again.

The travel follows the line you drew, not the corners — scrub the timeline and the figure or camera is on the curve where you can see it.

Dragging the end of a walk arrow **walks the person on it** rather than leaving the arrow pointing at nobody — either end, coming or going. The arrow keeps its clearance from them as they go.

Doors and windows go on walls

Drop a door, a window or an opening near a wall and it takes that wall's line and its angle — it sits *in* the wall rather than beside it. That isn't tidiness: an opening has to be in the wall to be cut out of it, and an opening that isn't cut out is one you can't see through when you look down the lens. Drag one and it re-seats on whatever wall it lands near, and moving a wall brings everything on it along. Hold ⌥ while dragging to place one exactly where you want instead. Furniture and props are left alone.

Reading a script

Read A Script… in the menu takes the whole thing pasted in. Every scene becomes a scene file with the scene text on it, the people in it standing in the middle with their names and the right gender where your cast knows, and the location assigned where you have one by that name. If it is episodic, put the episode number in and the scenes come out 103.12 rather than 12 — a folder of scenes called 1 through 40 is useless the moment there is a second episode.

Nothing that already exists is changed or deleted, ever. A scene file that is there is left exactly as it is. The only thing it will write onto an existing scene is a location onto one it made itself that nobody has opened since — so read the script now with no locations at all, draw the sets over the next fortnight, read it again, and the blanks fill in around your work.

It assigns a location, not a set. Which walls are where is yours to draw.

What the script calls a place

A script says **EXT. HELL HOUSE**; the production says **Eustis Estate**. Nothing but you saying so connects those, so each location carries the list of slug lines shot there — the **Slug lines shot here** field on the set page, or **What The Script Calls Places…** in the menu.

It is a list because a location is not one heading. A script has one HELL HOUSE and you have two: Eustis outside, Stevens inside, forty minutes apart. A school is one heading and several buildings — the library from one, the classroom from another. So the prefix and the room are part of it: `INT. SCHOOL – LIBRARY` beats `INT. SCHOOL` beats `SCHOOL`, and anything you have not split falls back to the building. You only ever have to name the exceptions.

Rename a location folder in the Finder and nothing breaks: the plan inside carries the name it was saved under, so a set is found by what it says it is rather than by where it is sitting.

The look of a place

Ten presets are ten ways of lighting a room and none of them is a point of view. What actually works is the paragraph you would write in a lookbook — where the light comes from, what it does to a face, what the grade is, what is not allowed — and that lives with the location, on the set page, by day and by night, because a place at noon and the same place at midnight are two different places. Write it once and every scene there gets it.

A scene can still overrule it. Written on the scene beats written on the location beats picked from a list.

Making a still of the frame

Make Still in the viewfinder sends the frame up as a reference picture and brings a photoreal one back, which lands on the plan as a storyboard card beside its camera. The frame goes as a *picture*, not as a description of one — the geometry is already right, and asking a model to rebuild it from prose is how you get a handsome still of a different room.

Five things go up. The **frame** first, because it is the one that says where the camera is. Then the same frame in **flat colour**, one colour per kind of thing, so nothing is ambiguous about what is a person and what is a wall. Then a **depth pass**, white nearest the lens, so it knows what stands in front of what. Then the **cast boards**. Then **photographs of the location** — several, from several positions, because one photograph of a front elevation is a background plate and four cannot all be, so the only way left to use them is as what the place is made of.

It needs an OpenAI key, set once in **Image Generation…**. The key stays on this machine: the page never sees it, and it cannot reach a share link or a published library. On cinesmith.app the key is the server's and there is nothing to set. Without either you are offered the other route — the frame saved and the brief copied, ready to paste wherever you like.

The dialog asks three things and works the rest out. **The look**, which is the decision you are actually making and changes every time — or **Write my own…** if none of them is it. **What is happening in it**, because the plan can say where the camera is and how tight the frame is and can never say that this is the moment she realises. And **which scout stills** to send, from a gallery of the whole location.

Which location that is, it works out for itself — from the set you placed, or from what the pictures in the scene are called, or failing all of that from the walls themselves. The lengths of your wall runs, rounded to the foot, are a fingerprint: compared against every saved set they find the room whoever drew it and however it got there. **not this one?** is beside the name if it is ever wrong, and the answer is remembered.

What goes in the brief

Short, and it got short the hard way. Every still that came back wrong earned a new sentence — one about the size, one about the mannequins, one repeating the size at the bottom in case the top had been forgotten — until it ran to forty lines and each sentence was competing with the last rather than adding to it. A long instruction is not a firmer one.

What it carries is what the plan knows and a photograph cannot say. The **size**, in the first line, because a shot planned very wide comes back a two-shot every time it is only implied by a focal length. **Inside or outside**, decided rather than assumed — walls in a plan are not evidence of a ceiling, and the outline of a house you are standing in front of is drawn exactly like the room you are standing in. **Where each figure lands in the frame**, as a percentage across and a percentage down for the head and the feet, since the viewfinder already did that arithmetic to draw them. The stand-ins **named as stand-ins**, grey mannequins marking where and how tall rather than how to pose. And the **sun**, if anybody has said where this is: which way the light comes from relative to the lens, and which way the shadows run.

Your own note on the shot — "MW quick push in to D and M" — steps aside when you have typed what is happening. Read as an instruction it says medium wide and it says move, and both of those beat the measured framing. It was written for the day; the other field was written for this picture.

Cast boards go up with it, but not on a wide shot. A character board is a portrait — a head filling its own frame — and handing two portraits to something being asked

for two small figures on a lawn is asking it to choose. Below 42% figure height they stay behind, where the face would be a dozen pixels anyway.

AI Brief copies the whole thing without sending it, which is worth a look before you spend a minute on a render.

Cars

The car is a Ford Explorer, built to the published figures: 16ft 6.8 long, 6ft 6.9 across the body, 7ft 5.3 over the mirrors, 5ft 9.9 to the roof, on a 9ft 11 wheelbase and 30in wheels. A specific car rather than a generic one, because a specific one has numbers you can check — and because it is what turns up as a picture car more than anything else its size.

The symbol inherited from the old format was twenty-three feet eight. The symbol inherited from the old format was twenty-three feet eight — a stretch limousine — and twenty of the cars in this library had been scaled down by hand to correct it, most to between fifteen and seventeen feet. It is drawn at its real size now, and those hand-sized ones were rescaled so they kept the size somebody gave them.

Four seats over two rows, with load space behind.

Down the lens it is two masses lofted from real sections: a body from the sill to the beltline with the wheels standing in open arches, and a cabin above it, upright, glazed between opaque pillars under a metal roof. A and B and C and D pillars are drawn because they are what a camera has to shoot around. The bodywork is solid — you see through the glass and nothing else, which is the point of glazing it at all.

The van too. The minibus is built the same way now: solid to the beltline, pillars, glass, a roof — and seats inside — so a lens outside sees whoever is in it, and one inside sees out.

Sitting on things. Somebody seated takes the height of what is under them: a sofa's cushion, a chair's slab, a bench; a counter, a bed or an apple box as a surface with their legs out along it. A seat up on a riser lifts them with it, and their own Off the floor still adds.

People in a car

Seat Someone… on a car puts them in one of the four seats: driver, front passenger, or either side in the back. Somebody already selected gets moved in; otherwise a new person is cast into the seat.

It is three things at once — the seat's place on the floor, sitting rather than standing, and a foot of height so they are on the seat and not under it — and getting two of

the three right is how somebody ends up kneeling in a footwell. **Empty The Car** puts everybody back on their feet.

Who somebody is, and what they look like

These are two different settings and they never touch. Select somebody and the character panel opens on the left.

Character colour
Which character this is. It lands on their top and on their mark on the plan, so you can pick the red one out of a room at a glance. It is not their skin — a green character does not have a green face.

Skin
Eight tones. Face, ears, neck and hands, and nothing else.

Name
Type it at the top of the panel. It labels them on the plan, names them in the brief, and joins the cast list so you can drop them into another scene.

Hair
Colour and style, on their own again. Eleven cuts: short, medium, long, ponytail and bun, plus afro, short coils, braids, locs and cornrows — hair that grows in a coil is a different shape, not a darker version of one that hangs, so they are built as different shapes.

Build
Presentation, build and real height. Change the height and the proportions change with it rather than the whole person being scaled — a tall person is longer in the leg, not bigger all over.

Pose and facing
Body facing and head facing are separate numbers, because somebody standing one way and looking another is often the whole point of the shot.

Everything applies as you touch it. Nothing here moves anybody, turns them, or resets what they were doing.

What's in their hands

Holding in the character panel, or **Holding…** on the right-click menu, and then which hand — left, right, or both.

The thing is drawn in that hand's own frame, so it turns with the hand rather than floating near a wrist: a rifle points where the arm points, a mug stays upright in the palm. Something you look at puts a hand up in front of you; something long

gets carried across the body, because hanging a rifle off a straight arm points it at the floor.

Arms, and what's in their hands

Right-click a person for **Arms**: at their sides, held out, out in front, folded, raised, or hands in pockets. The arms actually go there, and so do the hands — which is the point, because **Holding…** puts something in one of them: a phone, a bottle, papers, a laptop, a gun, a torch, a bag, a mug, a book, a stills camera.

A prop rides whatever the arms are doing, so a phone at somebody's side and a phone out in front of them are two different frames. Picking something to look at puts the arms in front for you unless you've already set them. The plan marks who is carrying something, and the brief says what.

Standing on something

A plan is flat, so the only way to say somebody is on a bed, on a step or on an apple box is to say it. **Height Off The Floor…** on a person does that, in feet — a bed is about 2, a step 8 inches, an apple box 1. The lens cares: eighteen inches of bed is the difference between an eyeline and the top of a head. Stairs draw as real treads and risers, so you can see which one somebody is on.

Keeping an eye on a frame

The **pin** beside a shot in the list holds that camera's viewfinder up whatever you click next — so you can drag a light, a chair or an actor around while watching what it does to the frame. Pin again, or **Unpin** on the panel, to let it follow the selection again.

Standing, sitting, on the floor

Men get one line across the face, women two. Shoulders are drawn at the real widths too, 18 inches against 14.

A chain of beats is a diagram, so the plan shows all of them at once. Down the lens you're looking at the room at one moment, and there is only ever one of anybody in it — so the viewer shows the mark this beat belongs to and leaves the rest out. Play it and you watch one person walk.

On the plan a person is what you actually see looking down at them: the crown of the head, the shoulders spread round it, and their feet just showing in front. There is no face, because from up there there isn't one. It is the shape every good lighting diagram uses and it holds up at any size.

Everybody is built to real height — an average adult is five foot eight, so that is what they are, with men a little over and women a little under. Down the lens they are the same person in one solid colour with a darker head, and a nose so you can see which way they are looking. A man is a shield, narrow at the hips and widening to the shoulders where the arms are part of the mass; a woman is a bell — a waist, then a skirt out to the hem. Nothing else: at the size these draw, a face only ever reads as a toy, and the colour is what tells you who it is.

Getting a frame out of the lens view

Under the through-the-lens view, **Storyboard** drops that frame onto the plan as a real storyboard object beside its camera — drag it where you want it, and it saves in the scene like any other. Behind ⋯, **Save PNG** writes the frame out at four times the size, and **AI Brief** copies a written description of that exact shot: the lens and format from your package, the lens height off whatever it is rigged on, the field of view in degrees, the size of the room off the walls you drew, and every person in frame with their distance from the lens, where they sit in the frame, which way they face and whether they are standing, sitting or on the floor.

Hand an image model the frame and the brief together and it has the geometry as a picture and the facts as words, which is a great deal closer to your shot than describing it from memory. Nothing in the brief is invented — it is all measured off the scene.

Your cast

Name… on a person gives them a name, which draws under them on the plan — always the right way up, whichever way they face — and is what the AI brief calls them. Naming somebody also saves them, so **Add Character** offers them by name from then on and drops them in already coloured and cast. Colours run out; names don't. **Edit Cast…** is a plain list you can rewrite.

Right-click a person for **Posture**. It isn't decoration — it sets the height the lens sees them at (a seated head tops out around 4'4", a standing one at 5'9") and it changes the floor they take up. Somebody lying down is drawn at their real six feet, pointed the way they're facing, because on a plan the floor space is the whole argument. Select several people first and the choice applies to all of them.

A seated figure gets a chair bracket behind them in furniture grey. Look through the lens with V and the three read at their proper heights — which is usually how you find out the camera needs to come down.

A selected prop gets a box in its own rotated frame with three handles: one edge for **width**, one for **depth**, and the corner for **both**. Hold ⇧ on the corner to keep its

shape. So a table can be made long and narrow without changing how deep it is. **Size…** on any prop takes exact dimensions in feet.

Select several things and right-click for group work: align six ways, distribute evenly, rotate or flip about the group's centre, spread apart or pull together, recolour every selected character at once, or swap every selected prop for a different one. The group gets its own box with a rotate handle and the same stretch handles.

CHAPTER 6

Walls and building a set

Press W or pick the wall tool. Click to start, click for each corner, and the wall appears as you go — it's the real thing, not a preview.

Finish
Double-click, ⏎, or click the last corner again.

Close a room
Click back on the corner you started from.

Take back a corner
⌫.

Straight runs
Hold ⇧ to lock to fifteen degrees.

Off the grid
Hold ⌥, or press G to turn grid snap off entirely.

The bar along the bottom shows the length of the run in feet and its angle as you draw. Corners snap to corners already in the scene, so rooms join up.

The wall tool stays armed because walls come in runs. Everything else is one shot. Esc always leaves you with nothing armed.

Getting a floorplan in

Drop the file on the plan. Or paste a picture — ⌘V — which is how one usually reaches you anyway: a screenshot, or something somebody sent. **Add ▸ Add Floorplan…** if you would rather go looking for it.

However it arrives it goes in behind everything, on every page, and then offers you the scale, because a plan you cannot measure against is a picture. Say Later if you are in a hurry; **Set Scale…** on the background is there whenever you want it.

Tracing over a floorplan

Most plans arrive as a picture — a survey, a phone photo of a plan on a wall, something an agent sent. It reads fine to you and means nothing to the app: no 3D, no lens height against a real wall, no brief that knows the size of the room. Tracing turns the picture into geometry.

Letting it find them

Find The Walls… on the background reads them off the picture. A floorplan is mostly paper, its walls are the darkest thing on it, and they run square — which is enough to pick them out in about a second, against the few minutes it takes to click a scene by hand.

What it finds is drawn over the plan in blue and applied only when you say so. It will also offer you a dimension line, the border of the drawing, or the edge of the table somebody photographed the plan on; those are quicker to delete than the rest were to draw. It reads straight walls, not curves or diagonals. Set the scale first, or they arrive at whatever size the picture is.

Tracing them yourself

Right-click the background and pick **Trace Walls…**, or press ⇧W. It offers to set the scale first — drag a line along something whose length you know, a door is three feet — because a wall traced at the wrong size is worse than no wall at all: it looks right and lies about every distance in the scene.

Square by default
The opposite of the wall tool, because plans are square. Hold ⌥ for anything that isn't.

Close a room
Click back on the corner you started from. The last corner is pulled square as it closes, so the walls actually meet — a room whose corners nearly touch looks fine on the plan and falls apart in 3D.

Keep going
It stays armed room after room. Esc when you're done.

CHAPTER 7

The kit

Bars in the kit are drawn as bars in the Lit finder — uprights across the opening with two rails — not as an empty hole. Every other opening (a door, an archway, a cased opening) now has its jambs and head, and a window keeps its sill, mullion and glass.

Colour. Furniture and props come pale on purpose, but a red sofa or a green door is sometimes the point of the shot. Select the piece and its panel opens with a row of colours — oxblood to cream — a dash for none, and a picker for anything else. The plan, the Flat finder, the Lit finder and every board and export show it, shading kept.

Furniture and props move too. Right-click a sofa, a lamp, a car ▸ **Move To…** and click where it goes: that is its next beat. It slides there on play, the same way a dolly does — no copies of it on the plan. Once it has a move the menu sets, holds and clears its beats. **Groups:** select a few things and press ⌘G; click any of them and they are all selected, so they drag, rotate, nudge and Move To together — a table and its chairs cross the room as one. ⇧⌘G lets them go, and ⌥-click picks one member out without ungrouping.

Roads. A road, driveway or path is drawn to scale, and a road that is too wide for its street is the commonest mistake. Select it and the panel has what it is — driveway, road, single lane, path, parking — and a **Width** slider in feet. A car is six feet wide; a lane ten; a two-way road twenty-four.

Two pieces are plain on purpose. **Cube** and **Sphere**, in the furniture menu, are stand-ins for the thing you have not found yet — a crate about this big, the boulder, a hero prop that does not exist in any kit. Wide, Deep and Tall make them any block or ball, and Colour paints them, in both finders.

A **prop** here means what it means on a set: something a person picks up. It is not a sofa. Furniture, vehicles, trees and grip each have their own heading, which is the difference between a menu you read and a menu you search.

Add ▸ has characters, cameras, props, furniture, set pieces, lighting, grip, and camera support.

Grip is the part the original never had: C-stands, combo stands, sandbags, apple boxes, flags and floppies, 4×4 through 12×12 frames, overheads, bounce, V-flats, mirror boards.

Lighting covers the original's tungsten and fluorescent units plus SkyPanel S30/S60/S120, LED tubes, 1.2K through 18K HMIs, space lights, ring lights and book lights.

The furniture, modelled

In both viewfinders the furniture is built from its parts rather than standing in as a grey block: a sofa is a plinth on four walnut feet with a back, two arms, seat cushions and back cushions; a bed has its frame, a padded headboard, the mattress, a duvet turned back and its pillows; a bookcase is full of books, and they stay where they are between redraws. Tables have turned legs or a pedestal, the kitchen has shaker-front cabinets under a marble worktop, a stainless fridge, a range with its burners and knobs.

Each part is made of something, and the Lit viewfinder shows it: linen and wool are soft and flat, varnished wood takes a sheen, ceramic and chrome catch the room in them. A colour you give a piece goes on its upholstery or its paint — a red sofa keeps its walnut feet.

A piece keeps its real proportions when you stretch it: a sofa drawn nine feet long gets a third seat cushion rather than fat arms.

Some of the plan symbols are icons rather than drawings to scale — the dog is drawn thirteen feet long, the horse fifty-four, an airliner thirty. In the viewfinder those are built to the real thing, so a horse is a horse's size in frame; Across and Deep still stretch it from there. Nothing in the kit is a plain block any more: furniture, lamps, grip, camera support, props, the production kit, vehicles, trees and animals are all built from their parts.

Cubicles

Add ▸ Furniture ▸ Cubicle gives you a workstation you can build up and take apart. Its panel has **Panels** — Back, Left, Right and Front, each a switch, the front leaving the way in — and **Desk**: L-shaped, straight, or none. **Tall** is the panel height: forty-two inches for a low bench, sixty-six for the usual, higher for privacy. A colour goes on the panel fabric. Put several side by side for a row, or back to back for a pod; the plan draws exactly the panels each one has.

The lighting and grip kit, modelled

Every lamp is a head on a yoke on a stand, built for what it is: a fresnel with its cooling fins, lens and barn doors; an open face, a PAR, an ellipsoidal with its lens tube; HMIs with their ballast at the foot of the stand; panels and SkyPanels with the diffuser across the front; Kinos with their tubes; a softbox, a book light, a ring light; a space light's skirt, a china ball and a balloon hanging where they burn. The head sits exactly where its light comes from and tips in its yoke by the lamp's **Tilt**, so what you see pointed is what is lit. Switched on, the lens glows the colour its Kelvin says at the level its dimmer says; off, it is dark glass.

Grip is there too — C-stands with their gobo arm, combos, sandbags, apple boxes with their hand holes, flags, floppies and silks in their frames, a 12×12 flown on two stands, bead board, V-flats — and camera support: tripod, hi-hat, dolly on its wheels, slider, jib base and Steadicam.

Painting a wall

A wall's panel has **Paint**: off white, warm white, greys to near black, sand, sage, pale blue, slate, clay, brick, olive — and the plain swatch, which puts it back to the grey it always was. Both viewfinders paint it, so a bounce off a dark wall reads as a bounce off a dark wall.

Walls at any height

Select a wall and its panel has **Height**, with the ones you reach for: Full, Low room, Door head, **Cubicle** (5′6″), Half wall, Counter, Bar top and Knee wall. Anything short enough to see over gets a real thickness and a top, so from a high angle a cubicle row reads as panels rather than paper. The height you pick is the height the next wall you draw comes out at, so a bank of cubicles is one choice and then just drawing.

Windows wherever you want them

A window's panel has **Sill** and **Opening height** — the same two sliders a prop calls Off the floor and Tall, named for what they are on a window. Raise the sill for a clerestory or a high cell window, drop it to the floor for a storefront or a French window, make it a thin strip for a transom or a counter-height pass-through. The wall is cut to match in both finders. Doors, openings and archways work the same way.

Lights that light

Every lamp in the kit throws real light in the **Lit** viewfinder, from where you put it: from the front of its head, at the top of however high **Tall** and **Off the floor** have it, in the direction it is turned. Falloff is the inverse square, so walking a light in a foot does what it does on a set — halve the distance and it is four times as bright. A space light, a china ball, a balloon or a bare practical throws all round and hangs as a lamp in the air; a fresnel, a PAR, an HMI or an ellipsoidal throws a cone with a real edge; a panel, a softbox, a Kino or a book light is a soft source that just comes from somewhere. Twenty lamps can burn at once; past that the brightest are the ones you get.

Select a light and its panel has **The light**: what it is (a 1K, a spot at 40°, 3200K native) — every lamp in the kit has one, down to the plain LED in Extras — **On** and **Off**, **Output** for the dimmer, **Colour** in Kelvin with the five you reach for — 2700

practical, 3200 tungsten, 4300, 5600 daylight, 6500 overcast — and **Tilt** for a head that points. An HMI is about four times as much light per watt as tungsten and an LED about three, so a 1.2K HMI out-punches a 2K tungsten, the way it does.

On the plan, each lamp's throw is drawn in the colour it burns at: a cone as wide as its beam for a head, a pool for a lamp that throws all round. Off, it draws nothing; dimmed, it reaches less far. `D` quietens it with the rest of the annotation.

Daylight. Your lamps only show if the room is dark enough for them to. The **Sun** strip under the viewfinder has **Daylight** as well as the sun's position and strength: the strength is how hard the sun is against the sky, and Daylight is how much of the day gets in at all. Take it to nothing for a blacked-out stage or a night interior and what lights the frame is what you put on the plan.

Camera support has tripod, hi-hat, dolly, slider, jib and Steadicam.

Props has a **ball** and a **pumpkin** — round all the way up in both finders, sized from the panel, sat on the floor or lifted onto a table with **Off the floor**.

Furniture has a **mirror**. It snaps to a wall like a window, and through the lens it reflects the room — the cast on their marks, the far walls, the camera taking the shot — in both the flat and the solid finder. Any window can be told to do the same: **Reflects** on its panel, for glass at night.

For anything not covered, **Add Image Prop…** takes a PNG — transparent works best — and it behaves like any other prop.

Track and rigs

Retired from the menus in October 2026: a camera move is marks now, and the camera track, blocking mode and templates are gone from the bar and the + menu. What follows is kept for scenes that already carry a dolly or a rig; they still work as described.

Lay Dolly Track… builds a run out of what comes off the truck — 4ft, 8ft and 10ft straights, 45° and 90° curves — at the real 24.5-inch gauge. The panel keeps a running tally, which is what you'd hand the key grip. Turn the whole run with `[` and `]` or its handle; it pivots about the middle of the run so it stays where you put it. Hold `⌥` to turn off the fifteen-degree detents. Track sections don't bend, so a laid run moves and turns as one piece rather than corner by corner.

Add Rigged Camera… gives you a dolly, a dolly with a Jib 21, a bare jib, or a slider, camera already on it. It comes apart the way the real thing does:

The base takes the track

Drop it near track and it takes it. After that the base only goes where the track goes — select it and drag to run it up and down. ⌥-drag lifts it clear of the track altogether, and dropping it by rails again puts it back on. There's **Take Off Track** in its menu if you'd rather say it than hold a key.

The arm only articulates
Drag the camera and it swings on the arm. It can't leave the arm and it can't take the track itself; the faint circle is the sweep it can reach. A Fisher Jib 21 is 5'10", which is shorter than most people draw it. **Arm Reach…** sets it to something else for a 23.

Moving a dolly, and moving the camera on it

Track first. A dolly only goes where the track goes, so ask for a move before there is any and it offers to lay some — and once it is down you build the run out of real pieces in the panel: 4, 8 and 10 foot straights, 45s and 90s. The tally is what you would ask the key grip for.

Then the two moves, which you set separately.

The dolly
Select it and the panel shows **Dolly beats**: where it stands at each beat, in feet along the run, because that is the number you say out loud on the day. Slide it to where you want it and press the beat number. It stays on the rails the whole way — what runs between two marks is how far along the track it is, so it takes a corner rather than cutting across it, and re-laying the track carries the beats with it.

The camera on it
Add a Swing / Rise… on the camera. Its beats are not places on the floor — that is the dolly's business. They are where it sits on the arm, how high the lens is and how far it is tilted. So a jib can be rising and swinging while the base is still running.

Then the camera goes where both of them put it. It animates because it is attached, not because it was told to, which means you can set either one without touching the other. Both menus offer the other one too — **Move The Dolly…** from the camera, **Move The Camera On It…** from the base — so you never have to go hunting for the half you did not select.

Track is for dollies. A camera on its own doesn't need any — give it **Add a Move…** instead. Lay track with T and drop a dolly near it and the dolly takes it.

Deleting the camera off a dolly takes the dolly and its track with it, and deleting a dolly takes its track unless something else is riding the same run.

Moving track after you've laid it

Select a run and the arrow keys nudge the whole thing two units at a time, ⇧ for twenty — anything riding it comes along. [and] turn it about its own middle.

When the run is simply in the wrong place: ⌥-drag the dolly to where you actually want it, then **Lay New Track From Here** on it. It runs fresh track out from where the dolly now stands and strikes the old run — unless something else is still riding it, in which case the old run stays. ⌘Z brings it back either way.

Positions

Cameras and figures get more than one beat the same way here as in the original: **a beat is another copy, tagged with the time it belongs to**. Hit **Add beat** and you get a second one, tagged for the next beat. Move it and that's beat two.

Every beat shows on the page at once, numbered. That's what makes it an overhead — you can hand someone a sheet where the camera is visibly at 1 and at 2, rather than a diagram that only shows one of them at a time. Blocking mode is the thing that steps them one by one.

The dolly and the camera keep their own numbering. Pick the base and **Add beat** gives the dolly a second place along the track; pick the camera and it gives the arm a second swing. So a move reads as: dolly at 1 and 2, arm swung back at 1 and forward at 2 — each still only able to do what it physically can.

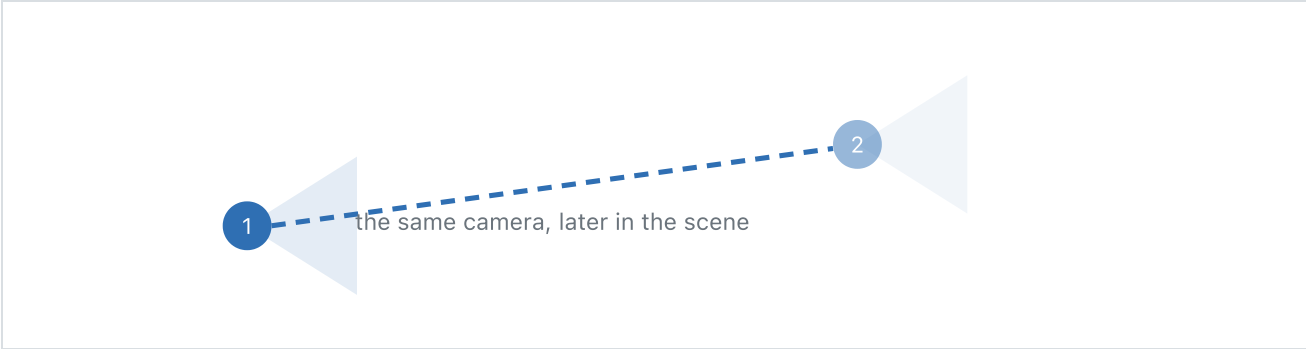
The numbered buttons say which beats this one is at — click to add or remove it from a beat, and a place used twice is simply tagged twice, the same as writing `1,4` on an actor's mark.

Step the timeline with the numbers at the bottom right, or with ← → in blocking mode, and only that beat is solid while the others fall back.

A beat holds both halves of the rig — where the base sits on the track *and* where the arm is swung. So a move reads the way you'd call it: dolly from A to B, arm starting swung back and coming forward. Each is still constrained: the base on its track, the arm within its reach.

CHAPTER 8

Shots, fast



A camera with a move is **one** camera with more than one position. The first is the camera; the rest are where it goes. The lens, the shot and its name belong to all of them.

Press `N`. The shot list opens with the cursor in the box, and you type the shot the way you'd say it:

```
ots d to m 50
cu sara 85
ins r 135
master
```

It shows you what it understood before you commit. A size, then who, then the lens as a bare number. Names match on the whole word or just the initial. Everything the app knows — OTS, CU, MCU, ECU, M, MW, W, LONG, Two Shot, Master, INS, POV, Profile, Push, Clean, Hi, Low, Jib, Slider, Drone — comes from what's already written across this library.

Hitting ⏎ places the camera, points it, lenses it, gives it the next letter and its own colour, and adds the row.

Straight onto a camera

Select a camera and press ⏎ (or `E`). Its shot opens with everything in one place — camera letter, the shot itself, lens, notes — and if that camera didn't have a shot yet, it gets one. Retype the shot line in shorthand and it re-reads it.

Your package

Size and lens: a click, not a number

Under the line in the shot list are two rows for the shot in hand — the sizes (OTS, CU, MCU, M, MW, W, EW, Two Shot, Master, INS, POV) and the lenses you carry. Hit ⏎ on the line and the shot you just added is the one in hand, so the very next click gives it its lens; click any row and the rows are that shot's. The one it is on is lit; click it again to clear it. A size click rewrites the first word of the slug, so the two never disagree. The rows stay even when the band is folded away, and the cursor stays in the line so twelve shots go in without touching the mouse — unless you want to.

The other two ways: press ⏎ on a camera and click it in the sheet, or put the number on the end of the shot line — `ots d to m 50`.

≡ ▸ **Camera Package…** is what you're actually carrying: the lenses in the case, in the order you reach for them, and the support that's on the truck. The lens chips and the rig menu follow it, so the app stops offering you a 135 you don't own. Packages are named, so a show with primes and a show with zooms can each have their own. It's remembered in the browser you set it in.

Coverage without typing

The **Cover** button lays out a two-hander in one go: the master, both over-the-shoulders and both singles, with lenses at 32 / 50 / 50 / 85 / 85. Singles are taken from past the other actor's shoulder, and every setup lands on the same side of the line — if the scene already has cameras it works out which side they're on and stays there.

The list

The list is a drawer from the top, opened when you want it and closed every new session. One row per shot however many positions the move has. Rows reorder with the arrows, and the camera letters renumber to follow. ⧉ duplicates a setup one step tighter — MCU becomes CU, CU becomes ECU — which is usually what the second shot is. Double-click a row to rename it. **CSV** gives the AD something they can open.

A row is one line however long the description; hover it and the whole description opens in a card beside the list, with the long one under it if the plan label carries more. **Hide tools** folds the search, the lenses and the actions away to the title, and remembers. **Board** opens the storyboard — see *Panels, and the board*.

CHAPTER 9

Seeing what the lens sees

Height, Tilt and Pan under the picture drive whichever position of the move is live, so parking on a beat and sliding one finesses that beat. The frame stays exactly as it is while you drag them. If you would rather see a margin outside the taking frame while your hand is on a control — useful on a long lens, where a close-up tells you nothing about which way the arm is going — tick **Open The Frame While Adjusting** behind the finder's ···. ⇧F holds it open for as long as you like.

The finder shows the camera you click, always. Stepping beats along a move takes it to that beat's position; clicking any position brings it straight back to that one, whether or not it was already selected.

The lenses are up the moment a camera is selected — a camera you have just put down has no shot yet, and the first thing you do with it is pick a lens, so the pick makes the shot. The letter comes with it; the words can wait.

Two things that turn a plan into something you can argue about with a director. Both are under **Layers** (L), and both are off until you want them.

Lens coverage

Draws the wedge each camera actually covers, at the real angle for that focal length on the body in your package — a 50 on Super35 is about 27°. Watching the wedge land on somebody or miss them settles it faster than talking about it. A camera only draws a wedge once it has a lens.

Through the lens

V, then pick a camera. The room from where it stands, at the lens and the height that camera has: walls at nine feet, people at their own heights in their own poses, furniture at the heights furniture has, updating as you drag. **Lit** is the room on the graphics card, with a depth buffer, occlusion and a real shadow; **Flat** is the measured drawing every export is taken from. Everybody in Lit is built at full detail with their face on, however far off they are standing and whichever way they were facing when you first looked: the card keeps what it is given and the camera moves afterwards, so a figure you first saw from behind at fifty feet has a face on it when you push in. It's for answering "is she behind the sofa" in ten seconds, not for looking like the film.

Black and blue. The finder panel is dark — the palette the lens deck and Frameline wear — whatever the page is doing, so the frame sits in a black surround the way a monitor does. ≡ ▸ **Finder In Black And Blue** turns it off if you would rather have it on the page's paper.

Real surfaces. The floors and grounds in Lit are photographs of the real thing — oak boards, deck planks, tile, concrete, asphalt, grass, sand, gravel, dirt, snow — scanned with their relief and their sheen (Poly Haven's free library), tiled at their true size so the boards are board-sized in any room. Walls and ceilings take plaster relief and keep their paint; a sofa keeps its colour and takes a weave; furniture wood takes grain. Each surface is fetched the first time a finder needs it, a few hundred kilobytes, and kept. ≡ ▸ **Real Surfaces In The Finder** turns it off for a machine that struggles or when you want the plainer diagram.

Take hold of the picture: drag the frame and the camera pans and tilts so the room stays under your hand; roll the wheel over it to go through the package. The finder follows the work — clicking a light to move it into the shot keeps the shot up — and **Hold** is for when you want it to stop following cameras too. It keeps the bottom-right corner; drag its top edge anywhere, double-click the caption to put it back. A second screen on the cart opens the session link with `&finder=1` and is the frame and nothing else.

Make Still holds the picture to the frame with a depth pass, and when the solid finder is up that pass is the real one off the depth buffer — a face is a face, a pumpkin is a sphere — so what comes back stands where you put it.

A camera's panel, at your left hand, is its one place: the shot and its lens, which beats it is on for, its positions with **Beat N from here**, the arm's marks if it is on a jib or a slider, and height, tilt and pan last.

It only tells the truth if the plan is drawn to distance. A schematic where the camera sits a foot from the actor will show an empty frame — and it says so, with how far away the nearest person actually is, rather than leaving you guessing.

Getting a plan to scale

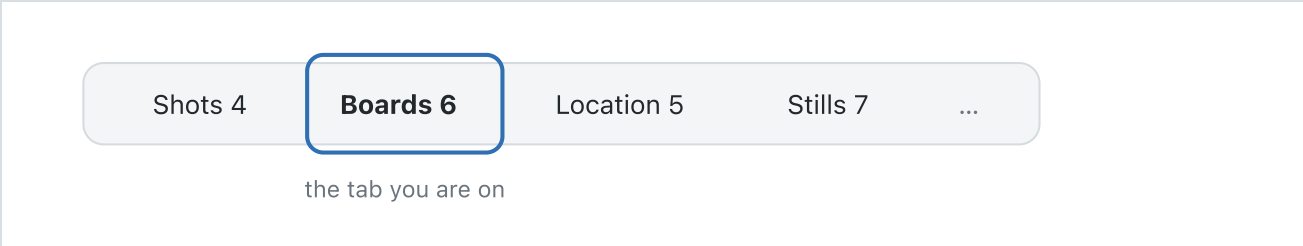
Which is what **Set Scale…** on a background image is for. Drop in a blueprint or a map, draw a line along something you know — a doorway, a scale bar, the length of a car — and say what it really is. The image resizes so the grid is true, and from then on everything measured off it is real: track lengths, lens choices, whether the dolly fits.

Right-click any picture you brought in — a floorplan, a scout still, an image prop — and **Crop…**: drag the corners, drag inside to move the rectangle, drag outside to

start again. What is inside stays exactly where it was on the plan, so walls traced off it are still on it.

CHAPTER 10

Panels, and the board



One bar along the top holds everything that belongs to the scene: the shots, the boards you have taken, the location photographs and the stills.

S keeps the viewfinder's frame as a storyboard — the same as the finder's Storyboard button, without reaching for it.

Leaving a scene. ⌘N, opening another scene, or switching workspace always asks first, whatever the state of the scene: **Save**, **Don't Save** or **Cancel**. A saved scene says so in the sheet and an empty page says nothing is drawn yet, but the choice is always yours to make — nothing is ever left unsaved without your choosing it.

The sun, under the picture. A line below the viewfinder's sliders says where the sun is — ☀ **Sun 205° · 24° up**. Click it and it opens three controls: **From**, the compass bearing it shines from; **Height**, how high it is; and **Strength**, how hard it is against the fill. Click the line again and it tucks away. Strength is the one to reach for when a shaft through a window does not read: at 1× the room carries a lot of soft ambient light, and winding it up takes that away and lets the sun do the work, so light through an opening lands on the floor where it should. It belongs to the scene, so every camera and every board agree.

The sun. ≡ ▸ **The Sun…** has two sliders: where it shines from, in plan degrees, and how high. Both finders follow it live: the solid one with its key light and shadows, the flat one with which walls come up light. It is kept with the scene. A ceiling and the windows decide what the sun reaches. The finder's own panel stays the camera's: height, tilt, pan, lens.

On the floor. The floor is the one surface everybody stands on: feet meet it (they used to stop a couple of inches short), somebody seated with nothing under them sits on it with their legs out, a chair or a bed or a table top takes them at its own height, and somebody lying down lies on it. Lying down has a **Propped up** slider — up on the elbows, as far as you like.

Crouching. The pose row has **Crouching** beside Standing, Sitting and Lying Down: down at a bottom drawer, hips off the heels, knees up, leaning in. Eye height and top follow, so the finder and the "in frame" checks are right for it.

Face Down. Lying Down is on the back, face to the sky. **Face Down** is the same six feet on the plan rolled onto the front — dragged along the ground, fallen, hiding behind a rock. Eyes to the dirt, the back a hair lower than a chest, Propped up still lifts the shoulders.

Labels. The panel for a prop, a piece of furniture, a light, a model or a painted ground has a **Label** line at the top: type a name — *Dad's chair*, *the good lamp*, *back lawn* — and it is on the plan under the thing (in the middle of a ground), the same size whatever the thing is scaled to, and on every export. People are named by their cast name and cameras by their shot; this is for everything else.

Locking. The panel that opens for a selected thing has a lock beside its close. Locked, the thing takes no clicks on the plan — a click near it grabs whatever else is there — and stays selected in the panel, so it can still be set from there. Locking somebody with a move locks every position of the move. Unlock from the panel or by right-click.

Changing where a scene is. Pick another place on the location card and put its set in, and the set that was standing here goes — the room is the place. Walls you drew by hand, and the cast, cameras, lights and blocking, stay where they are. ⌘Z brings the old room back. Rooms inside a place — *Verlice › Garage* — bring their set in the same way.

The ground locks too. Click the grass, the asphalt, any painted shape on the floor, and its panel opens: what it is painted, and the lock. Locked, clicks go through it to whatever stands on it. And **Layers** has a row for every shelf of the catalogue — **Ground**, **Furniture**, **Vehicles**, **Outdoors**, **Props**, **Set**, **Lighting** — each shown, locked or hidden on its own, so the trees can be locked without the chairs.

Windows in the solid finder are a frame, a sill, a mullion when wide, and glass you can see through — not just a hole.

Open Scene… browses the project the way Save As does: the folders in Scenes as folders you click into, with how many scenes each holds, Back to come out, crumbs across the top, and the last few you opened at the top of the root. Typing in the search box looks through the whole project.

Rename Or Move… (≡) is for when the name was wrong: it shows where the file is now (`Scenes/104/104.37.hcw`, say), lets you give it its name or click into another folder, and moves the one file — no copy left behind under the old name. Its stills go

with it: the folder of pictures dropped in for it and the frames named after it. **Show folder** in that sheet, and in Save As, opens the folder itself.

Save As shows where the scene will go — *Into Scenes › 105* — with the folders listed as folders: click one to save inside it, **New folder here…** to make one, Back to come out, and the button says **Save into 105**. **Save a copy in another folder…** writes a copy anywhere you point it, on Drive or off, while the scene itself keeps living in the project where autosave can reach it.

Ground: beach, water, grass. Draw the area with the wall tool as a closed shape, right-click it and **Make It Ground…**: Sand, Water, Grass, Dirt, Gravel, Concrete, Asphalt, Wood deck, Wood floor, Tile, Snow. The shape stops being a wall and becomes that surface — a fill on the plan (water gets a shoreline), the ground under everyone's feet in both finders. Shapes can overlap; draw the water, then the beach beside it, then the grass behind. **A Wall Again** turns it back.

Into the water. Depth belongs to the water, not the person: right-click a water shape and **Water Depth…** — ankle, knee, waist, chest, neck. Anyone whose feet are inside that shape sinks by that much, in Lit and in Flat, and walks out dry on the other side. It is deliberately not on the person's *Off the floor* slider: a scene without deep water never meets it, and a walk through the shallows needs nothing set on each stop. When one person should go in further than the water says — wading to the knees where it is waist deep, or ducking right under — their panel grows an **In the water** row while their feet are inside it: as the water, ankle, knee, waist, chest, neck, under.

A ceiling. Right-click a wall that closes a shape — a room, or a building drawn as walls — and **Add Ceiling**. It shows in the finder, flat and solid, and never on the plan; an open run is closed on the way. Remove it from the same menu.

New places and scenes, by hand. In **Where is this scene?**, type a name and press Return to make a new location, or click **New location…** at the foot of the list. On a location's card, **New scene here…** starts an empty scene already filed at that place; **Open Scene…** has **New scene…** at the top for the same thing anywhere.

Dragging pictures in. Drag photos over the window from anywhere and the targets appear: **Photos of the place**, **Stills for the scene**, and **Under the plan** for a floorplan or survey to trace. Drop on the one you mean. Dropped straight on the plan, they are location photos.

A photo's own menu. Right-click a tile on Location or Stills (hold it on the iPad): **Make It The Background** puts it under the plan, then Pin It On The Plan, Stand It Up As A Backdrop, Look At It, and **Delete Photo…**, which asks first and removes the file from the project folder. The × in a tile's corner is the same delete.

A photo from the bar, onto the plan. Drag a tile from Location or Stills down onto the plan and it goes *under* the drawing, centred where you dropped it — a floorplan to set the scale on and trace. The lightbox (click a tile) has the other two: **Pin it on the plan** for a picture card, and **Stand it up as a backdrop**.

A backdrop. From a photo's lightbox — Location or Stills — **Stand it up as a backdrop**: the still stands in the world, thirty feet wide, its bottom on the floor, thirty feet in front of the selected camera and facing it, so the frame has the location behind the set. Drag it to move, rotate it to turn. Select it and its panel has the rest: **Width** (the height follows the picture's shape), **Off the floor**, **From the camera** — how far it stands from the camera the finder is on, along the line between them — **Facing**, and three buttons: **Face the camera**, **Flip left/right** for a still that reads the wrong way round for the room, and **Lay it flat**. Right-click still has the width and the lay-flat. Any picture on the plan can be stood up the same way. Both finders show it — unlit in Lit, since a photograph carries its own light — and on the plan it is a line the plate's width with a tick on the side it faces.

The plan under the plan, on the floor. Whatever picture is under the drawing — the estate survey you traced the walls from, the scout photo of the lawn — lies on the floor of both finders at exactly its footprint on the overhead: centred where it is centred, turned the way it is turned, at the scale you set. So the parquet under somebody's mark is the parquet under their feet in the frame, and a set traced off a photograph is not walls standing on a blank grey floor. In Lit it takes the scene's light and the cast's shadows fall on it; at night it goes dark with everything else. The flat finder draws it in true perspective. A plan that is only there to be traced, or a survey with a title block you would rather not see underfoot, comes off the floor from its right-click menu: **Hide From The Finder Floor** (and back with **Show On The Finder Floor**). It is never in the masks the stills are made from, so a still's floor is still yours to describe.

Stills, on the bar. The fourth tab, **Stills**, is this scene's folder in the project's Stills folder — on Drive when the project is. Every frame the finder keeps lands there, and so does anything you drop on the tab or add with **Add images…**: frame grabs, references, a painting somebody sent. Click one to see it big, put it behind the plan to trace, or pin it; drag one down and it is a picture card on the plan. **Folder** opens the folder itself. Location has the same Folder button for its photos.

Start from the photos. A new scene usually begins as a folder of scout photos. Drop them anywhere on the plan (or ≡ ▸ **Add Location Photos…**). If the scene has not said where it is, it asks once, files the photos under that place, and the strip along the top opens on its **Location** tab. Click a photo to see it big and put it behind the plan to trace the walls from; drag one down onto the plan and it is a picture card

there. Drop more on the strip any time. The same photos are the place's scouts in the location card and in every scene at that place.

The bar. Under the scene's name sits one bar with three tabs: **Shots** (the shot list), **Boards** (every storyboard, by shot, a panel per beat) and **Location** (the place's photos). Click a tab to open it, click it again — or **Hide** — and the bar folds to a pill. ⇧B opens Boards. It starts folded each time.

Boards. Park the finder on a beat and press **Storyboard**: the frame slides into Boards, in its shot's group, with arrows between beats. The panel is the picture the finder was showing — the lit render when it was on Lit, the drawing when it was on Flat. The × on a panel deletes it (⌘Z brings it back). That is where storyboards live; the plan stays a plan. Click a panel to go to that shot and beat with the finder on it. Drag a panel sideways along its row to reorder the beats. Drag a panel down onto the plan and a **copy** lands there — the panel stays on the board, marked with a dot — and the copy does what a card on the plan does: a leader to its camera, arrows to its neighbours. Drag a copy back up onto the bar, or right-click it, to take it off the plan. The **…** button has both sheets, each as a **PDF** or a **PNG** — the board (plan, stills and shot list) and the beat board (the overhead beside each frame) — and lays copies of every panel out beside the plan or clears them all off. The PDF is the one to print or zoom; the PNG is one picture for a message or a wall, and the beat board's comes out at twice the size with its overheads drawn sharp.

Board on the shot list, or ⇧B, is a row per shot in the list's order, its panels left to right with the arrows between; a shot with no panel yet shows what its finder sees so the row is never a hole. Click a panel and the plan goes to that beat on that camera. **Drag a panel** along its row to change the order of the beats — the numbers and the arrows follow — or nudge it with the ◀ ▶ under it; drag a row, or ▲ ▼ beside its name, to reorder the shots. **Lay out on the plan** puts the cards beside the drawing in the same rows and columns, still tied to their cameras.

Every export that takes one picture per shot — the board PDF, the shot cards, the sheet — takes a shot's whole strip when it has more than one panel, in order, arrows and all. The hero beat still decides the frame for a shot with no panels.

≡ ▸ **Export The Beat Board — plan beside every frame, beat by beat (PDF)** is the one where the overhead moves: a row per beat of every shot, the plan drawn at that beat with only that beat's positions on it and that camera lit, cropped to the same thirty-six feet of floor around it every time, the panel for that beat beside it (the finder's frame where there is no card), and the shot line under both. Read down the page and the plan walks with the pictures.

It comes out as a **PDF**, three beats to a Letter page, and it is built to be zoomed: each overhead is redrawn from the plan itself at print size rather than cut out of a picture of the page, each panel is the panel at its own resolution, and every word is

type you can search. Zoom in on a camera mark and it is still a line. **Export The Beat Board — one tall picture (PNG)** is the old PNG, for a message or a wall.

CHAPTER 11

Marks

There are no beats. Every camera and every character has its **own marks** — 1, 2, 3, like key frames — and nothing is shared between them: slowing a walk moves that walker's marks and nobody else's. The overhead is the timeline: the numbered dots along a run are that thing's marks, in its own count; a hollow dot is a pose or a turn marked where no position changed. The bar at the bottom shows the **selected** person's or camera's marks on a timescale — drag one to move it in time, click one for its window — and says what they are doing: *Sara · Mark 2 of 3*, *Between 2 and 3*. Seconds run underneath and stay there. Nothing is a copy: a person is one figure, and the run between their marks is drawn place to place on the overhead. Old scenes were converted once, so they play as they did.

How a change becomes a mark

Everything that moves arrives with its **mark 1**, where it stands, so the bar reads "Mark 1 of 1" at once and Play runs straight away (a scene with nothing moving yet plays a two-second look). The first look you give a person — lying, say — is **how they start**: it is written at mark 1 and nothing else happens. The next change is **what happens next**: pick Sitting and how they were stays at mark 1, sitting lands at mark 2 a moment on, the clock moves there, and Play shows them **sit up** — a posture takes about 1.2 s, a pose about 0.6. Change your mind while standing on mark 2 and mark 2 changes; nothing new is made. Stand between two marks and a change is marked right there; stand after the last mark and it is the next one. ⌘Z if a mark you did not mean appears.

Postures **morph**: lying to sitting is a sit-up — the hips rise and the torso hinges up from flat — sitting to standing the hips rise, standing to crouching they drop and the torso leans in. Poses blend over the last few tenths of a second before their mark, as before.

Marks, anywhere

Think like animation. Stand anywhere on the clock — on a mark or between two, paused there or scrubbed there — and change something: drag somebody on the overhead, pick a pose, sit them down, move the camera's height, swing it. That change is **marked** to that thing at that time, and nothing else. The first half of a move being right is no reason to touch it: scrub to where it goes wrong and fix it there. A camera that waits and then moves is mark 1 and mark 2 on the same spot — **Waits Here…** in the mark's window does the same thing. The panel's ◇ **Mark**

here marks a thing as it stands (◆ takes the mark out again), and **+** on the bar does it for the selection.

The mark's window

Click a dot — on the overhead or on the bar — and a little window opens for that one mark of that one thing. The **pace slider** is how fast it gets there: slide left and the walk slows, right and it hurries; the word is the pace, the seconds are what it comes to. The marks after it ride along; nobody else moves. **Takes…** is the same as a number. **Pause Here…** is how long the thing stays on this spot before setting off for the next mark, and **Duplicate This Mark** lays the same stop down as a second mark half a second on — drag the copy along the bar to make the stop as long as you like, with no second point on the overhead. Under **The run into it**, **Goes, then settles** is the rush-then-slow-down, and the **Feather** slider is how much of the settle: full, a little, none. **Land With…** puts this mark at the same time as somebody else's — the camera arrives as she reaches the door — without a number in sight. Then how the run into it goes — evenly, starting slow, settling, or slow at both ends — and **Take This Mark Out**. **Drag a dot on the overhead** to move the position itself.

Names, copies and the blocking list

Name This Mark… in the mark's window: a few words for what happens here — *sees him*, *hits the mark*. It shows on the bar (a dot under the number), in the window, on the badge, on the boards' captions and on the blocking list. **Copy This Mark To…** gives another person the same moment, pose and name, marked where they stand; **Copy All Marks To…** does the whole set — a chorus of extras in one go. Cameras get the moments as marks where they stand. ≡ ▸ **Export The Blocking List** prints every person's and camera's marks in order with what happens at each — walks 11 ft at a walk, 3.4 s; sits; turns; waits — the page an AD or an actor can hold. Nobody is left off it for standing still: a person or a camera with no marks is one line, where they are for the scene. An old scene's chains of copies fold into marks on the way, and a move nobody timed takes what it takes at that thing's pace — a 29 ft dolly is a dolly, not a whip.

Ghosts

Select a person or a camera and two faint copies appear on the overhead: one at the mark before the moment you stand on, one at the mark after — where they came from and where they go next, as they are at those marks, pose and all. Click a ghost to stand on its mark. Nothing selected, no ghosts.

The bar

Select a person or a camera and the bar shows their marks, numbered, on a timescale. **Drag a mark** along it to move it in time; it stops short of its neighbours, with ⇧ it takes every later mark with it, and with ⌥ it leaves the mark where it is and drags a copy — a stop, in one move. The small handle **between two marks** is the run itself: drag it right and the run takes longer, left and it is quicker, and every mark after it rides along — Takes… as a drag. **Click a mark** to stand on it and open its window. Drag between the marks to scrub, ⇧ for slow; a board taken at a time is a dot above. Nothing selected: everyone's marks as faint dots. , and . step a little. **All** shows every position of every move at once.

On the overhead

Right-click somebody ▸ **Walk To…**, click where they go: that is their next mark, as far on as the distance takes at their pace — eleven feet at a walk is 2.4 s. **Walk From…** is the way in: they arrive where they stand, having set off that long before. **Right-click a run**: **Add A Mark Here** puts a mark on this thing's path at the point clicked, at the time it was passing — so a walk can bend, slow down or stop part way; **Takes…** re-times the run; and the pace. Change a pose or turn somebody between two marks and a hollow mark appears there. The panel's ◇ **Mark here** marks a thing as it stands; **Next Mark From Here** in the finder starts the camera's next mark the same as this one, for a tilt or a lens change on the spot. There is a walkthrough of exactly this: ≡ ▸ **Walk Me Through Marks And Timing…**. **Pace**: stroll, walk, brisk, jog, run, sprint; a camera creeps, dollies, moves quick or whips.

Recording a move

The fastest way to block action is to do it. ⇧R, take hold of a person or a camera, move them the way they move, at the speed they move, let go. The path is marked as you made it, in seconds, from wherever the clock was. Record the other fighter over the same stretch and they play together.

A fight, counted

Right-click a fighter ▸ **Fight** ▸ **Count A Fight With…** ▸ the other. How many counts, seconds per count, a pose for each fighter on each count. Each count is a mark that many seconds on, on both fighters, on their spots with their poses. Then it is marks like anything else: click one to change it. Play at ½ to rehearse it.

Boards save the moment

A storyboard taken from the finder saves the time it was taken at and an **overhead of that moment** with it, kept even if the scene moves on from there. It shows in the card's corner on the boards strip, the shot cards go out with it, and ≡ ▸ **Beat Board Overheads As Boarded** makes the beat board use them too.

Asking

Press `/` (or the microphone) and ask: *why can't I move my character?*, *how do I change the lens?*, *how do I make a dolly move?* The answer knows where you are — a tool on, All showing, playing — and opens the handbook at the right page. Orders work there too: *50mm*, *storyboard*.

Cameras stay on

A camera is on for the whole scene unless you say otherwise: before its first mark it stands at its first, after its last it stays at its last. Only "On for these seconds" in its panel, ticked by you, takes it off.

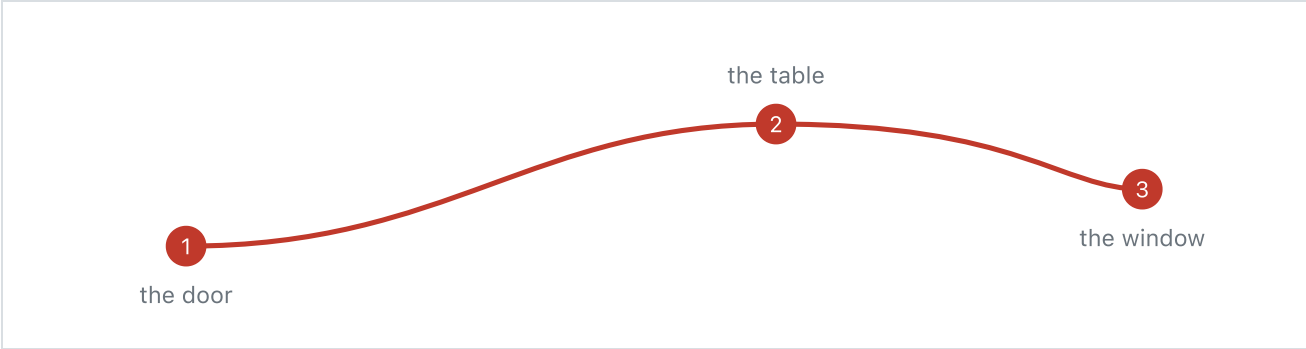
Playing, and pausing

`Space` or `P` plays and stops (space held is still the hand: drag to pan); the speed menu plays at ¼, ½ or 2×. The finder's lenses are up the whole time — a camera that has no shot yet gets one the moment you pick a lens, and a camera is always on one lens. Pause is a pause: the shot stops exactly where it is, and that is where your next change is marked. A change of pose does not cut: over the four tenths of a second before it lands the figure moves into it; anyone going somewhere walks.

CHAPTER 12

Blocking

What is kept with a person. Give somebody a name and their colour, their look, their age and their description are kept with them on the production's cast — put them in another scene and they come in exactly as you last had them. The panel says so at the top. Without a name, none of it is kept: it is only how that figure looks in this scene. Changing a colour used to be the odd one out — it changed the person and quietly did not reach the cast list — and now every part of the way somebody looks is kept the moment you change it.



One person, three beats. Each circle is where they stand on that beat; the line is the way they take between them. Press **P** and they walk it.

At the next beat they are… The other half of **Turn To…**. Turn To says which way somebody faces at the next beat; this says what they are doing with the rest of them — **standing**, **sitting**, **lying down** or **crouching** — in the same place, on the next beat. Right-click them and pick one: the next beat gets that as their look, the beats before keep what they had, and the beat bar parks on it. One figure, no copy — step back a beat and they are up again, step forward and they are sitting, in the finder as on the plan. It works whether or not they have a move already. Drag them on that beat if they should move as well as change.

A fight. Right-click somebody ▸ **Fight** ▸ **Grapple With…**, pick the other person, then the fight: grappling, shoving and shoved, choking, headlock, holding from behind, grabbing a wrist, pulling someone along, lunging, pinning down. The other person is set two feet in front (or at their back), facing them, and each gets a half of it. The halves are the fourteen poses under **Fight** in the menu and the panel — Grappling, Shoving, Choking, Headlock, Holding Round The Waist, Held With Arms Pinned Back, Struggling, Shielding The Face, Fending Off, Grabbing A Wrist, Pulling Someone Along, Lunging, Pinning Someone Down, Pinned — so one side can be changed on its own. Like any pose, on a beat of a move it belongs to that beat.

Walk From (Move From on a camera). They are already at the sofa on beat 2 and everywhere after; what is missing is the way in. Right-click them ▸ **Walk From…** and click where they come from. That is where they are at beat 1.5, half a beat before they arrive — one position of their own, on the same figure, with nobody else's beats touched. Parked on beat 2 you see the arrival; parked on 1 you see them at the door; play and they walk in through the second half of beat 1. On beat 1 itself, where there is no time before, they start at the door and arrive at 1.5. Cameras have the same, in the panel and on the finder, and a camera's way in is a move of the one camera, not a copy on a track.

Move To In Between. Move To… goes to the next beat. **Move To In Between…** goes to a beat of this one thing's own, between this beat and the next — 1.1, then 1.2, then 1.3 — so a camera can creep in three steps while everybody else's beat 1 and beat 2 stay exactly what they were. Nothing is added to the beat bar; the position plays where it says, and scrubbing to 1.1 shows it.

Who is this. Right-click a person and **Who Is This…** lists the production's cast and everyone named on the plan. Pick one and this figure — and every position of their walk — takes that name, look and colour; the blocking stays exactly where it is. **Someone New…** names a fresh person.

A busy scene ends up with one actor drawn at ten beats and arrows crossing everywhere. Press `B`.

It works out the beats from what's already in the scene — the walk arrows chain beats in order, and any numbers written into a beat's label say which beat it belongs to, including `1,4` for a spot that gets used twice and `5/6` for two beats in the same place.

Step with `←` and `→`. Only the current beat is solid; where everyone has already been ghosts behind them. Shot labels appear only for cameras actually pointed at somebody live on that beat, which on a busy page takes twenty-two labels down to about nine.

Nothing needs setting up first. It reads scenes you already made.

Switching from Shot Designer

≡ ▸ **Switch From Shot Designer…**, or the door on the first screen. Point it at your *Shot Designer Scenes* folder. It is the same file format, so nothing is converted and nothing is lost — every camera, wall, prop, light, move and storyboard comes in as it was, with the folders as they are. Two things happen on the way that you would otherwise do by hand: everyone named on a plan goes onto the production's cast list with their colour and height, and the name is written onto the figure so *Who is this* already knows. And you are told exactly what came across — the scenes, the

cameras, the people, the walls — and named, by scene, anything Sightline does not yet know how to draw. Your Shot Designer folder is never touched; if you have no project folder yet it asks for one first.

Coming back to what you had open

Sightline puts the loading mark up until there is something to look at or something to answer — so the question about picking up where you left off arrives over the loading mark, not over a blank new scene that was never yours. It arrives at once, too: the unsaved work is in this browser, so answering for it needs no folder, no Drive and no waiting. Finding last session's project and reading its cast is the slow errand, and it now runs alongside the question instead of in front of it. Say **Pick it up** and that scene is on screen while the folder is still opening; the only thing that waits for the project is reopening a scene that was last saved inside it.

Saying where a scene is

⌘L opens the card. It names the place you are already at straight away and fills the list in behind that, so there is nothing to wait for before you start typing — and if you are mid-word when the folder finally answers, the word stays where you left it. **change** in the corner puts you back to the picker.

Telling Josh something is wrong

≡ ▸ **Report A Bug Or Ask For Something…**. It carries the build you are actually running, which beat and which view you were on, and the name of the scene — nothing else about the scene goes, no objects and no pictures. Half of "it is still broken" is a copy that has not been reloaded since the fix, and the build on the report is what tells the two apart. With no signal it is kept on this machine and goes out next time.

How far a camera tilts

Tilt runs to 85° either way — far enough for a jib looking down onto a table or down a stairwell, not only the high angle fifty degrees gets you. Dragging the picture in the viewfinder goes just as far.

Day and night

The sun strip has a **Day / Night** switch, kept on the scene. Night is not daylight turned down to nothing — that is a blacked-out stage, right for a set with the doors shut and wrong for a street at 2am. Night is a deep blue sky and a moon: a cool mark where the sun was, at a twentieth of its strength, so what you put on the plan

is what lights the frame. **From** and **Height** point the moon, **Moonlight** is how much of it there is — a hundred is a clear night, nothing is overcast and the lamps are all there is, and it runs on to **300%**, the movie moon that marks a whole street blue — and **Exposure** is still yours. Moonlight is its own number on the scene, so switching to night and back loses neither level. The lamps burn exactly as bright by night as by day, and a third brighter than they did.

A room with a lid on it, and the iris

The sky in the Lit viewfinder arrives from every direction, and no ceiling stops it — so a closed room with a ceiling used to be lit as brightly as the lawn outside, and a 1K standing in it made no visible difference. Inside a roofed room the sky and the rim now come right down. The sun keeps its strength and its shadow, so what comes in through a window or an open door still comes in, as a shaft, where it actually falls; and your lamps do the rest, which is the point of hanging them.

The **Sun** strip also has **Exposure**, in stops. It is the iris, not the light: open it up to judge a night interior, close it down when a white set is clipping.

Doors that open on a beat

Select a door, a double door or a barred gate and its panel ends with **How far it stands open**. The slider says how far open it is *at this beat*, and **Shut on this beat** / **Open on this beat** are the two you reach for most. Pin it shut on one beat and open on another and it hinges between them — it is not shut and then suddenly open, it is coming open while she walks through it.

The overhead draws the leaf where it actually is, with the thin arc of its travel behind it, which is a blocking question as much as a set one: the leaf is in shot, or it is in the way of the dolly. Both viewfinders draw it too, and a barred gate swings as one grille, bars and all. **Forget the swing** puts it back to however its artwork has it, on every beat — a door nobody has said anything about has no opinion about the timeline.

What takes a click on a beat, and under All

Standing on a beat, only that beat's things take a click. Always — there is no switch for it any more. Every other position of every move is still drawn, so you can see the whole shape of the scene, but it is somewhere the thing *goes*, not where it is — a picture. The mouse goes straight through it: no light under the cursor, no pointer, no click. Nothing of another beat can be hovered, picked up or jumped to while you are parked; you move beats on the bar. Stepping off a beat also lets go of whatever lives there, so a figure from another beat cannot be left selected with its

ring and its handles sitting on the plan. Nothing is deleted — step back and it is yours again.

Under All there is a choice, on ⇧L or **Layers** ▸ *Under All, a click on a position goes to its beat*. **On**, a position lights under the cursor and a click on it parks you on its beat. **Off**, every drawn position is simply the thing itself and picks up as one — quicker when there is not much on and you are pulling a move into shape.

Either way, what is here comes first. A press goes to the thing that is on the beat you are standing on, even when a position of another beat is drawn on top of it and even when you land a few pixels off. A camera standing where somebody arrives nine beats later is still your camera when you click it — you get the camera, on this beat, not them on theirs.

Edit Shot: the lens and the size are rows, not numbers

Press ⏎ on a camera. The sheet's lens is the lenses you carry, as a row to click — the package's own list, with whatever lens the shot already has added if it is not in the package — and under it the sizes, the same way. The one that is on is lit. Click one; click it again to clear it. A size clicked leads the slug (*MCU Sara*), and a size typed at the front of the slug lights the chip. The slug still takes a lens in the words — *ots r to b 50* — when that is quicker. The right-click **Shot Description…** sheet is the same: type and lens as rows.

The slug keeps what you type

The shot's slug takes shorthand — *ots m to c 50* becomes **OTS Mitch To Carrie** on a 50 — and only when every word is understood. A name it cannot place, or a word after the second name, and the slug is kept exactly as typed; it never writes back half of what you said.

Play from here

P plays from the beat you are on — or from the moment you are scrubbed to — through to the end and round again. ⇧P plays from the top. Under **All** there is no beat to be on, so play starts from the top there too.

Any moment, not only the beats

Drag across the beat numbers and the scene holds still between them — at 2.4, everybody is drawn where they are on their way from beat 2 to beat 3, the viewfinder looks through the camera where *it* is on its way, and the caption says **Beat 2.4**. Take a storyboard or a still there and it is stamped 2.4 and its card reads *beat 2.4 · between*, so it sorts into the board where it belongs and says what it is. On the

Timeline sheet the red playhead is the same thing: take hold of it and drag, and the scene runs under your hand, viewfinder and all. It is play with the clock stopped, so the same rule applies: between beats you can look and shoot, and you can click a camera to look through it, but nothing that moves can be moved — a position at 2.4 is not kept anywhere, it is worked out from the marks either side. Let go close to a number and you are simply on that beat again. The timing sheet's ruler scrubs the same way.

Slowly. Hold ⇧ while you drag either scrubber and the clock moves an eighth as far as your hand. , and . step a tenth of a beat back and forward with play stopped, ⇧, and ⇧. a hundredth. ≡ ▸ **Play Speed** cycles how long a beat takes to play — ¼×, ½×, 1×, 2× — and is remembered.

The numbered dots are the beats

Every position of a move wears its beat number beside it. The dot is not a label — it takes a click, and what it means depends on where you are standing. On a numbered beat it takes you to that beat. Under **All**, where you are not standing anywhere, it makes that position the live one: the viewfinder looks through it, the caption says which beat it is, and **Height**, **Tilt** and **Pan** drive that beat and no other. That is how you look through beat two of a camera without leaving the view of the whole scene. ⇧M hides the dots when you want the plan clean.

One camera, and the beats that come off it

A camera is one camera. **Beat N from here** makes the beat after the one you are on, starting from the same spot with the same lens, and the camera you placed keeps the beat it was already on — which is beat one if it has been there all along, and beat five if that is where you brought it in. Each beat then holds its own height, tilt, pan and position: move them on beat three and beat two is untouched. Stepping through the beats moves the viewfinder with them, in both directions, with nothing to click twice.

The move you are on

An actor who walks back and forth draws four or five dashed runs across each other, and the plan stops saying anything. The leg leaving the beat you are parked on is drawn plainly; the rest of the move goes quiet, and so do the beat numbers that are not this beat's. Walk arrows do the same — the arrow out of this beat reads, the others fade back. Under **All**, and in blocking, they are all equal again, because that is the picture those are for.

Under All, people and cameras hold still

All draws every position of every move, which is the picture you want while you lay a scene out and the worst one to have live under the pointer — six positions of four people is two dozen things to nudge by accident while reaching past them for a wall. So under **All** a person or a camera can be clicked, selected and read, but not dragged. The set and the props still move, because that is usually what you are doing while you look at the whole scene at once. Step onto a numbered beat and everything moves again. It follows the same switch as *Under All, a click on a position goes to its beat* in Layers, so turning that off turns this off too.

A link that opens a scene

`cinesmith.app/sightline/?open=105/105.38` opens that scene from the project's Scenes folder the moment Sightline is up — the project has to be one this browser has opened before, so it can be found without asking. After that it is the scene you last had open, as always.

The woods, and a streetlight

Outdoors now has a **deer**, a **snake**, a **broom**, a **skateboard** and a handful of **apples**, and Lighting has a **streetlight** that throws its pool on the road in the lit finder. People have five more poses: *hanging by the hands*, *hand to throat*, *hands out, offering*, *gripping, in front* and *scrambling back*. Off the floor takes a person as high as you like — sixty feet is a girl on a broom above the canopy; ride it crouched, because sitting finds the floor under her.

Connect Claude — an assistant that builds in your scene

≡ ▸ **Connect Claude…** makes a link — `cinesmith.app/mcp/…`, yours alone — and switches on **Listening**. In Claude, Settings ▸ Connectors ▸ Add custom connector, paste the link. From then on, with Sightline open in a browser, Claude can read the scene, build a room from walls in feet with doors and windows, put furniture and props in from the catalogue, stand the cast on their beats in a pose, aim a camera at somebody with a lens and a height, make it night, look at the plan and through any camera, board every shot, undo, and save into the project. Say it the way you would to an assistant: “build a 14×18 living room with a window on the north wall, a sofa facing it, Sara on the sofa, and give me a wide and a close-up.” Every call is one undo step. The link can be replaced or revoked any time from the same sheet; nothing happens while Listening is off, and nothing happens at all without Sightline open and signed in.

Sequences — a whole scene from one document

Menu ▸ **Sequences…**. A sequence is a scene written down: the ground and the set, the cast on their beats — where each of them stands, which way, what pose and posture — the props that move and the beats they are on, a camera for every panel aimed at what it looks at, and the light. The app builds it: the scene, its beats, its shots, and a board for every shot on its beat. Three ship with it — the 105 broom sequence, in its three scenes: Willow Road, Black Willow Woods, above the canopy and the Verlice lawn. Build one, then save it into your project.

Save this scene as a sequence… writes the scene you have out the same way — a small `.sequence.json` you can rebuild later, hand to somebody, or keep with the script. **Open a sequence file…** builds one. The document is plain enough to write by hand: feet on the plan, beats by number, a camera as *where it stands* and *what it looks at*.

Taking hold of people in the finder

Press on somebody in the viewfinder and **hold still for a beat** — they come up in your hand, and then they go where the pointer goes, on the floor they stand on. A foot to the left is a judgement you make looking at the frame, so the frame takes it. Props too: the snake, the chair, the lamp. It writes where the plan's drag writes, this beat's position and no other, and only this beat's things take it.

A drag is always the camera. Start moving at once and the picture pans and tilts, whoever it started on — so framing up a close-up never picks the actor up by mistake. **⌥-drag** grabs straight away, no hold.

How somebody is, beat by beat

Everything in a person's panel — the pose, standing or sitting or down, which way the head is turned, what is in the hand, how far off the floor, propped up — is **this beat's**. Change it on beat 3 and beats 1 and 2 keep what she was; beat 3 and everything after wear the change until a later beat changes it again. It saves with the scene, beat by beat, and the finder follows it while a move plays. Nothing to set up: a person who is never changed on a beat is simply how they are, on every beat.

Move To, beat after beat

Move To… works from the beat you are on: where the thing stands is this beat's, where you click is the next. And the tool stays in your hand — the next click is the beat after that, and the next — so a walk across the room is one click per beat. Click the thing itself, or press `Esc`, to stop.

The beat you are on is the beat you are working

Everything that moves — a person, a camera, a prop — starts its beats from the beat you are standing on, not from beat one and not after its last. On beat 8, **Beat 9 from here** keeps beat 8 exactly as it is and starts beat 9 the same; **Move To…** marks beat 8 where it stands and puts beat 9 where you click. Beats before it stand where it does. Every prop's panel has its beats and a **Beat N from here**; **Only 8** on the beats row puts a thing on for beat 8 and no other — the snake is over her feet on beat 8, and gone on 7 and 9.

A shot line with a description on it

Type the slug, a dash, and what the shot is — `cu dylan 75 — hand to throat, the necklace is gone` — and the part after the dash goes into the shot's description, the same field the Edit sheet writes. The slug alone places the camera. **EWS**, **WS** and **MWS** read as sizes now.

Play the cut

On the **Boards** tab, ▶ **Play the cut** runs every board in order, three seconds each, in the finder — the scene as cuts rather than as tiles. `Esc` or a click on the plan stops it. Durations of their own and sound under them are on the bench.

Flying the camera from the finder

With the pointer over the picture, `W` and `S` fly along the lens — *where it is pointed*, so tilted down, W flies down into the room — `A` and `D` truck across it, `Q` and `E` go straight down and up. Hold a mark and it flies, easing up to speed and drifting a hand's width after the mark comes up, the way Unreal's cine camera does when you pilot it. Eight speeds, Unreal's: the **wheel while flying** steps through them (four feet a second to start with, said on the way past, remembered), `⇧` is four times whichever you are on. **Right-drag** looks round the way the mouse goes, a fifth of a degree a pixel on every lens; **middle-drag** trucks and pedestals at the fly speed. A plain drag is still a grab of the picture — the room stays under the pointer — and off the marks the wheel is still the lens. Nothing to switch on and nothing to eject from: away from the picture the same marks are the app's own. It writes where the sliders write, so a beat flown into place is that beat's and no other; on a rig it flies the rig. The marks are written on the picture until you have plainly learnt them.

Height, tilt and pan as beats of their own

A change of height, tilt or pan on the spot is a beat, the same as a move is. With the viewfinder open, **Beat 9 from here** (the button says the number of the beat it will

make) keeps beat 8 exactly as it is — height, tilt, pan *and lens* — and starts beat 9 as a copy of it on the same spot, then takes you there. Move Height, Tilt, Pan or pick a lens and the change belongs to beat 9 and no other: beat 8 keeps what it had, beat 9 tilts down, or goes to a 50. It is on the right-click menu too, as *Next Beat Here — Height / Pan / Tilt*.

Board this beat, beside it, is a different thing: it says which beat the stills and boards for this camera are taken at, whatever beat the bar is on. Lit, it reads *Boards use beat 2 ✓*; click again and they follow the bar.

If the next beat already belongs to that camera it makes nothing — it just steps you onto it, because the sliders are already that beat's. And there is no need to Move To somewhere else and drag the camera back on top of itself: that leaves two positions at the same point, and then clicking beat 1 or beat 2 lands on whichever of them the plan found first.

All means all

All is the coverage picture: the whole scene's staging at once. Every camera and everybody who moves is drawn at *every* position of their move, a shade back from the beat you were last parked on, with the dashed run and the numbered dots joining them up. Every one of those positions takes a click too, so you can pick up the camera at its position 2 without stepping to beat 2 first. It used to draw the run and the numbers and then the camera exactly once, wherever the last beat had left it — so a four-camera plan could come up looking like two, with the rest of the numbers standing on nothing.

The numbered beats do the opposite, and deliberately: one position each, the one that beat is at. That is what makes a number a moment and All an overhead.

Taking the plan back down to the staging

Two marks, for two different questions. ⇧N takes off the cast names, the lens heights and the tilts — who is that. ⇧M takes off the numbered dots and the height and tilt chip that sits under each one — when is this. Either one back on with the same mark, and both are remembered between scenes. ⇧M is also in **Layers**, under Declutter, so it can be found without knowing it is there. The dashed run of a move stays either way: that is the shape of the move, not an annotation on it.

Beats, one at a time

Parked on a beat, a new camera or character starts there: it is the beat-three camera, absent from one and two, on from three. Under **All** a new thing is on every

beat as before. Its panel says "On from beat 3", and ticking an earlier beat on lifts the start.

Parked on a beat, only that beat's things take the hand; the other beats of a walk are there to look at, not to hold, until you select one from the list or step to its beat. A camera or a character is on for every beat by default; the row of beats on its panel (or the right-click menu) takes it off one, so the plan for beat three isn't wearing the cameras from one and two.

Next Beat Here drops the next position exactly where this one is — for sitting up in bed, or a camera that tilts from her feet to her face without leaving the sticks. **Back To Beat N's Spot** sends someone back where they were without another figure on the plan, and in Walk To… a click on one of their own earlier positions means "there again", same pose and all. Somebody who walks somewhere arrives standing; somebody set lying down lies down, on the plan and in the finder, and only the walk itself stands her up while it plays.

Lock In Place on anything: it takes no press until a right-click on it unlocks it. The bed she kept getting instead of the actor lying on it is why.

CHAPTER 13

Keeping it readable

Overheads turn into soup as the day goes on. The tools for that live under the **Tidy** menu.

Colour Cameras Apart
Gives every camera its own colour. Their shot chips and shot-list rows follow, so eight setups stop being eight identical green arrows.

Shrink Shot Labels
Keeps the chips, drops the descriptions. Good for a page you're handing to someone who just needs to see where the cameras are.

Spread Overlapping Labels
Overlapping labels are always nudged apart on screen; this writes those nudges into the scene so they survive an export.

Layers (L) turns whole categories down — lighting, grip, walk arrows, storyboard frames — when you want the diagram to say one thing. Storyboard frames you've pinned to a plan draw in their black surround with their caption underneath.

Locking what you've already built

Clicking a layer cycles it through three states: **shown**, **shown but locked**, and **hidden**. Locked is the one you'll live in — the set stays on the page and stops being something you can drag by accident while you work cameras and actors on top of it. Locked things ignore clicks, marquees and Select All.

Lock Set, Props & Backgrounds does the three in one go, which is usually the moment the room is right and you want to stop touching it. Camera support has its own layer and isn't caught by that — a dolly is equipment, not set dressing, and you'll be moving it long after the room is settled.

Dragging locked scenery **pans the drawing** — it's a surface, not a hole, so grabbing the floorplan pushes the whole page around. A selection sweep only starts from genuinely empty canvas. Click into something locked and it tells you which layer is holding it.

CHAPTER 14

On the iPad

Open cinesmith.app/sightline in Safari, sign in, tap Share, then **Add to Home Screen**. It opens full-screen like an app from then on, works with no signal, and takes the same updates the browser does.

Signed in, your scenes follow you. On the Mac, with the project folder open, the account is kept in step on its own: whatever is newer in the folder goes up, whatever is newer in the account comes down, and a scene made on the iPad lands in the folder. On the iPad, **Open Scene…** lists the account in the same folders and ⌘S saves back to it. Nothing to send, nothing to start. ≡ ▸ **Sync With Your Account Now** if you cannot wait the three minutes.

The iPad as the viewfinder. Sign in on both. On the iPad, ≡ ▸ **Be The Viewfinder** — or open `cinesmith.app/sightline/?finder=1` from the Home Screen — and it is the frame the laptop is looking through and nothing else. It never opens a project of its own: the laptop is the project. It follows the camera the laptop selects and the beat the laptop is on; open another scene on the laptop, or undo, and the iPad has that scene a moment later. Whichever one comes up first, the other finds it, and if the laptop goes away and comes back the iPad picks up where it is. Nothing to start and no code to read out: signed in as the same account, both devices arrive at the same room.

Two laptops, one room. Whichever device opened a scene first is the host and keeps the scene. A second one on the account that comes up with a scene open steps back to watching and says so — it never sends its scene over yours. If you meant to work on the second one, leave the session there and start a new one.

Scans and 3D sets come too. The iPad has no project folder, so a scan or a model a scene stands on has to reach it another way: the Mac puts the project's scan and model files into your account beside the scenes — the moment it hosts a room, with every mirror, or from ≡ ▸ **Send Scans To Your Account — for the iPad** — and the iPad reads them back from there, saying how far it has got with a big one. A big scan goes up in 40 MB pieces and comes back down the same way, so the store's own one-object limit never gets in the way; anything over 400 MB is named and left. The first time a scan reaches the iPad it is a download of that size; after that it is cached by the browser like anything else.

The bar at the top of that screen picks what it shows: **Finder**, the frame the laptop is on; **Board**, every storyboard so far, the laptop's current one outlined and scrolled to; **Plan**, the overhead, pinch to zoom. A director holds it, or it stands on the cart as a

third monitor. It keeps the screen awake while it is up, and ⛶ goes full screen (from the Home Screen it already is). Press play on the laptop and the iPad plays the same move on its own clock, in step to a frame or two, however slow the connection; stop or scrub and it stops there too.

A finger has no right button and no wheel, so: **hold a finger still** on anything for its menu (or on empty floor for Add), **pinch** to zoom the plan, **two fingers** to pan it, one finger to drag a thing. The row tools on the shot list are simply there instead of waiting for a hover.

CHAPTER 15

How this is made

One read decides the still. Paste the scene from the script into the still dialog under *The scene* (or read the whole script in with **Read A Script…** and every scene carries its own). When you press Make it, one reader gets everything at once — the scene as written, the show's own look words, the place, the cast, the look you picked or wrote, how hard it is running, what is in the air, the season and the hour, and the plan's measurements of the frame — and decides the picture from all of it together: the tone, the light, what falls to black, the palette, the performance, the dressing. Nothing is pre-digested for it. The one thing it may not decide is the framing: where the camera is and where each person stands and how big they are come from the plan, exactly.

Make Still, on top of a photograph. The best stills are made on a photograph taken from where the camera stands, with that lens — a scout frame from the location, not a render. In the still dialog, under *The place*, the switch **The first photo I pick is this camera's own view** is on by default: pick that photograph first and the still is built on top of it, the architecture fixed, the crew stripped out, the room dressed as the plan has it, and the people put where the frame says. Pick nothing, and the frame leads as before with the scene's scout photos as references.

What costs money. Nothing, in the beta — except a photoreal still, because each one costs the server real money to make. Every account gets five to try; after that it is $12 for 25 or $39 for 100, credited to the account with no expiry. The Make Still button says how many are left, and the account panel sells the packs. Pro itself is free until April 30, 2027 for everyone, while it is out being used and the notes come back, and stays the point of the app; the stills are a plus.

Web and Pro. Without an account, or on Web after the beta, the app is the taster: the plan with its kit, cast and cameras, positions and beats, the flat finder, the typed shot list, Shot Designer files in and out, and a PNG or SVG of the overhead. Everything else is Pro — the lit finder, storyboards and boards, every PDF, project folders with their locations and scouts, 3D sets, Blender and Unreal, the second screen, Connect Claude, sequences, and the stills (Pro first, then metered). A Pro door on a Web plan puts up a sheet saying so, with the way in; nothing is lost, and the scene you were working on is still yours. **Have a code?** The account panel redeems it — stills, Pro, or both, one use per account. Codes are given out by hand.

Sightline is built by a working director of photography with a pair-programmer, Claude. Features are decided on set and built the same week. The code is what one

DP and a model made of them, and it is fixed by the same two hands the day it breaks. There is no company behind it and no roadmap beyond the next show.

You are running build `local`. If something this handbook describes is missing, that is the first thing to check: the hub prints the current build at cinesmith.app/sightline/build.json, and a hard reload (⌘⇧R, or close and reopen the app on the iPad) lands it.

That cuts both ways. It is shaped by the job rather than by a market, and it moves fast. It also means a fresh feature can be wrong in a way a bigger team would have caught, which is why every scene stays a Shot Designer file you can open anywhere else, and why the Web version is free. If something is wrong, say so — it gets fixed the day it is found.

CHAPTER 16

Files, and getting it to people

Open Scene has a search. Type in the box at the top and the folder you are in is filtered; from two letters it looks through every folder — the account on the iPad, the Shot Designer folder on a Mac — and lists what it finds with the folder it is in. Enter opens the first.

Keeping a room you have built. Draw the walls, say where the scene is, and the room can be kept as that location's set — drawn once, it stands in every scene shot there. Two doors to the same thing: **Save This Room As …'s Set** in the menu beside Save, and **Update the set at …** on the location card. A set is the room and what stands in it. The cast, the cameras, the rigs and the blocking are the scene's, not the place's, and never go into one — a set opened on its own page has nobody standing in it.

The location card, and its set. The card says plainly whether the set is kept: under the buttons it reads **Saved — 14 pieces, 17 Sep 18:49** whenever there is a set on file for that place. Saving one says so and offers **Open the set** beside the message; the same link sits on the card itself, so the set on its own page is always one click away. **New scene here…** starts a scene already at that location and asks where to save it — if the project folder has gone to sleep, the browser asks for it again rather than starting a scene with no name and saying nothing.

Why Drive's Trash fills up. Every save replaces the file — that is how the browser writes, atomically, by swapping a new file in — and Google Drive treats each swap as a delete and a create, so the previous copy lands in Drive's Trash. Nothing is being deleted on purpose and nothing is lost; the Trash is old versions. Sightline now writes the file only after twenty quiet seconds, or at once when you switch away or leave the scene, instead of after every nudge — so a day's work leaves a handful of copies in the Trash rather than hundreds. Drive empties its Trash after thirty days on its own.

Save As asks where first. A project folder (and then which folder inside it), your CineSmith account, or a file on this computer — three doors, the likeliest first. It used to go straight to wherever things last saved, which with no project open was the account and a name box.

Scenes are `.hcw` files, read and written in place from your scenes folder — so a library you already have opens as it is, and anything you save here still opens anywhere else that reads the format. Every save leaves a timestamped copy of the previous version behind.

Don't have the same scene open in both apps. The original has its own sync and will write over what you did here.

Duplicate Scene…
This scene as it stands, under a new name, next to it — set, lighting, cast, blocking, shot list — and you go on in the copy; the one you were in is saved as it stands and left alone. Works in a project folder, in your account and in the cloud. For a second scene at the same location, or for keeping what you had before trying something.

Export
PNG, SVG, a plain `.hcw`, or the shot list as CSV. Exports are always on white paper whatever the screen is set to.

Export A Whole Folder…
An episode as one PDF — every scene in the folder you pick, in the order they are named, one after another.

Frameline Stills
Every still the Frameline viewfinder takes goes to your account's inbox, and Sightline — open on the Mac, with the project folder it is set to — files it under `Locations/<place>/` with a note of the lens, height and heading beside it, every five minutes or at once from ≡ ▸ **Frameline Stills — pull now**. The place is the one picked on the phone (Settings ▸ Sightline folder); the phone's list of places is the project's own, published back the other way. No Files-app link on the phone is needed any more. Switch the automatic pull off from the same menu.

Export Every Scene…
All the scenes out at once, *a file per scene*. Pick the folder, tick what you want for each — the PDF, the board, the shot cards, the beats, the coverage, the plan as PNG or SVG, the scene file, the Blender or Unreal script — and they are filed under `Exports/` in the project the way the scenes are filed under `Scenes/`: `Scenes/105/105.39 Woods.hcw` comes out as `Exports/105/105.39 Woods.pdf`. Into the project, not into Downloads, because forty downloads is not a deliverable and a folder is. A scene with no cameras is skipped for the things that need one and still gets its plan and its file. `Esc` stops after the scene it is on; the scene you had open comes back exactly, unsaved edits and all, and **Show** on the toast opens the folder.

Projects

A production keeps its work in a folder, so Sightline does too. ≡ ▸ **Open A Project Folder…** and point it at Google Drive, iCloud Drive, the Desktop or a disk in the truck. It makes the shape and leaves a note explaining it:

```
Klaypool Residence/
  project.json
  Scenes/       the plans you save
  Locations/    a folder per place, full of scout stills
  Sets/         each place's drawn floorplan
  Stills/       frames that came back from the model
```

One picker, one permission, once per job. Scenes save there. Scouts are read from there — drop stills into `Locations/Kitchen` in the Finder and the kitchen has scouts here, with nothing imported. Nothing is uploaded, so whatever already syncs that folder goes on syncing it, and when Sightline is gone the work is still there.

Asking separately to connect Drive and to point at a locations folder was always the wrong question: on any machine with Drive or iCloud installed, those are the same folder.

It reconnects itself next session. Chrome or Edge on a computer only — Safari and the iPad cannot hand a folder to a page, and there the account is the route.

Signed in on cinesmith.app

Scenes, sets and scout stills can live in your account instead, which is what reaches the iPad. ≡ ▸ **Where Things Save…** chooses between that, a project folder, and this Mac's own scenes folder.

Workspaces

A workspace is a name and a folder of scenes. There is always one, and out of the box it is the folder Shot Designer itself uses — so if you never open this menu, nothing about how you work changes.

Workspaces… adds another. A second workspace is a second folder and nothing more: it cannot see the first, adding one puts no file inside the one you are in, and taking one off the list leaves every scene in it where it was. Mark one **read-only** and scenes there open and plan normally but are never written — which is the setting for a folder another program owns.

Rooms inside a place

A house is several sets — the garage, the kitchen, the back lawn. On the location card, **New room at Verlice…** opens the chooser with the house already typed; name the room and it is filed under it, as *Locations/Verlice/Garage*, with its own plan and its own scout photos. Once a place has rooms the button reads **Rooms here (n)…**. Typing *Verlice/Garage* anywhere a location is asked for does the same.

From Blender — a set as a 3D model

A set built in Blender comes in whole. **Add ▸ Add 3D Model Or Scan…**, or drop the `.glb` onto the plan where it should stand. The file is kept in the project beside the location's scouts and plan — *Locations/Verlice/models/* — so every scene at that place can use it and it travels with the project. On the plan it is a footprint the size of the thing, named; in the lit finder it is the model itself, lit by your sun and lamps, casting shadows, at real scale. Its panel shows the measured size, a **Scale** for a model that was not built in metres, **Off the floor**, **Facing** and the lock. It sits on the Set layer, so locking the set locks it.

The overhead comes with it. The moment the model is in the lit finder it is photographed from straight above, and that picture — the real plan of the model, walls and furniture as they are — is what the plan shows inside its footprint, turning with it. It is filed beside the model (*name.glb.plan.png*) so it is there the next time without the finder. Nothing to draw and nothing else to export: one .glb gives you the 3D world and the overhead.

Cut at plan height. A house seen from above is a roof. So a model tall enough to have walls is cut at 4 ft 6 for its overhead, the way an architect draws a floor — you see the rooms. **Overhead cut** in its panel moves the knife, or turns it off for a piece of furniture; **Redraw the overhead** takes it again at the new cut the next time the lit finder draws.

Straight from the folder. Anything Codex (or you) puts in *Locations/Verlice/models/* shows on the location card under *3D models at Verlice* with **Stand it here** — one click and it is in the scene, no file picker. The file stays where it is.

Exporting from Blender: File ▸ Export ▸ glTF 2.0, format *glTF Binary (.glb)*, *+Y Up* on (the default), units in metres, *Apply Modifiers* on, materials and textures included. Apply transforms first (^A ▸ All Transforms) so the model measures as it looks. Blender's origin does not matter — the footprint is centred and the lowest point put on the floor. Keep it to the set: no cameras, lights or people in the file; those are Sightline's.

The deck: camera, lens, ratio, and the gear

Under the frame sits the deck, the way Frameline has it: **CAM** (the body and its recording mode), **LENS** (the set in the case and the focal on this camera), **RATIO**, and the ⚙. Any of them opens the package — body, recording mode, gate, lens set, squeeze, support. The lens row under the deck is the set's focals; the one you are on is the blue square. **Follow Frameline**, a switch in the package sheet: with it on, whatever body, lens set and focal the phone has on it becomes this package, and the focal goes on the camera the finder is showing, within twenty seconds of the

phone changing them. Same project, same account. The phone leads; a change made here is not sent back.

A scan of the real place — Gaussian splats

A location scanned on the day comes in the same way: **Add ▸ Add 3D Model Or Scan…** and pick the splat — `.splat`, `.ksplat`, `.ply` (a 3D Gaussian splat, the kind Polycam, Scaniverse, Luma and PostShot export) or `.spz`. It is filed under the location's *models* folder like a mesh, and on the plan it is a footprint you drag and turn. In the **lit finder it is the room, photographed**: stand a camera in it and the lens sees the real place, and the cast and the kit are solid in it — a person walking behind the scan's own sofa is hidden by it. The flat finder draws nothing for it (it would be a box the size of a house); switch to Lit.

The overhead is a cut. Seen from straight above, a scan is a roof and a garbled mess of ceilings, so the plan shows it *cut*: only what stands below the **Overhead cut** height (6′6″ to start) is drawn, floor first, so you see the rooms and the furniture with the ceilings taken off. The splat itself stands whole on top of that, invisible to the plan. A prepared scan can bring its own cutaway (a *name.splat.plan.png* beside it, with a *name.splat.json* saying its size and floor); the Stevens Estate scan does.

Which way is up. Phones export y-up and the app assumes that; a raw 3DGS training (the Inria trainer, PostShot's raw export) is y-down. If the room comes in on its side, select the scan and pick **Y up**, **Z up** or **Y down** under *Which way is up in the file*; it is turned over, measured again and the overhead redrawn. **Scale** on the same panel if the scan is not metric (LiDAR scans are). **Off the floor** if the floor it found is wrong.

Standing on it. A scan has no surface to rest on, but it knows where its surfaces are: the flat splats facing up are the floor, the treads, the landings and the table tops. Anybody you put down on a scan takes the height of what is under them — the fifth step is the fifth step's height, and a walk down the stairs (Move To, beat by beat) steps down with each position. Off the stairs they are back on the floor. A camera never snaps: its height is the one on its slider, wherever it is put down, so dragging it across a scan does not bounce the frame. On an upper floor the stairwell goes *down*: positions across it step below zero to the floor beneath. The lit finder has to have had the scan up once, because that is who measured it.

Clearing the furniture. Select the scan, **Clear a patch…**, and drag a box on the plan: what stands inside it between three inches and seven feet is cleared out of the scan — the table, the chairs, the plant — and the floor and ceiling stay. The file is never changed; the patches are kept on the scan, **Undo last** takes the last one back and **Put it all back** clears them all. Works on `.splat` files (the import makes one of anything else soon).

What a scan is not: lit. It carries the light it was shot in, so day and night, the sun and your lamps change the cast and the kit and not the room. It is for blocking, framing and lens choice in the real space, and for a photoreal plate from the camera's own position. Keep a scan to a floor: a whole house is three million splats and a hundred megabytes, a floor is half that, and a floor's worth drags smoothly on a Mac. Moving, turning or rescaling it on the plan loads it again where it now stands, so place it, lock it, and work. The Stevens Estate is in as two scenes, *Ground floor (scan)* and *Upper floor (scan)*.

To Blender

Export To Blender… writes a script that builds the scene: walls at their real length with the openings cut, blocks where the furniture is, stand-ins where the people are, and the cameras with the actual sensor, focal length and squeeze — keyframed across the beats, so a move you built plays there too. Open it in Blender's Scripting tab and press Run.

It goes one way on purpose. Nothing reads anything back, so a render pass can never quietly rewrite the plan it came from. Everything lands in its own collection; delete the collection to take it all out again.

CHAPTER 17

Every shortcut

The list is grouped by what you are trying to do, and it has a search box: type *board*, or *beat*, or a key itself, and it narrows. It is read off the app's own key handler, so it says what the keys actually do.

`N`	New shot
`B` then `←` `→`	Blocking, step beats
`W` / `T` / `R`	Wall, camera track, road or driveway
`M`	Give it a move, or pin this beat
`G`	Grid snap on and off
`V`	Through the lens
`⇧N`	Hide and show cast names, lens heights and tilts
`D`	How loud the plan is: Full, Quiet, Bare
`⇧B`	The board
`⇧V`	Hold the finder on this camera
`P`	Play, always from the first beat
`1`–`9`	Jump to a beat
`⌘`-click, `⇧`-click	Add to the selection
`⌘C` `⌘X` `⌘V`	Copy, cut, paste
`⌘D`	Duplicate
`⌘A` / `Esc`	Select all, deselect
`⌘Z` `⇧⌘Z`	Undo, redo
`⌫`	Delete
Arrows	Nudge two units, `⇧` for twenty
`[` `]`	Rotate fifteen degrees
`⌘S` `⇧⌘S`	Save, Save As
`⌘O` `⌘N`	Open, new scene
`⌘E`	Export PNG
`⌘0` `⌘+` `⌘–`	Fit, zoom in, zoom out
`?`	This handbook

About this guide

Printed November 1, 2026, for build a3491207. The chapters are the handbook that ships inside the app (press ?), so the app is always the newer of the two. The quick start is cut from the video tutorial, which is recorded off the app itself.

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