

REVISION POLICY - Wed, Dec 8, 2021

By Tom Getty

Please read the following to understand how Acrolight Pictures and I handle revisions.

Revisions carry a heavy risk. Changing one item inadvertently changes a neighboring item. Think of a trailer like a carefully woven tapestry—tampering unravels the most snug thread.

The closer you drill to a structural level (changing pace, for instance), the more at risk the entire trailer becomes.

The artist's old friend Diminishing Returns always sets in.

When I deliver the first draft of a trailer, **it is my best draft**. I have poured in upwards of 30-40 hours of research, market research, pondering, testing, editing, re-editing, graphics design, copywriting, color correction, music composition, music editing, music mastering, audio editing, audio re-editing, pacing, syncing, polishing, re-shaping, mixing, mastering, and delivery.

I consider the trailer not only a representation of your film, but also an example of my own skills. Of which I take the most pride in.

I do not make choices carelessly.

Therefore, you can be 100% sure you are getting the absolute best trailer.

However, all art is subjective, and the client—you—may have changes or additional requests. This is perfectly fine and understandable. I can deeply empathize with not wanting to be feel stuck with something that can't be changed.

But I need guidance when doing revisions. So...

Revisions are to be defined by timecode, and within my guidelines of what a 'revision' is (see below).

First, the word “revision” MUST be defined and distinguished from the far greater, deeper-scope changes of a “draft.”

- **A ‘revision’ is a surface change that doesn’t affect the underlying structure.**
- **A ‘draft’ is a re-shaping of the underlying structure.**

Of course, this begs an even more specific distinction between a ‘revision’ and a ‘draft’.

As Justice Wendell Holmes once said, “I know it when I see it.”

I reserve the ultimate discretion of what a revision is, and what a new draft is.

Below are some very clear guidelines on how I define what a ‘revision’ is and what a ‘new draft’ is.

1) Revisions are generally based and limited by the trailer’s timecode.

Take for instance....

— *“Let’s swap out the one shot of James holding the gun for something else.”*

There’s many problems with this. First, the editor will not know who James is—nor will the audience. And, what’s wrong with James holding the gun? What would the client like in lieu of him doing that? And if not him, then whom? Or what? From which part of the movie? And how will the editor know THAT’S the correct shot? He wasn’t right the first time. This will require, on the client’s part, confirmation that the editor has chosen correctly. This increases the overall cost of the trailer.

Please just write the revision request like this...

— *“Change shot of man at 00:00:23:22 (in the review copy of the trailer) and replace with shot at 01:23:23:10 (from the originally-delivered-film’s timecode).”*

2) “Does this revision request raise more questions than it answers?”

If it does, the editor will likely define it as a 'new draft.'

For instance...

— *"I don't like the music. Can we try something different?"*

This request requires serious mind reading that the editor is not capable of. If the client doesn't like the first song chosen, they are probably not going to like the second. A request like this requires some deep searching. And that can only be done in a new draft.

If the client is unhappy with the music, it's my hope that he or she will just say, "Can you change the song at (insert timecode) to something more like "Mollussus" by Hans Zimmer?"

Depending on the complexity of the new song request, I might be able to wiggle this in as a 'revision.' I will let you know if this cannot be done.

But please! Please include your song preferences at the outset, as everything can be better built around it!!!!

3) If the revision request requires using polite, suggestive, explorative language, It's probably not a revision.

The following are signs that the client is not asking for a revision, but rather a new draft:

- "Let's see if we could..."
- "How about we do 'x'?"
- "What if we were to 'y'?"
- "Could you include more of 'x'?"
- "Can we have less (insert vague artistic term)?"
- "Can we have MORE (insert vague artist term)?"
- "What if you...?"
- "What if I...?"
- "I think it might be worth...."
- "Showing more of x could possibly enhance y"
- "My first thought is we're not showing enough of this thing we spent a lot of money on."
- "We're worried that..."
- "Do you think we should...?"

- “We’re hoping to...”
- “It needs to be further set up that....”

While thoughtful and probing statements/questions, it is language that betrays the requested revision hasn’t been thought through—and is being left to the editor to answer in the 11th hour, and within a structure that may refuse new ideas.

In a new draft, I will answer all kinds of the probing questions listed above. I will go back, as they say, to the drawing board, re-open everything, and take another crack at things.

In the revision process, **the client is working with a video editor who simply responds to the client’s specific requests.**

What goes in is what goes out...

If the client wants to leave it up to the video editor who will be making these revisions, that’s fine. But what is delivered as a revision is a fulfillment of the revision.

This means...

If the client doesn’t like the revision as corrected, then they must use their remaining revisions, or purchase a new set of revisions.

A revision is not a revision of a revision.

It is the start of a new revision, triggering the appropriate, subsequent charges.

Of course, if the video editor has not followed the client’s specific directions, then that mistake will be happily corrected.

If the client is still concerned about revisions, or worried about being stuck, I highly, highly suggest remembering:

THE CLIENT OWNS THE MATERIALS

All materials delivered are OWNED BY THE CLIENT.

That means, the client can re-mix, re-edit, re-do whatever to their heart's content.

This is **completely free and within the client's right to do so.**

In fact, I recommend even purchasing a set of the UNMIXED DIA, FX, and MUSIC AUDIO STEMS (\$75.00) so as to make re-editing, a re-working, completely possible.

This allows for 100% creative control on the client's part.

The client is also welcome to hire a third-party video editor to carry out subsequent revisions. I do not harbor any hard feelings about this! Sometimes a "fresh set of eyes" is just the ticket!