

## 1 The Basics of Subtitles

- Purpose of subtitles:
  - To give a textual translation (and interpretation) of speech, dialogue, and sometimes to describe sounds and music
  - They are meant to be stylistically neutral and as unobtrusive as possible (it's not really the kind of thing you get creative with)

### 1.1 Formatting

- There are basic standards for formatting subtitles, but they vary between country and production companies; most all of them share these basic principles in formatting:
  - Use a font like *Arial*, and avoid fonts with serifs, particularly small ones: Serifs tend to fall apart when a project is compressed to smaller dimensions –
  - Neutrally colored fonts, usually either white or yellow
  - Use *drop shadows* if possible: they help separate the subtitle text from images and video – especially if the background image is the same color as the font (i.e. white or yellow)

Serifs are those little 'hooks' on a font, like Times New Roman. The font of this margin note does not have serifs, or what is called a *sans serif* font. Arial is a typical *sans serif* font

Unshadowed Title  
Shadowed Title

DROP SHADOW

- 'Broadcast-safe' has to do with the position of the subtitles relative to the screen size. this is generally automatics, but as a general rule subtitles should be below the lower third of the screen and not too close to the edges

### 1.2 Transitions

- When an image changes, so should the subtitle: don't let subtitles 'bleed' over onto the next image, or you'll create visual confusion as subtitles seemingly appear and disappear at random

- Never use more than two lines (or things look too crowded and distracting): if there is an extended monologue, just use more subtitle frames – this is an example of **bad** subtitling



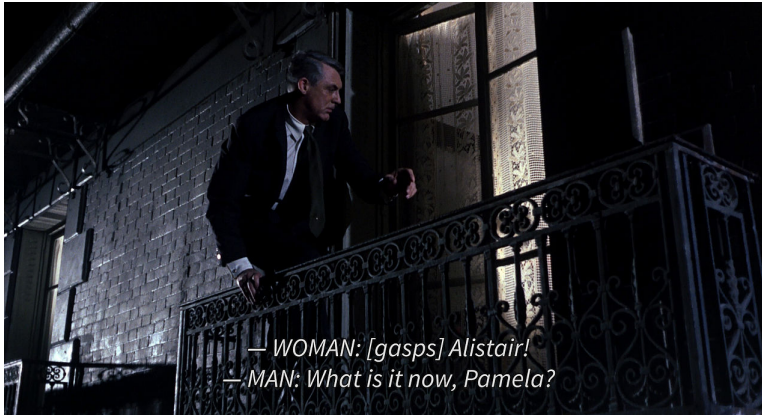
- Onscreen speaker: just the running subtitles with normal punctuation



- Dialogue between two onscreen speakers: use dashes ‘-’ to separate the dialogue



- Offscreen speakers or dialogue: specify who the speakers are (roles, names, descriptions) and *italicize*



- Descriptions of the scene, relevant sounds, singing or music are put in [square brackets]



Notice two more things: one is that the description of the door opening sound is offscreen and therefore is italicized. Two is that the door opening sound and her scream is like a dialogue, and therefore dashes are used

### 1.3 Subtitling software

- Subtitling in Movie Maker or iMovie is possible, but not really ideal
- There are many applications for subtitling of varying complexity, quality and price
- Aegisub is a free, cross-platform open source tool for creating and modifying subtitles

## 2 Practice!

### ★ Practice 1

1. Capture the YouTube file 'Best of Foghorn Leghorn.mp4' using the 4K Video Downloader
2. Select a scene to add subtitles to, and add subtitles in Movie Maker (Rolando) or iMovie (Tyler)
3. Render and save this file, and then test the playback

### ★ Practice 2

1. Capture the YouTube file 'Best of Foghorn Leghorn.mp4' using the 4K Video Downloader
2. Open it up in your editor and select one of the scenes and save it to your computer
3. Open your clip up in Aegisub and apply the subtitling techniques above to your clip
4. Render and save this file, and then test the playback