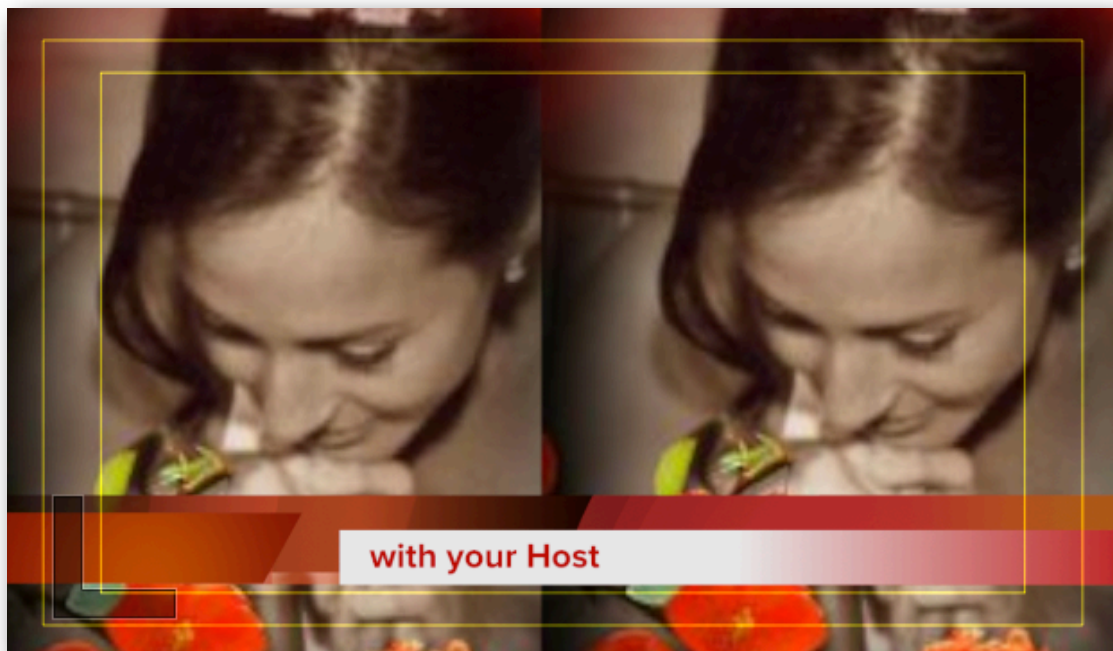


How to Make Your Film Title and Action Safe



The Back Door to Hollywood by Beth Rosen

copyright © 2012 all rights reserved



Title and Action Safe Grids

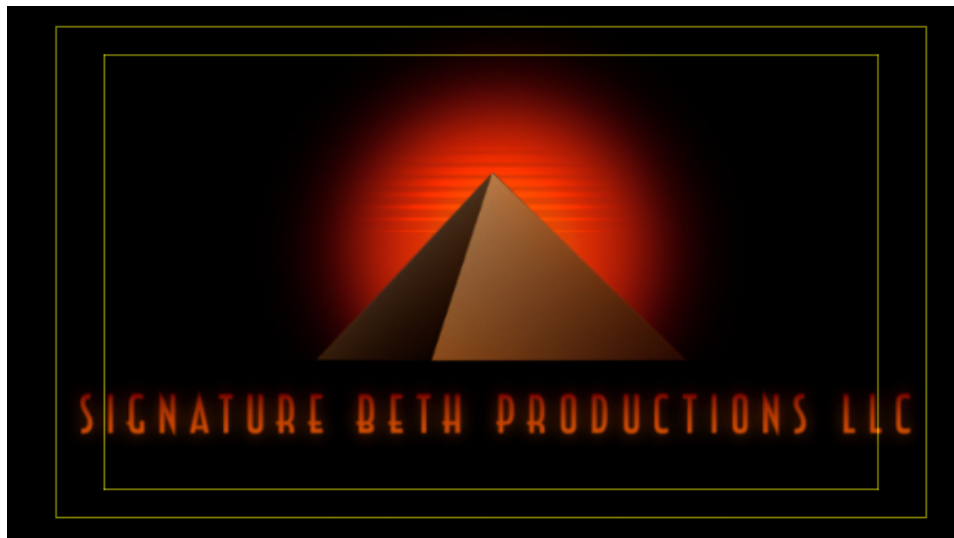
The yellow grid boxes represent the areas of your shots that are title and action safe. They are sometimes referred to as safe zones or safe grids and can be found in most professional movie editing software. They are different colors in different software programs but they always show up visually as a box within a box. The important thing to remember is to keep your titles within the inside smaller box and your important character action within the outer bigger box.

If for some reason you need to change your image so that it fits within the action safe area, then you will need to learn how to work with image and wire frames and other advanced editing techniques so that you do not distort the image or adversely impact the quality of your clip and/or continuity of your scene as you move to another clip. When you are behind the camera on set, keep these grid lines in mind when framing your shots so you avoid having to make changes in post-production.

TITLE SAFE

When you do your opening titles, subtitles and ending credits, keep in mind that people will eventually be viewing your film on their own television sets once it is on DVD or television/cable. Therefore you want to make sure you position those titles within the smaller inner grid box. Even if you want the titles to appear at the top of the screen, to the left or right or on the bottom, you still must make sure it is inside that inner box. It is the mark of a professional.

Remember to be careful with how you present credits so that people's names and titles do not go beyond the left and right grid lines which can easily happen if you do a two column credit scroll. The last thing you want is to have your own name or anyone else's cut off after all the hard work you all put into the film.



CASE STUDY 1: NOT TITLE SAFE

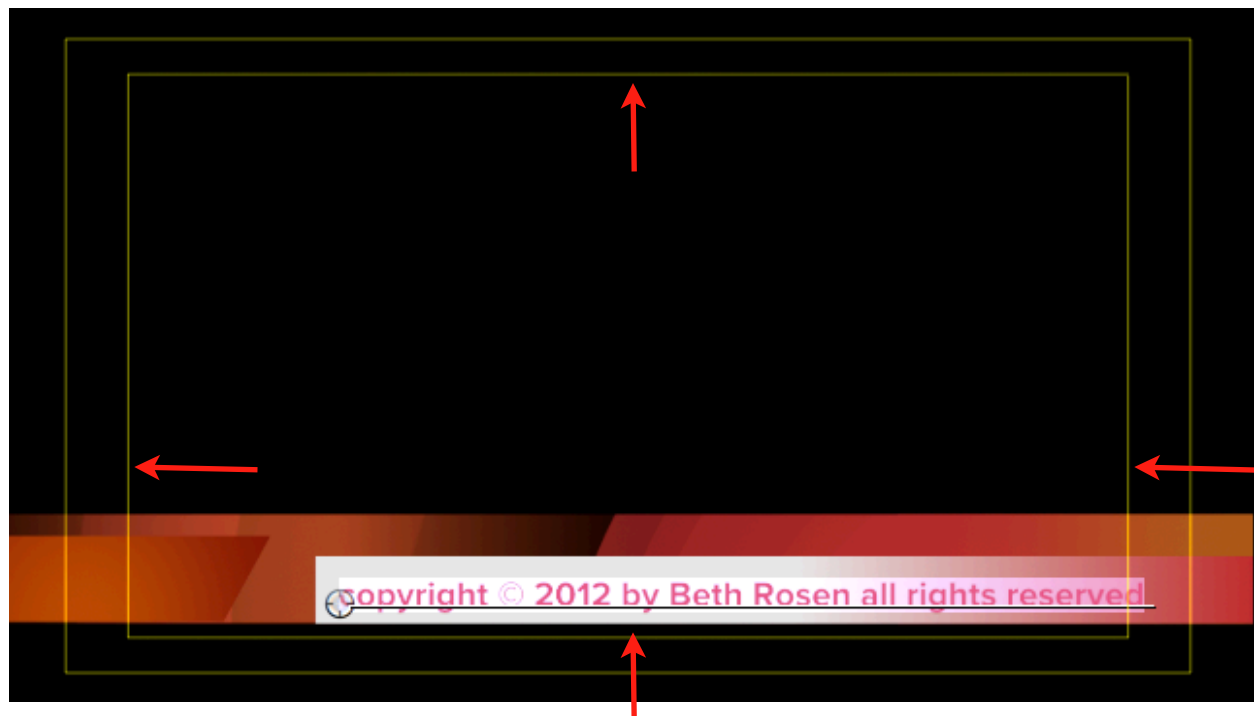
Notice how the titles in the clip to the left are not title safe. The first and last letters extend beyond the inner box so they might get cut off on a DVD burn or a television.



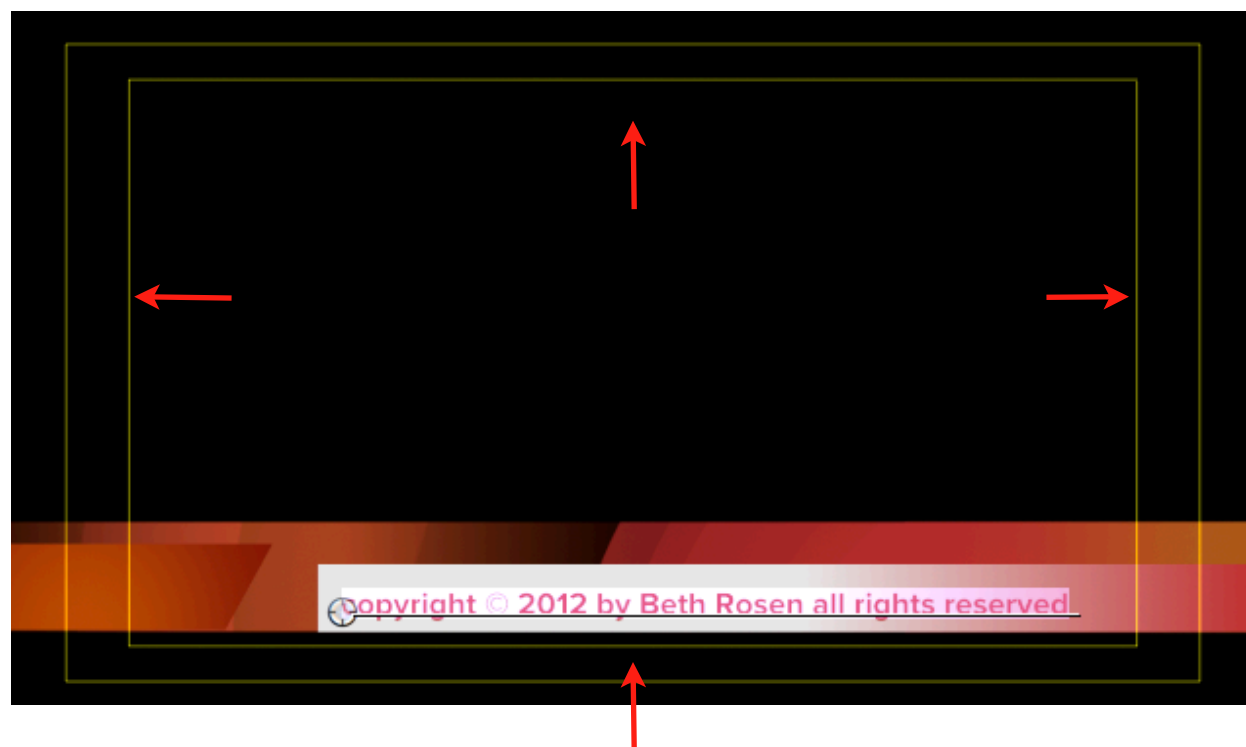
CASE STUDY 2: TITLE SAFE

This is a title safe clip because the titles are within the inner box and therefore there is no risk that they will be cut off on a DVD or television when viewing.

CASE STUDY 3: NOT TITLE SAFE: BEYOND THE INSIDE GRID LINE ON RIGHT

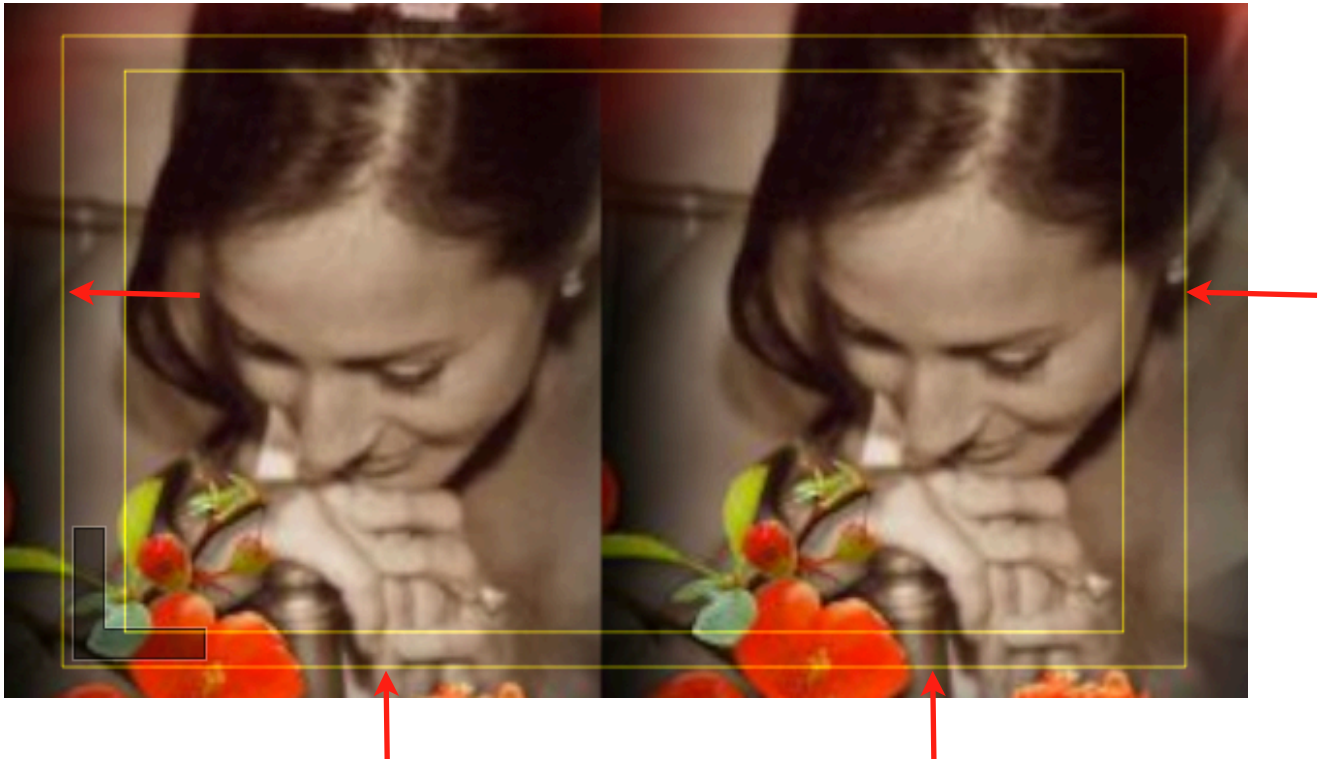


CASE STUDY 4: TITLE SAFE BECAUSE WITHIN THE INSIDE GRID LINE



ACTION SAFE ZONES

CASE STUDY 5: AREA BEYOND THE OUTER BOX IS NOT ACTION SAFE



Action safe means that the area that is inside the bigger yellow box (the outer yellow grid line in the clip above) will not be cut off on DVD's, television or home theater screens. Anything beyond that second outside frame may get cut off.

If you intend to burn your films and/or videos to DVD (which you must do if you submit to film festivals because you will need screening and exhibitions copies), or you intend for your video or film to be aired on television or cable networks, or via online video streaming sites that will be viewed on televisions and/or home theaters, then you need to make sure your films and videos are action and title safe. It is the mark of a professional.

Make sure your important characters and their actions are framed in the camera so they will be action safe. It's helpful to know this before you get on set so that you make sure your actors don't go beyond action safe marks.

When you export your movie for showing in a movie theater, make sure to format your film for the wide screen. Choose the 16:9 aspect ratio when exporting your project and burning to a DVD. This is how you make sure that it is formatted for the wide screen.

CASE STUDY 6: TITLE & ACTION SAFE: WITHIN BOTH GRID LINES



Even though there are some visual elements outside the safe zones, the critical elements are within the two boxes so there is no need to change anything. But if for some reason you have some item that is outside the safe zone grid and it is critical to the story line of your film, such as reaching for a priceless ring and the ring is outside the grid zone, you risk the home audience not being able to see it and missing a critical element of the plot line. If they cannot follow along, they will likely change the channel. Also keep in mind that members of the selection committee for film festivals will be screening your film and evaluating your work on their own television or home theater system so if critical actions or titles are cut off, it may impact adversely on your reputation as a filmmaker and you risk not getting accepted as an official selection to the festival.

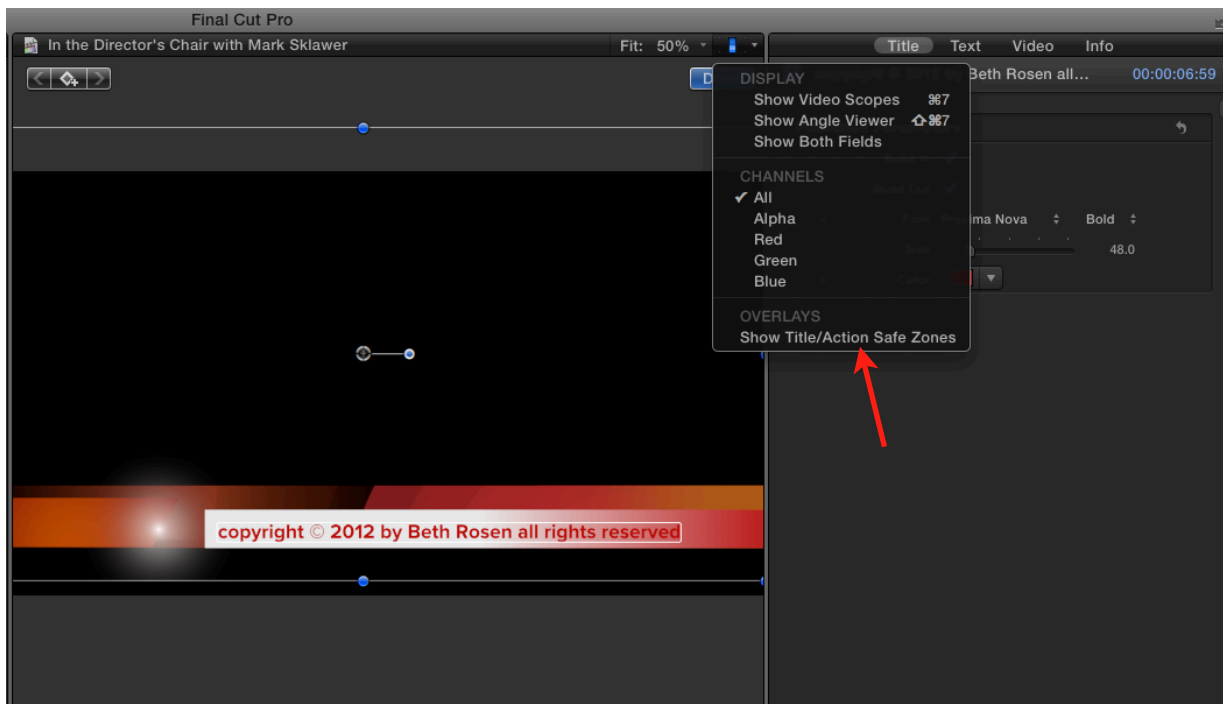
Even if you are planning on doing simple videos that are not full length feature films but you plan on burning to DVD for people to watch at home, make sure to title and action safe the video.

WHERE TO FIND TITLE SAFE ZONES ON FINAL CUT PRO X

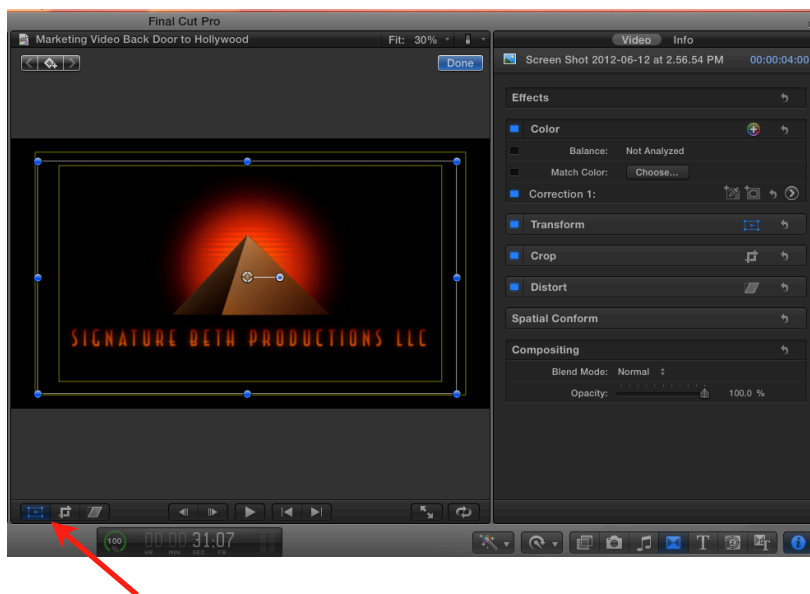
Click on the blue icon where the red arrow is pointing to



Select "Show Title/Action Safe Zone" option where the red arrow is pointing to



You can also click on “View” and then highlight “Show Title/Action Safe Zones”



One way to work with a clip that is not action or title safe is with the transform tool. Click on the blue transform tool on the lower left of the viewer (indicated by the red arrow) and then resize your video clip to make it title or action safe. Notice how the clip is resized by the blue dotted grid and is now smaller and within both grid lines.