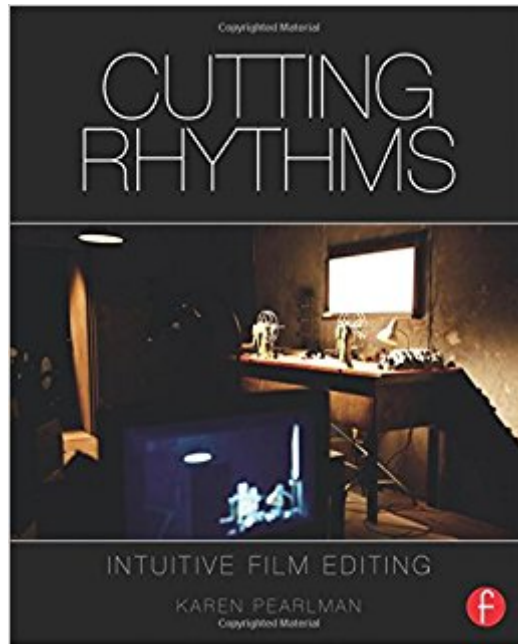




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# **Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing**



## Synopsis

There are many books on the technical aspects of film and video editing. Much rarer are books on how editors think and make creative decisions. Filled with timeless principles and thought-provoking examples from a variety of international films, the second edition of Karen Pearlman's *Cutting Rhythms* offers an in-depth study of the film editor's rhythmic creativity and intuition, the processes and tools editors use to shape rhythms, and how rhythm works to engage audiences in film. While respecting the importance of intuitive flow in the cutting room, this book offers processes for understanding what editing intuition is and how to develop it. This fully revised and updated edition contains:

- New chapters on collaboration and "editing thinking";
- Advice on making onscreen drafts before finalizing your story
- Tips on how to create and sustain audience empathy and engagement;
- Explanations of how rhythm is perceived, learned, practiced and applied in editing;
- Updated discussions of intuition, structure and dynamics;
- An all-new companion website ([www.focalpress.com/cw/pearlman](http://www.focalpress.com/cw/pearlman)) with video examples and links for expanding and illustrating the principles of key chapters in the book.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Karen's insights about the flow of story, emotion, image and sound have helped me at all stages of filmmaking, from onscreen drafting to fine cutting." - Genevieve Clay-Smith, multi-award winning Director

"A great resource! Karen's out-of-the box thinking about editing brings a new level of insight and articulation to describing what editors do and how we do it." - Jason Ballantine, ASE

Dr. Karen Pearlman is a director of the multi-award winning Physical TV Company where she directs, produces and edits drama, documentary and dance film. Currently a lecturer in Screen Production at Macquarie University, Karen is a former President of the Australian Screen Editors Guild and a four-time nominee for Best Editing at the Australian Screen Editors Guild Annual Award.

The best book in editing I can even imagine. So helpful in getting inside the process.

It's really great book. The one and only which describes topic so well

It is an inspiring title that explains clearly a difficult issue to express: the importance of rhythm in the assembly . A great help for those interested in understanding the art of editing .

This is a pretty good read. I don't know if I would have read it without the requirement of a class on editing, but it certainly helps to define good editing techniques. It's more for beginners of editing, but there's some very useful information in there that I wish I would have known from the start.

great

Here is a book on film (and video) editing that is frustrating, but can be helpful and thought provoking. The author assumes that the best video editing is intuitive and rhythmic. She explains what she means by these terms and then proceeds to compare editing to choreography. To show how editing is rhythmic she explores timing, pacing, and what she calls trajectory phrasing. She categorizes rhythms into physical, emotional and event rhythm, and divides style into a continuum from montage to continuity cutting. Pearlman explores the devices of parallel action and slow and fast motion. There is a discussion of the relationship between director and editor, which she nicely calls a Vulcan Mind Meld. She finishes up with an exploration of what she calls "onscreen drafting". The book is extensively illustrated with case studies, including photographs from motion pictures, which illustrate the various points, although photographs are a poor substitute for viewing a moving image. Pearlman's discussions deal in theory rather than technique. The latter half of the book points out a number of different ways that editors can think about the films they are cutting that may prove useful, although many of them are ideas that have been presented before. For example, she talks about cutting to follow how characters throw emotional energy to

each other. It's in the beginning of the book that the theory seems less useful. She tries to develop a theory for cutting that is based upon the idea of rhythm, perhaps because so many editors make mention of the right or wrong rhythm. My dictionary defines rhythm as a recurrent alternation of strong and weak elements, but Pearlman conflates rhythm with movement, and this special meaning reduces the accessibility of her explanation. (She does mention the cycle of tension and relief.) Moreover, she then goes on to compare editing to dance, even though a more obvious art might be music, especially since so many films and videos incorporate music. The author is careful to distinguish intuition from instinct, so that intuition can be developed, but although she promises how to develop intuition, she never actually does. Finally the last chapter, which is an add-on to the original book, suggests that film makers might create a draft film, to ease story development. Not only does she not mention existing tools, like storyboarding, but she also fails to discuss how draft films would substantially increase the time and cost of creating films. For an inexperienced editor or director, the book should prove interesting, as long as they recognize that some of the theory may not be useful or correct. I suppose even experienced editors may find something new here. Note: The publisher provided me with a review copy of this book at no charge.

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