

A Guide to Creating a Book Trailer

by
Randy Ross
for



CAPE COD
writers CENTER
A Literary Tradition Since 1963

Presentation available at randyrossmedia.com/talks

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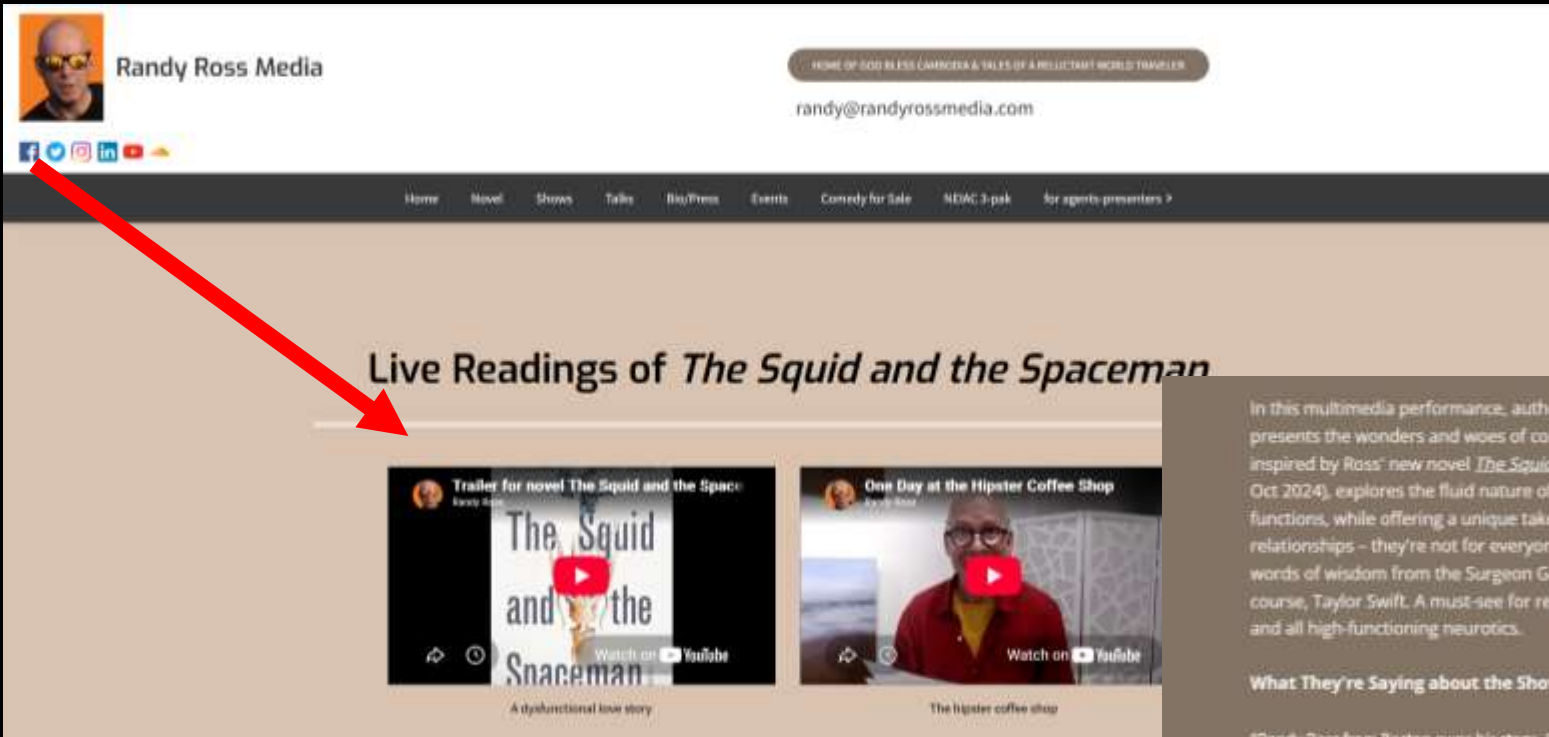
- Why a book trailer
- What's in a book trailer?
- Hire out or DIY?
- Content
- Video editing software
- ***this presentation and links at randyrossmedia.com/talks***

Why a Book Trailer?

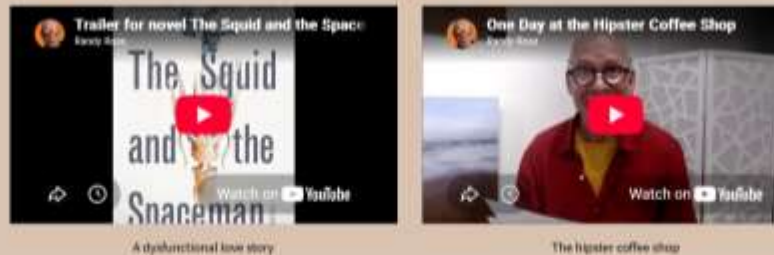
- Professionalism?
- Social media clicks?
- Other reasons?
- You don't need one!



Looks Nice on Web Site



Live Readings of *The Squid and the Spaceman*



In this multimedia performance, author and veteran storyteller Randy Ross presents the wonders and woes of contemporary romance. The show, inspired by Ross' new novel *The Squid and the Spaceman* (Epsilon Books/ Oct 2024), explores the fluid nature of intimacy, independence, and bodily functions, while offering a unique take on personal change and committed relationships – they're not for everyone and that's OK. The show features words of wisdom from the Surgeon General, Arthur Schopenhauer, and, of course, Taylor Swift. A must-see for readers and writers, lovers and haters, and all high-functioning neurotics.

What They're Saying about the Show:

"Randy Ross from Boston owns his stage. He's polished, entertaining to listen to and his play moves along nicely."
— *The Jenny Revue* (2026 Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival)

"Therapy is in session and ... the audience is the therapist."
— *Winnipeg Free Press* (2026 Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival)

What They're Saying about the Novel:

"A lively and distinctive cast invigorates this biting novel about a midlife, never-married comedian navigating another chance at love."
Rating: 4 out of 5 — *Foreword Clarion Reviews*

"A comic performer, still single in his 50s, begins a new relationship that challenges his need for space in Ross' novel." — *Kirkus Reviews*

Video Trailer



Not for the Squeamish



rand

What's in a Trailer: Query, Flap Copy, Reviews

Non-fiction: Easier

- Facts and figures
- Pictures
- Topics
- Reviews

Fiction/Memoir: Harder

- Genesis/research
- Themes
- Plot teaser
- Reviews



Fiction: 30-Second Teaser



*Hard to figure how so much awful horror
could've started out with just these two
horses and not a one yet named...*

Fiction: Another 30-Second Teaser



Non-Fiction: Summary of Content

Hire Out or DIY?



What You Got?

- Fiction vs. Non
- Windows vs. Mac
- Tech-savvy?



Hiring Out

-Fiverr, Upwork: \$50-\$400+

-\$2,400?

-Good to know what's involved

-Good experiences?

The screenshot shows the Animation Express website with a purple background and yellow accents. The header includes a phone number (+1 (855) 509-5030), the 'ax' logo, and an email address (info@animationexpress.com). A paragraph explains that the three tiers are designed for authors at every stage, from launching a first indie release to scaling a series. Below this are three pricing cards, each with a yellow header, a teal body, and a yellow footer with an 'Order Now' button.

Basic	Standard	Premium
15 SECOND TEASER \$999	30 SECOND STANDARD \$1,499	60 SECOND EXTENDED \$2,399
- Script Development - Media Search - Stock Video - Stock Music - Dynamic Text - Motion Graphics 1 Revision	- Script Development - Media Search - Stock Video - Stock Music - Dynamic Text - Motion Graphics 2 Revision - Professional Voiceover - Up to 10 Seconds of VFX	- Script Development - Media Search - Stock Video - Stock Music - Dynamic Text - Motion Graphics 3 Revision - Professional Voiceover - Up to 20 Seconds of VFX - Book Publishing on 2 Platforms - Interactive 3-Page Custom Website
Order Now	Order Now	Order Now

Tips for Hiring a Contractor

- Send cover, description, samples
- Send content: music, images?
- Details: revisions? rights?



My Good (Book Cover) Experience on Reedsy

Book details

THE SQUID AND THE SPACEMAN is an 80,000-word contemporary novel that combines the romantic dysfunction of Jonathan Tropper and the dark humor of Sam Lipsyte, set against the backdrop of today's divisive politics and shifting rules of courtship, love, and commitment.

It's 2015 and Boston is being colonized by gendertrenders, biotech hipsters, and artisanal pickle shops. Two tone-deaf fifty-somethings, unhappy with the city's transformation, meet and fall in love.

Randall is chronically single. Jackie doesn't date men; she marries them. He's Jewish and trying to reinvent himself as an artist. She's Chinese-American and drives a muscle car. Both are struggling with their ethnic identities and worry they've aged out of the local dating pool. Both fear that this relationship is their last chance for happiness.

After four months of dating, Randall develops insomnia and Jackie develops an ulcer. Because Randall has never been married, they agree he's the problem. He locates a therapist, Dr. Byrnes, who creates a plan for turning him into marriage material. On Byrnes' suggestion, Randall and Jackie attend a fetish conference to resuscitate their middle-aged sex life.

Can compromise, active listening, and a sphincter harness save their relationship? And how much can—and should—someone change for the one they love?

Target market

Dark humor, love gone wrong, comparable authors Phillip Roth, Jonathan Tropper, and Sam Lipsyte.

Main characters

Jackie is represented by the Squid -- needy, been married three times wants to get married again.

Randall is represented by the Spaceman -- needs his personal space, afraid of intimacy, never married but considering it with Jackie.

Their relationship is intense and contentious.

Five Responses: \$650-\$1000

The screenshot shows the Reedsy interface for a design request. The header includes navigation links for Marketplace, Projects, Books, Learning, and Help, along with a user profile for Randy. The main section is titled 'Here are your requests' and includes a search bar. Below this, a list of responses is shown for the request 'The Squid and the Spaceman' (Design request #183595). The responses are as follows:

Response	Amount	Status	Action
Laura D. Sent Jan 12, 2024	\$1,000.00	Declined	View offer
David T. Sent Jan 12, 2024	\$650.00	Declined	View offer
Patrick K. Sent Jan 12, 2024		Canceled	
Lance B. Sent Jan 12, 2024		Canceled	
Jason A. Sent Jan 12, 2024	\$800.00	Accepted	Manage

Three red arrows point to the 'View offer' buttons for Laura D. and David T., and the 'Manage' button for Jason A.

Most Thorough Response

Hi Randy, here are the project specs. Let me know if you'd like any adjustments:

Front Cover Design

I will design an initial round of front cover designs (round 1 will have 5+ cover options), followed by two rounds of revisions if necessary.

Jacket Design

I will design a paperback jacket based off the approved front cover design. An initial round of designs will be followed by two additional rounds of revisions.

Client Deliverables

- Title: The Squid and the Spaceman
- Author: Randy Ross
- Printer: IngramSpark
- Trim Size: 5.5" x 8.5" (600dpi for 10" x 16" enlargement)
- Format: Paperback
- InDesign template for paperback jacket via IngramSpark
- Back cover assets (book description, author photo, author bio, publisher logo, etc.)

Art Direction

1. A photo collage of an astronaut seated in a kitchen chair, with one leg crossed, and squid tentacles in the helmet, stylistically inspired by *No One Left to Come Looking For You* by Sam Lipsyte.
2. A similar composition as above, but the illustration style will be inspired by *Less* by Andrew Sean Greer.
3. Three or more experiments that are abstract and evocative.

Timeline

- This will be a loose timeline since we have less than a one month window to finish. We'll definitely wrap-up before March 15th, likely around mid-February. I will aim to get the first round of covers to you by Feb. 1st.

Design Deliverables

1. A high resolution .jpg file of the front cover, to be used as your eBook cover or in digital promotion
2. A high resolution .pdf of the front cover, for printed promotional use
3. A high resolution .png of the front cover as a 3D book mockup, for digital promotion
4. A print-ready .pdf file of the paperback jacket, formatted for IngramSpark
5. Copyright ownership of the approved artwork across all mediums in perpetuity

**Jason A.**
[View profile](#)

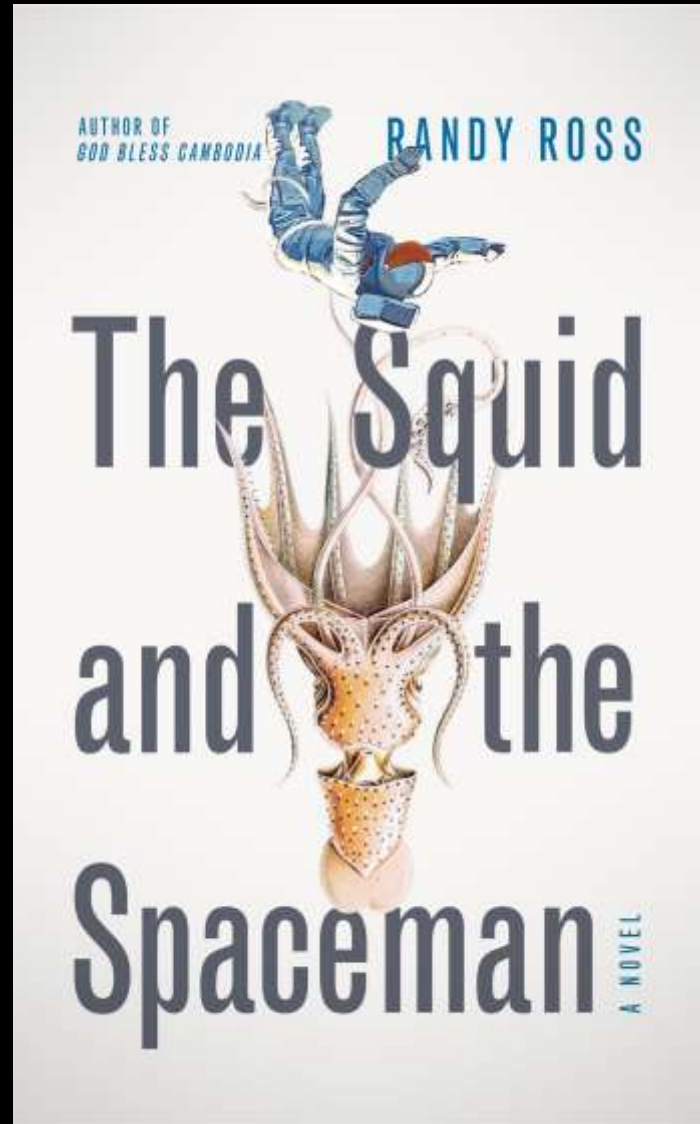
Send a message 

Professional fee	\$800.00
Reedsy fee 	\$80.00
Total	\$880.00

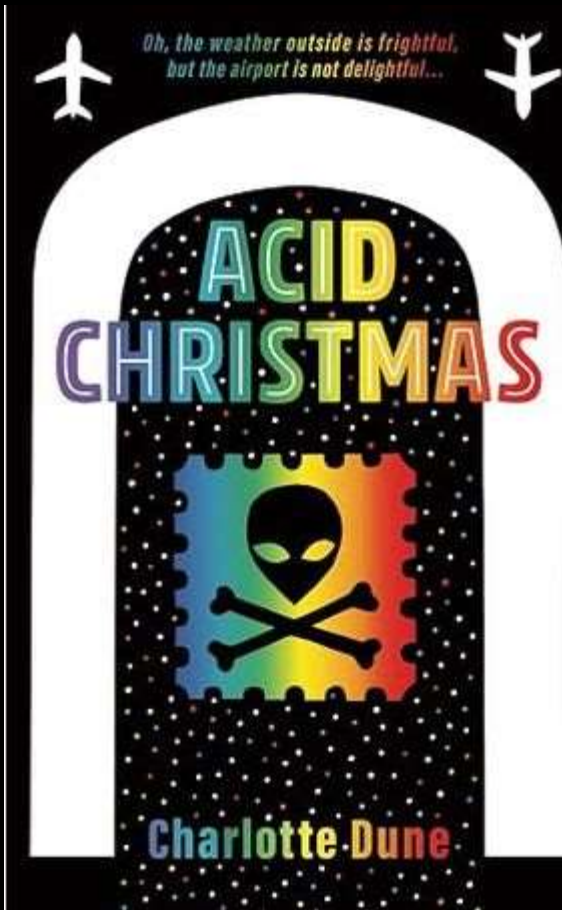
OFFER ACCEPTED

This offer was accepted on Jan 16, 2024. [Manage your collaboration](#)

\$1000 Later



Cautionary Tale



randyrossmedia.com/talks

Charlotte Dune's Lagoon

Inspired by the hilarious Fiverr test videos of bass player Davie504, where he hires multiple Fiverr pros at different price points, I began my own "fun" Fiverr experiment, and I found three different Fiverr video creators, at three different price points, and gave them all the same source files (including the book cover art) and instructions:

- Make a book trailer under 30 seconds long.
 - Include the cover.
 - This is the plot of the book:
 - **Acid Christmas is a dystopian holiday tale with a packed airport, unending snow, and a mysterious book of LSD.**
- Weary and worried about an impending funeral, flight attendant Candi is on her way home to Vegas when a sudden blizzard grounds her flight. Delayed in Toronto without a winter jacket, she waits for the snowstorm to end; only it

- The trailer must include the book cover.
- Dystopian, creepy music, even better if it has bells or a creepy holiday sound.
- I also sent them both of the book trailers above as examples.

Source: charlottedune.substack.com/p/i-paid-three-fiverr-artists-to-make

You Can DIY



DIY: The Steps

- Script for one minute or less
- Content: images, videos, audio
- Tools: video, image editor
- Post for feedback?



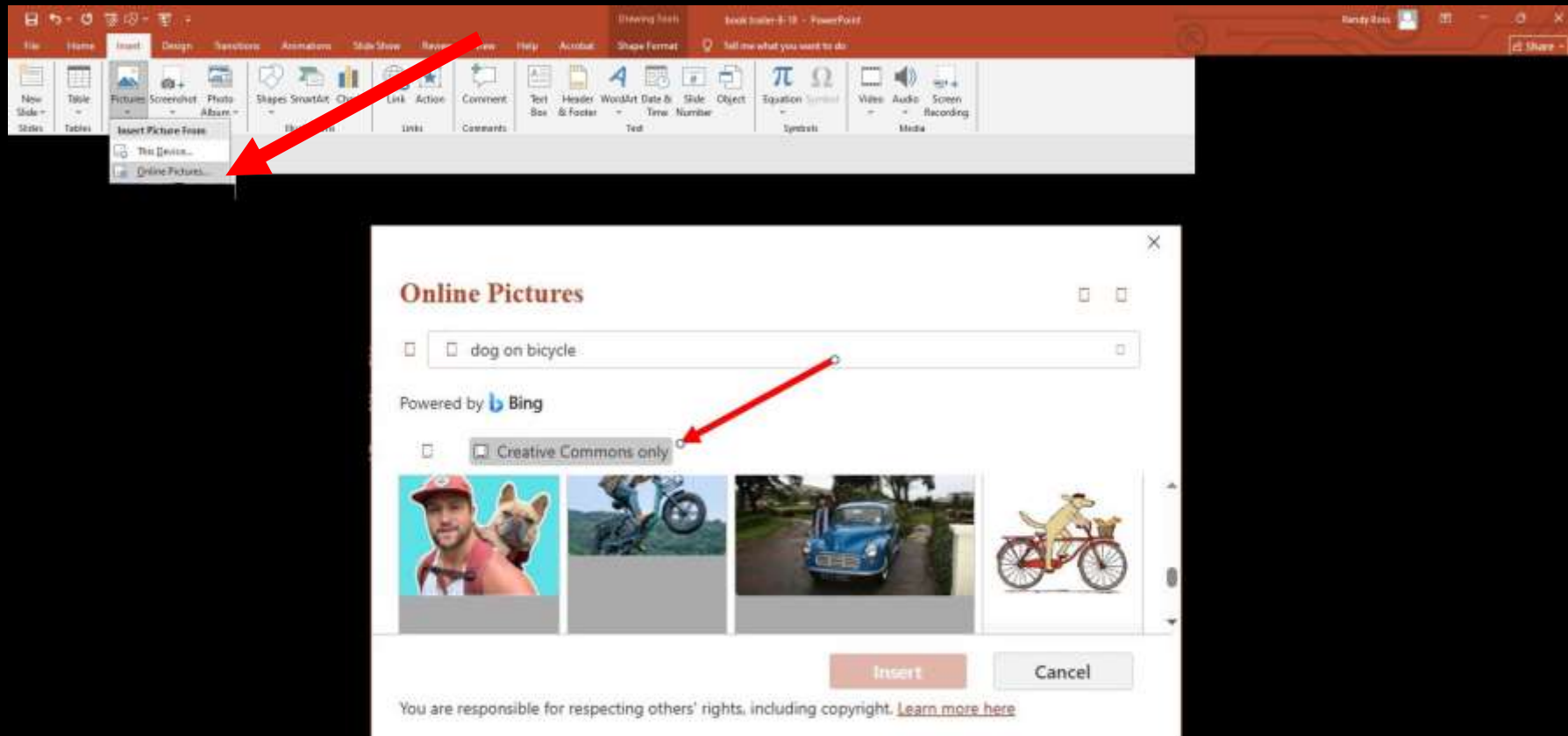
Free Copyright-Free Content

- Images, Audio, Some video
 - Existing programs: Powerpoint, Canva, Capcut
 - Free sites
 - Read licenses, avoid problems



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is
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Freebies in Powerpoint



Free Site: search.creativecommons.org

search.creativecommons.org

Thesau pwrthsaurs wordhippo Libry ggl drv Stat CC creative commons Tw FB Inst L UTub emerson Need Help? TnyURL unflw About &

cc search portal

Find content you can share, use, and remix.

The Creative Commons (CC) Search Portal helps you search CC licensed works across multiple platforms.

dog on bicycle **Search**

Search using:

ccMixer Music	Europeana Media	Flickr Media
Google Web	Google Images Image	Jamendo Music
Nappy Image	Open Clip Art Image	OpenGameArt Media
Openverse Media	Sketchfab 3D Model	SoundCloud Music
Thingiverse 3D Model	Vimeo Video	Wikimedia Commons Media
YouTube Video		

Select “Licensable”



File:Maltese with Short Hair in Bike...
Wikimedia Commons



Dog rides a bike | The dog's name is...
Flickr



Pets - Denali National Park & Preserve...
National Park Service



Woman & Dog Sunset Free Stock Photo -...
Public Domain Pictures



Dog Riding A Bike Art Print Free Stock...
Public Domain Pictures



German Sheperd Dog Images | Free...
Rawpixel



File:A dog riding the bicycle.jpg -...
Wikimedia Commons



File:Shetland sheepdog in a bicycle...
Wikimedia Commons



Free Images : street, bicycle, bike, puppy...
PxHere



Second Sunday on Main: Dog Days [...]
Flickr



Black white shot dog corded | Free Photo...
Rawpixel



woman with dog on bicycle | i took a...
Flickr



Free Images : police dog, dog walking...
PxHere



HD wallpaper: puppy in bicycle cargo rac...
Wallpaper Flare



Dog Riding A Bike Art Print Free Stock...
Public Domain Pictures



Man with Bike and Pet Dog circa 1900



File:Dog Riding a Tricycle.jpg - Wikimedia...
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Sled dog running. Free public | Free Phot...
Rawpixel

Check the License

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Linnea Mafetta / [View](#)
Tip Linnea

More images similar to "Dog Riding Bike Art Print"

Dog Riding A Bike Art Print
Cute pup riding a bicycle

Premium Download
500 x 500 px, 4 MB, \$0.95, 80-10

Free Download
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Winner!

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Free Site: Free Music Archive

freemusicarchive.org/search?adv=1&search-genre=Electronic&only-instrumental=1&&music-filter-CC-attribution-only=1&music-filter-CC-attribution-sharealike=1&music-filter-public-domain=1&music-filter-cc

bitly QR Thesau pwrthsaurs wordhippo Libry ggl drv Stat CC creative commons Tw FB Inst L UTub emerson Need Help? TryURL unflw About & Rules Blogge CC Search

FMA Discover Create About Search Sign in

very searchable

Search results: 3767 tracks found!

Search for specific artists, tracks or albums Search

Filters

All Instrumental License Genre Duration

Clear filters Apply filters

Electronic x INSTRUMENTAL x CC BY x CC BY SA x

Public Domain x Commercial Use x Use in a Remix or Video x

Most Interesting

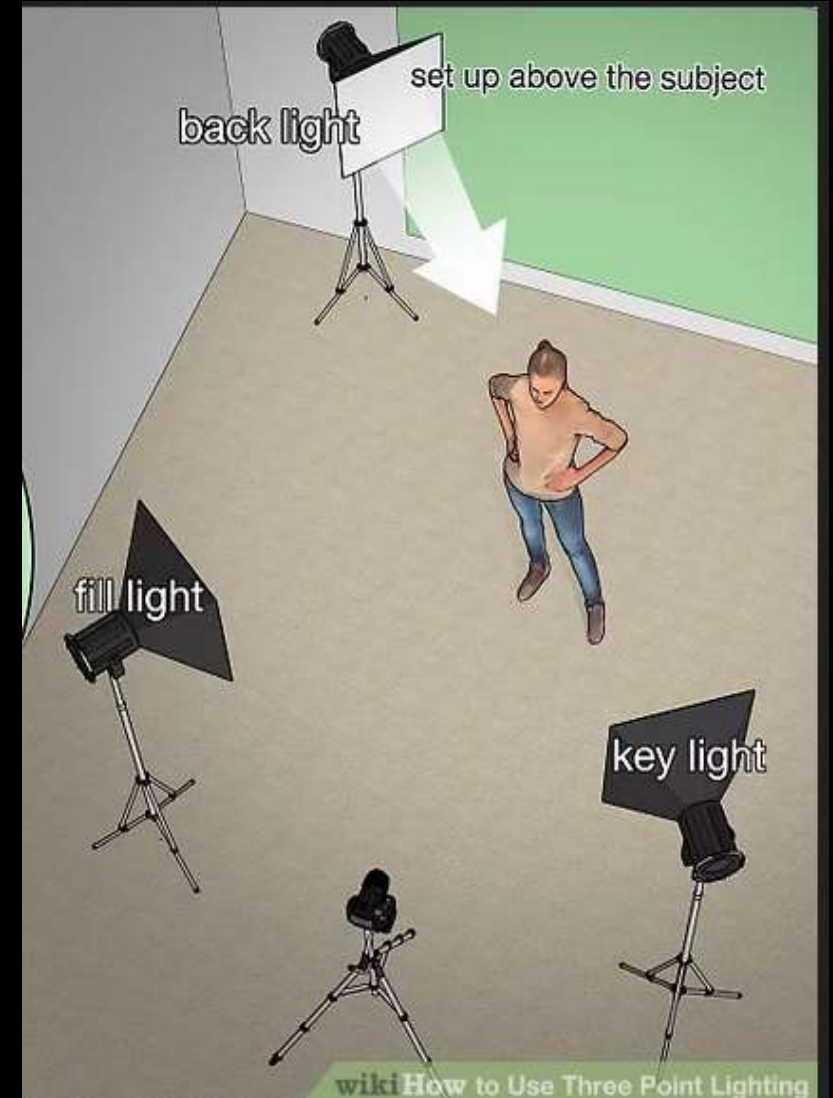
Track	Album	Genres	Duration
The Companionship of Isolation by Brylie Christopher	Neither and Both	Electronic , Ambient Electronic , Minimal Electroni	05:22
D2 by Amarent	Free Electronic Music	Electronic , Ambient Electronic , Minimal Electroni	03:12
Ranger's Lament by human gazpacho	Arcane Resonance	Electronic , Ambient Electronic , Minimal Electroni	03:48
Stone Of Stumbling by Jangwa	Unnamed album	Electronic , Ambient Electronic , Minimal Electroni	06:04

<https://freemusicarchive.org/music/amarent/>

randyrossmedia.com/talks

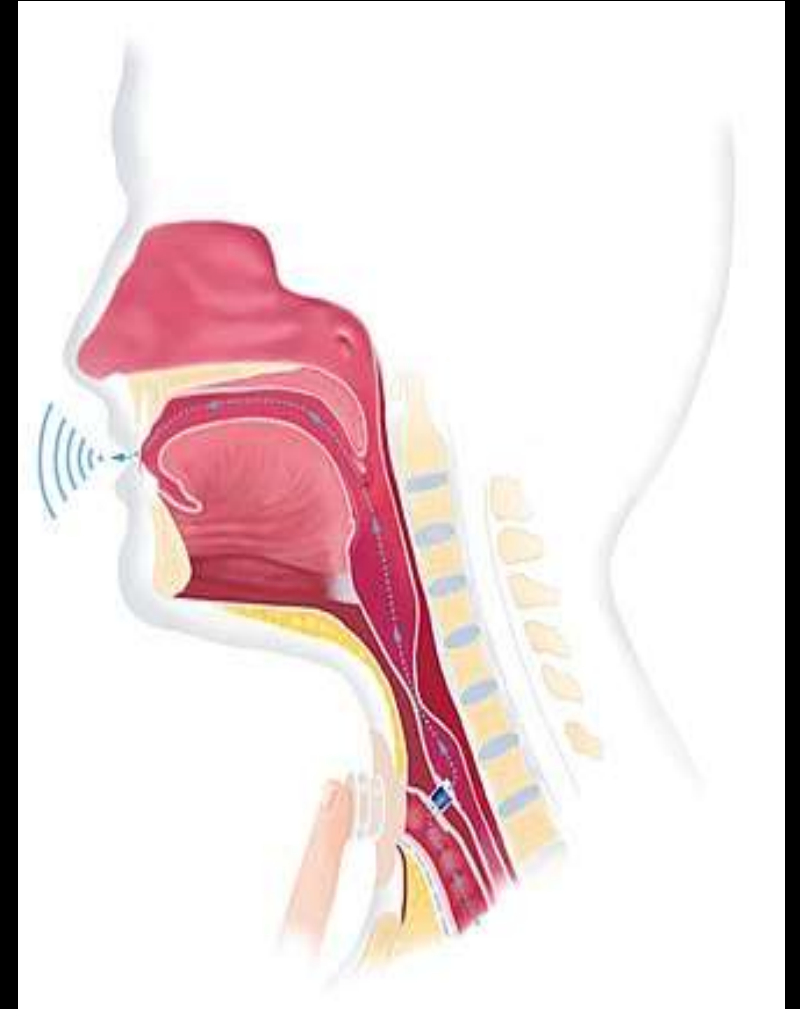
DIY Content

- Photos and video:
- Phone is fine
- Google “three-point lighting”

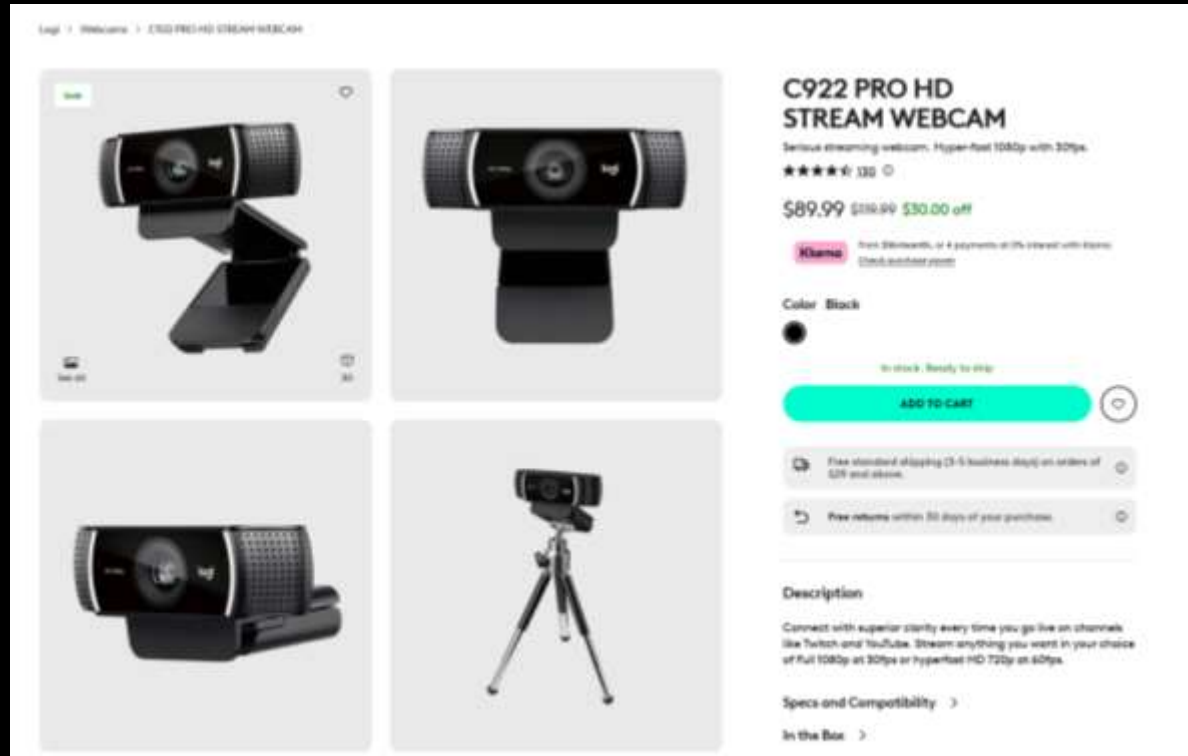


DIY: Audio/Voice Over

- Phone is OK
- Good computer audio is OK
- Lavalier mic is best



Webcam I've used for video/audio: Logitech



Example: Novel “The Squid and the Spaceman”

- Script Ideas: flap copy, query letter, reviews
- 8-10 images for 1-minute trailer (3-4 seconds each)
- Create folders for content*
 - *may need to resize with image editor.
- Load into Video Editor

Plot Teaser

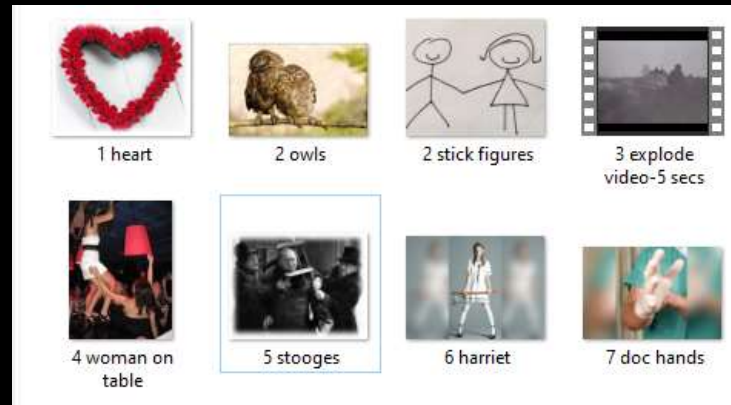


Folders with 8-10 Images

Beginning



Middle



End



Background Music

The screenshot shows the freesound.org website interface. At the top, there's a search bar with the text "Search sounds...". Below the search bar, there's a filter section with "Search by license" highlighted by a red arrow. The filter section also includes "SUBCATEGORY" and "TAGS" sections. The "SUBCATEGORY" section lists: Solo instrument (29,447), Solo percussion (13,416), Multiple instruments (8,955), and Other (350). The "TAGS" section lists various tags like loop, beat, synth, drum, bass, music, drums, electronic, synthesizer, bpm, piano, free, dance, electro, multisample, single-note, percussion, 120, guitar, noise, ambient, samples, house, 120bpm, techno, reverb, loops, industrial, glitch, sample, evicty, sample, singlesamples, rhythm, soundtrack, beats. The main content area displays three sound results: "110bpm hand clap dark reverb music loop 4 bars", "Brazilian Funk Vocal Loop 1-Sliced Fuck-130bpm", and "Piano loops 214 effect 2 octave long loop 120 bpm". Each result includes a waveform, a play button, a duration, a title, a description, tags, and a star rating.

Search by license

Search sounds...

53,168 sounds

Show advanced search options

Sort: Date added (newest first)

SUBCATEGORY

- Solo instrument (29,447)
- Solo percussion (13,416)
- Multiple instruments (8,955)
- Other (350)

TAGS

- loop, beat, synth, drum, bass
- music, drums, electronic
- synthesizer, bpm, piano, free
- dance, electro, multisample
- single-note, percussion, 120
- guitar, noise, ambient, samples
- house, 120bpm, techno, reverb
- loops, industrial, glitch, sample
- evicty, sample, singlesamples
- rhythm, soundtrack, beats

110bpm hand clap dark reverb music loop 4 bars

Hand clap loop with Audacity Reverb (Small Room Dark preset) using CLAP LOOPS (cc0) by hadescolossus samples.

110bpm, clap, gapless, hand, loop

Brazilian Funk Vocal Loop 1-Sliced Fuck-130bpm

Sliced: 457964_fabrizio84_screaming-fuck

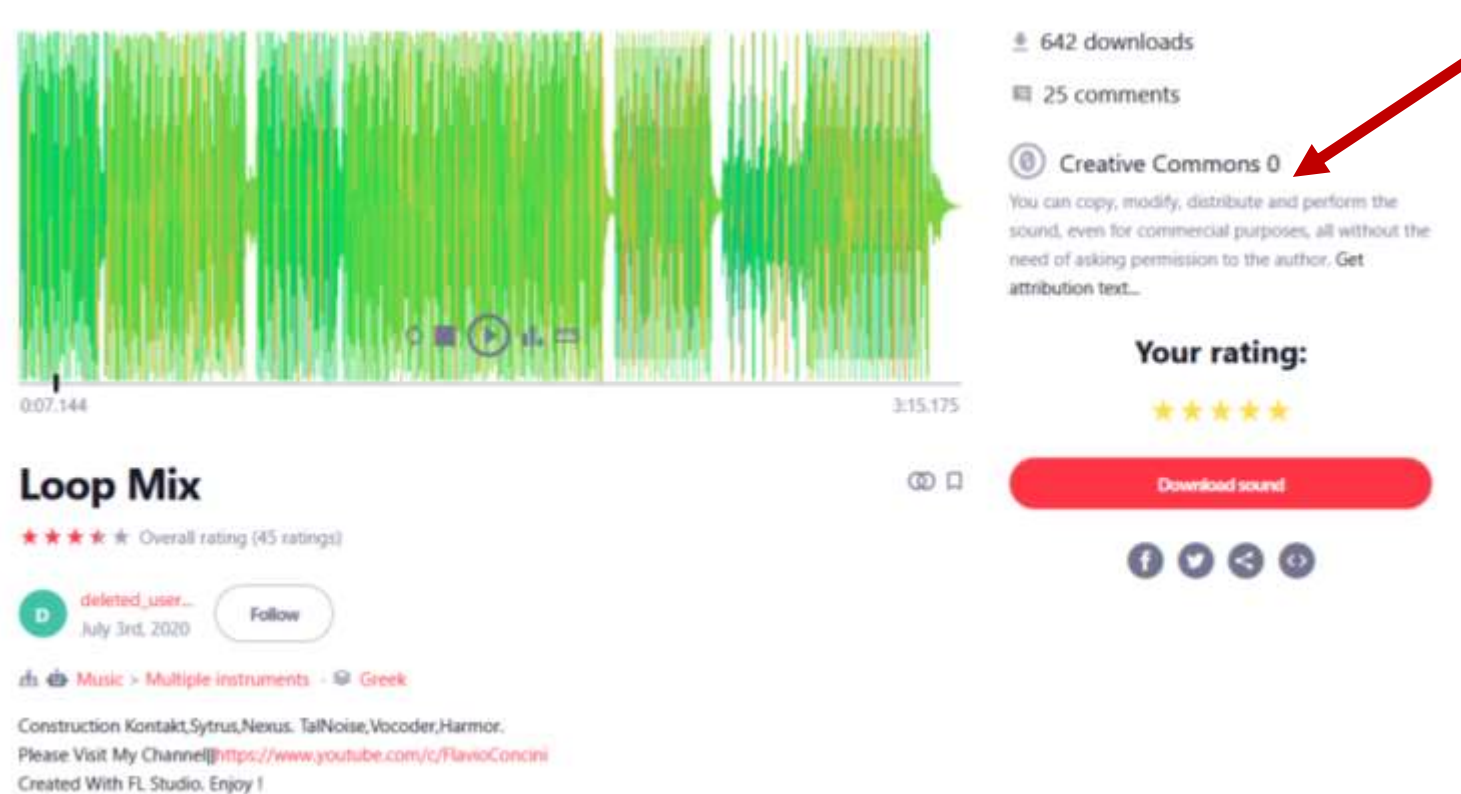
130bpm, Brazilian, Distorted, Funk, Vocal

Piano loops 214 effect 2 octave long loop 120 bpm

Beautiful piano harmony inspired by the work of Danny Elfman. This sound can be combined with other sounds in the pack. Otherwise, it is well usable up to ...

120, 120bpm, free, loop, music

Free and Licensable



The image shows a YouTube audio player interface. The main visual is a green and yellow waveform representing the audio. Below the waveform is a progress bar with a play button in the center. To the right of the waveform, the following information is displayed:

- 642 downloads
- 25 comments
- Creative Commons 0** (indicated by a red arrow)
- You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the sound, even for commercial purposes, all without the need of asking permission to the author. [Get attribution text...](#)
- Your rating:** 5 stars (5 yellow stars)
- [Download sound](#) (button)
- Social media icons: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and a share icon.

Below the waveform, the title **Loop Mix** is shown, followed by an overall rating of 4.5 stars (45 ratings). The uploader is [deleted_user...](#), with a profile picture of a green circle containing a white 'D'. The upload date is July 3rd, 2020, and there is a [Follow](#) button. The tags are [Music](#), [Multiple instruments](#), and [Greek](#). The description reads: "Construction Kontakt, Sytrus, Nexus, TailNoise, Vocoder, Harmor. Please Visit My Channel <https://www.youtube.com/c/FlavioConcini> Created With FL Studio. Enjoy !"



Pick a Video Editor



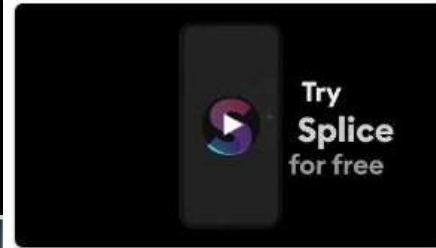
 Video Editor & Maker - InShot
InShot Video Editor
4.8 ★



 KineMaster - Video Editor
KineMaster, Video Editor Experts Group
4.4 ★



 Picsart AI
PicsArt, Inc.
4.0 ★



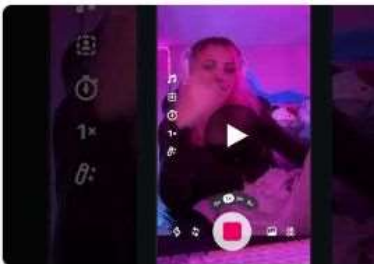
 Splice - Video Editor & Maker
Bending Spoons
3.6 ★



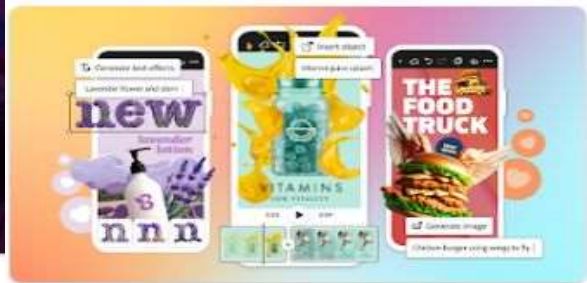
 B612 AI Photo&Video Editor
SNOW Corporation
4.1 ★



 GoPro Quik: Video Editor
GoPro
4.5 ★



 Edits: Video Editor
Instagram
4.7 ★



 Adobe Express: AI Photo, Video
Adobe
4.6 ★



 YouTube
Google LLC
4.6 ★



 AI Video Editor - Vidma Cut AI
Vidma Video Studio
4.6 ★



 Wink: Video Enhancer & Editor
Meitu (China) Limited
4.5 ★



 Meitu
Meitu (China) Limited
4.5 ★



 PowerDirector - Video Editor
Cyberlink Corp.
4.2 ★



 AI Video Editor - VivaCut
Ai Propulse2026
4.3 ★



 VivaVideo
QuVideo II
4.3 ★



 KwaiCut - Video Editor
Kwai Technology Limited
4.4 ★



 PixVerse: AI Video Generator
PixVerse
4.5 ★



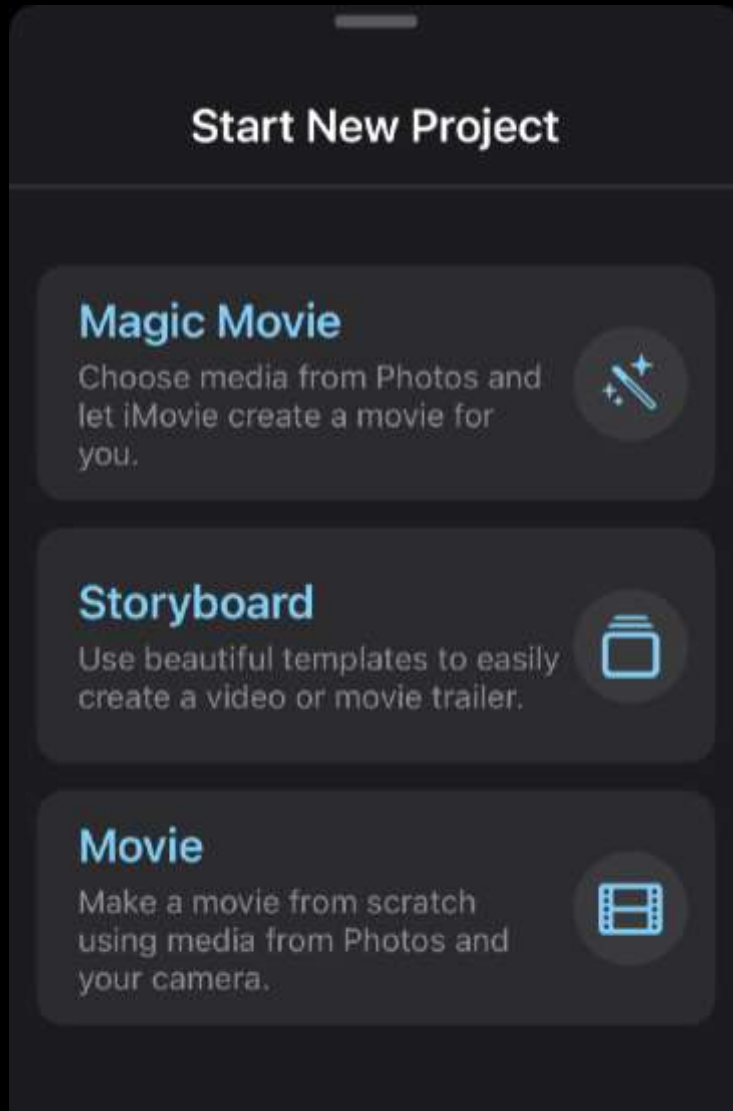
 Alight Motion
Alight Motion
3.2 ★

Popular Ones I've Used

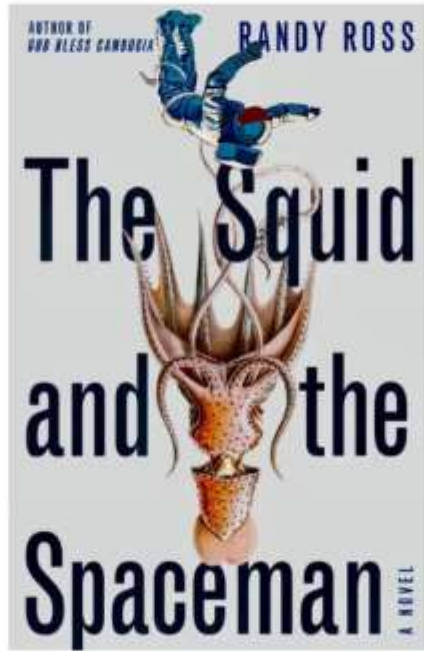
- Simple and free:
 - Apple iMovie
 - Microsoft Movie Maker
- Intermediate: free but better features cost
 - Canva: online, image and video editing
 - Capcut: desktop and online
- Professional:
 - Premiere



Simple and Free: iPhone iMovie “Magic Movie”



A “Magic Movie”



Windows Movie Maker 2012

- Simple to use
- Minimal system requirements
- Free
- Lives on computer – you own the files.

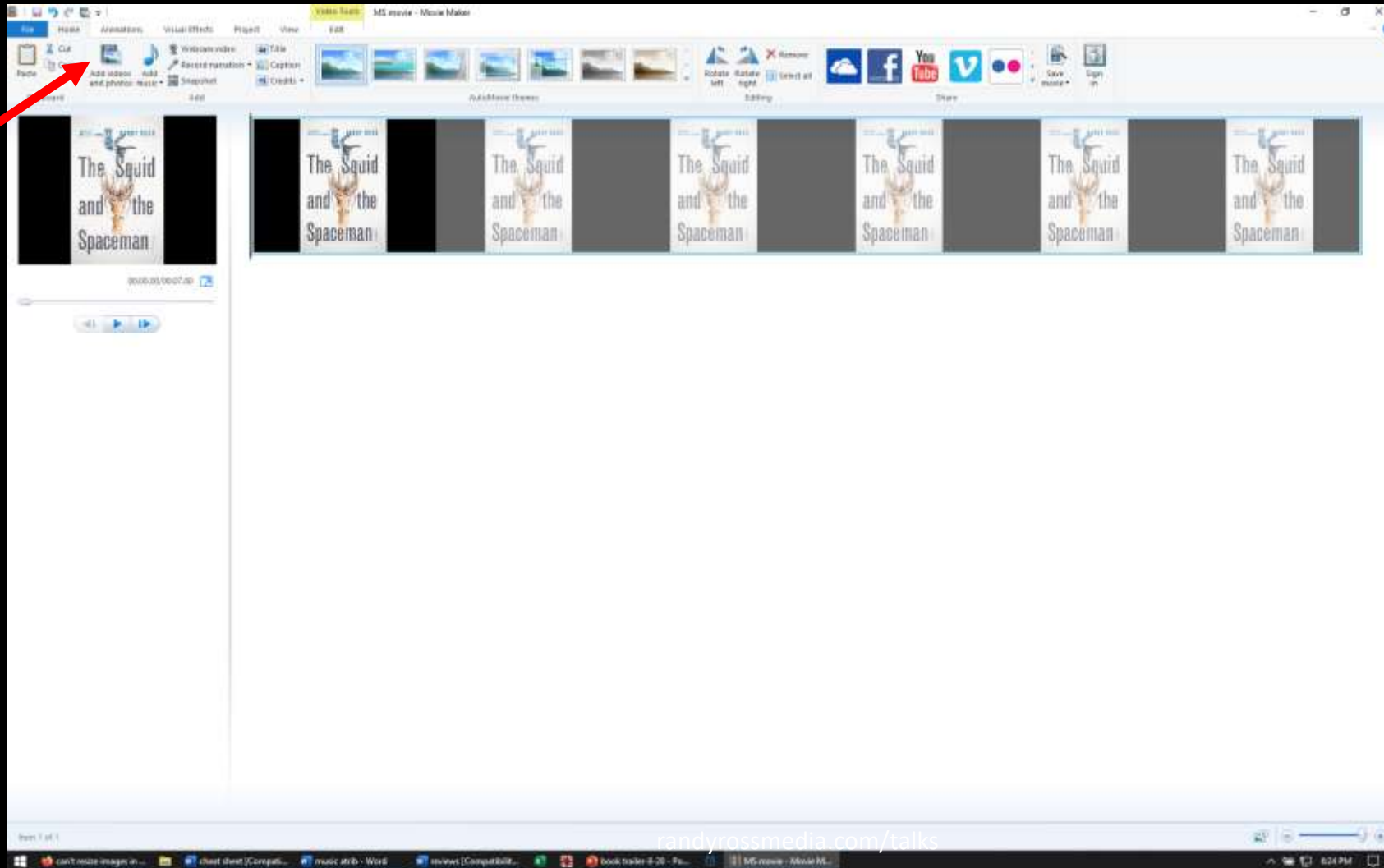


Windows Movie Maker 2012

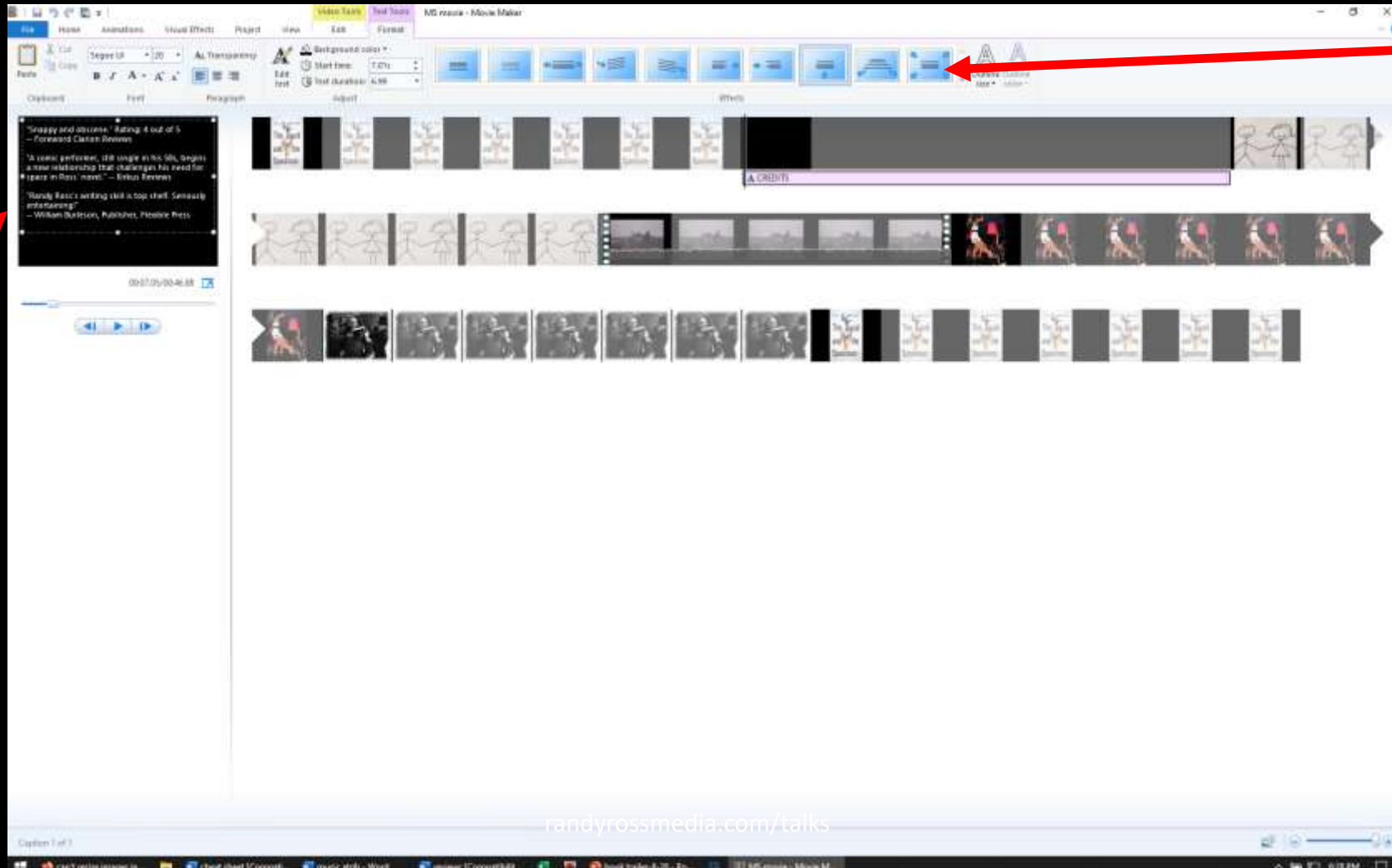


- But:
 - Windows only
 - Limited features and free content
 - No tutorials
- Download: archive.org/details/wlsetup-all_201704
- Manual: <https://www.scribd.com/document/491205621/Windows-Movie-Maker-2012-Notes>

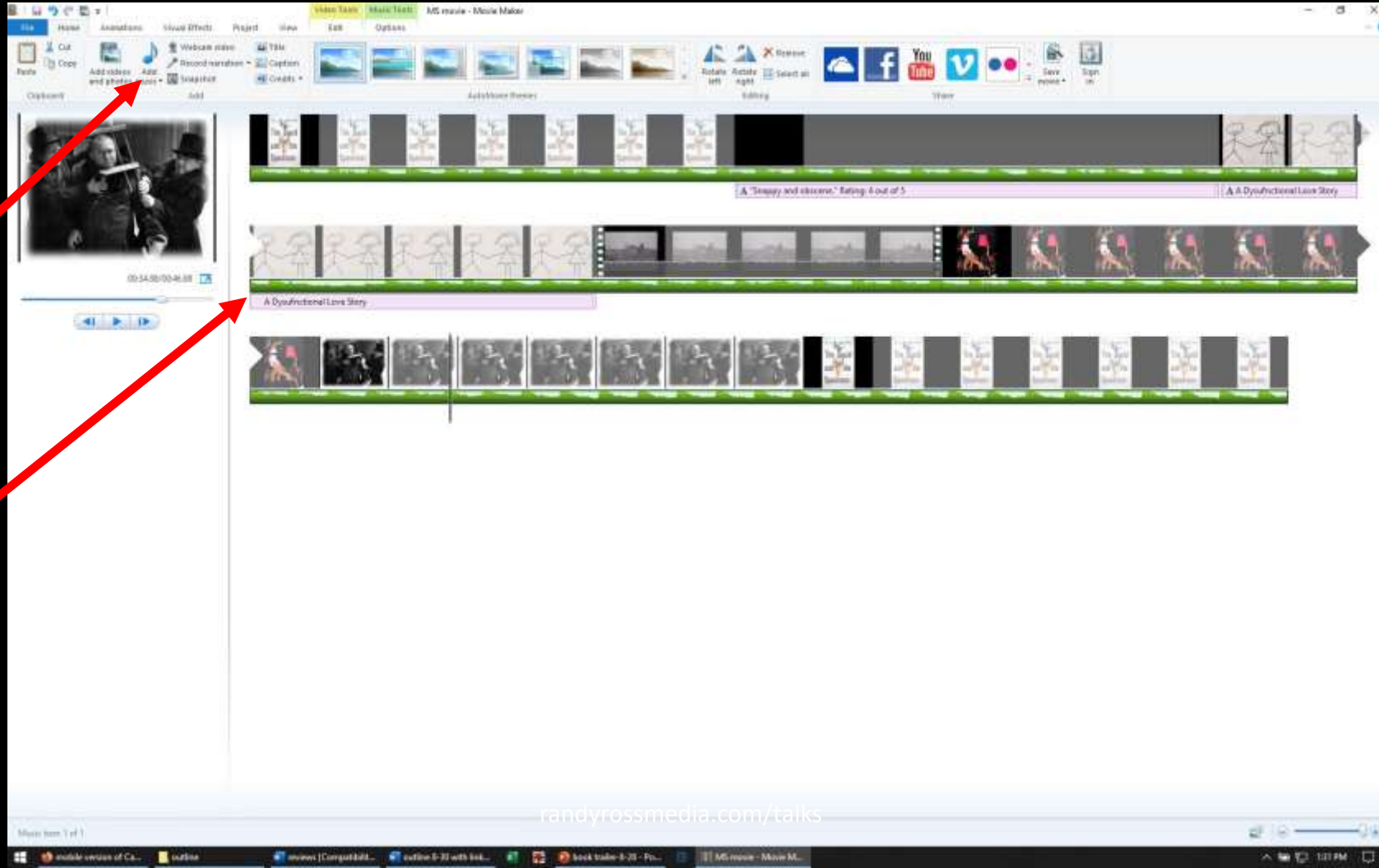
Add Files



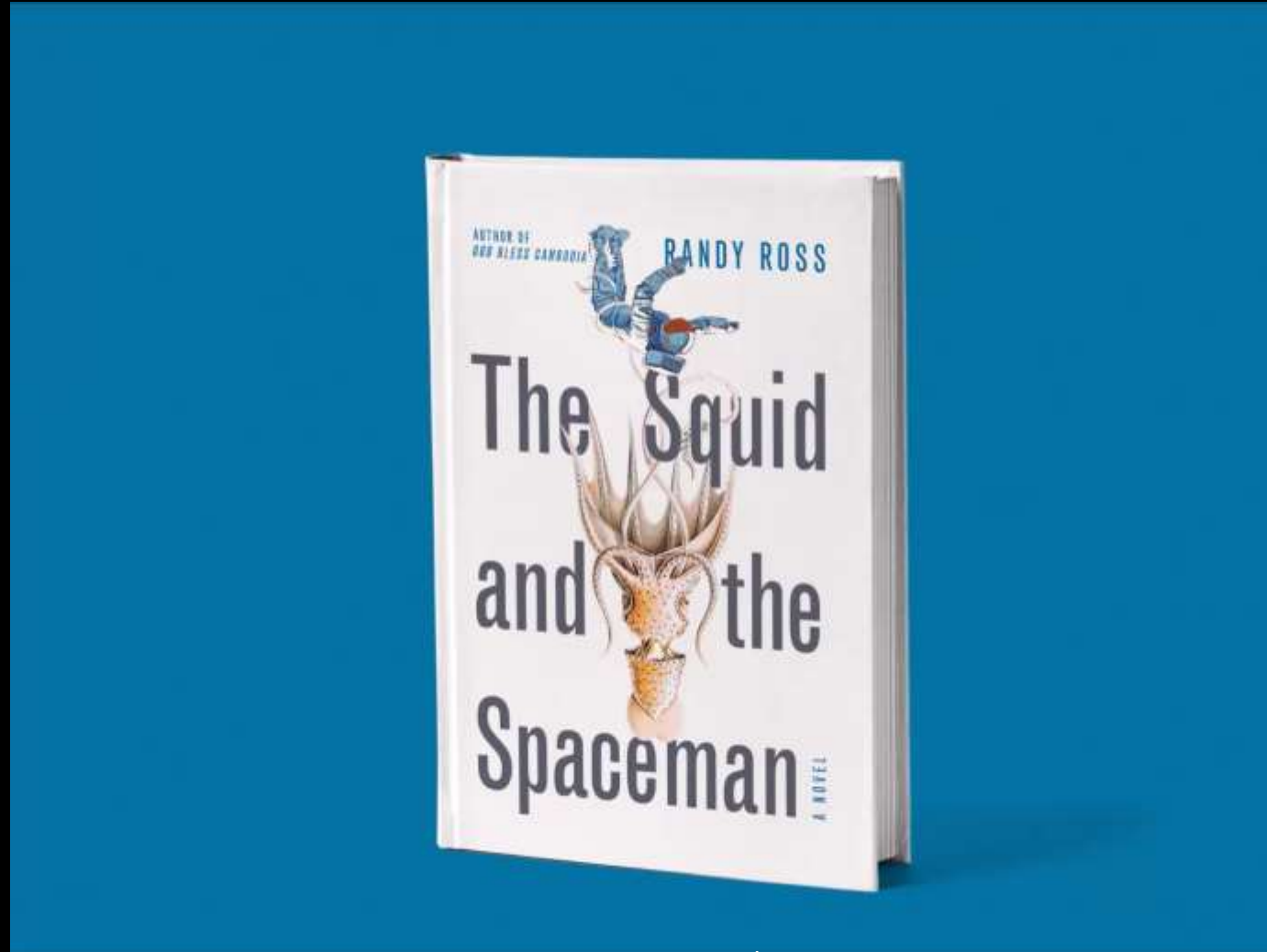
Add Text and Animation



Add Captions to Images, Music



30-Second Finished Product



Canva: More Advanced



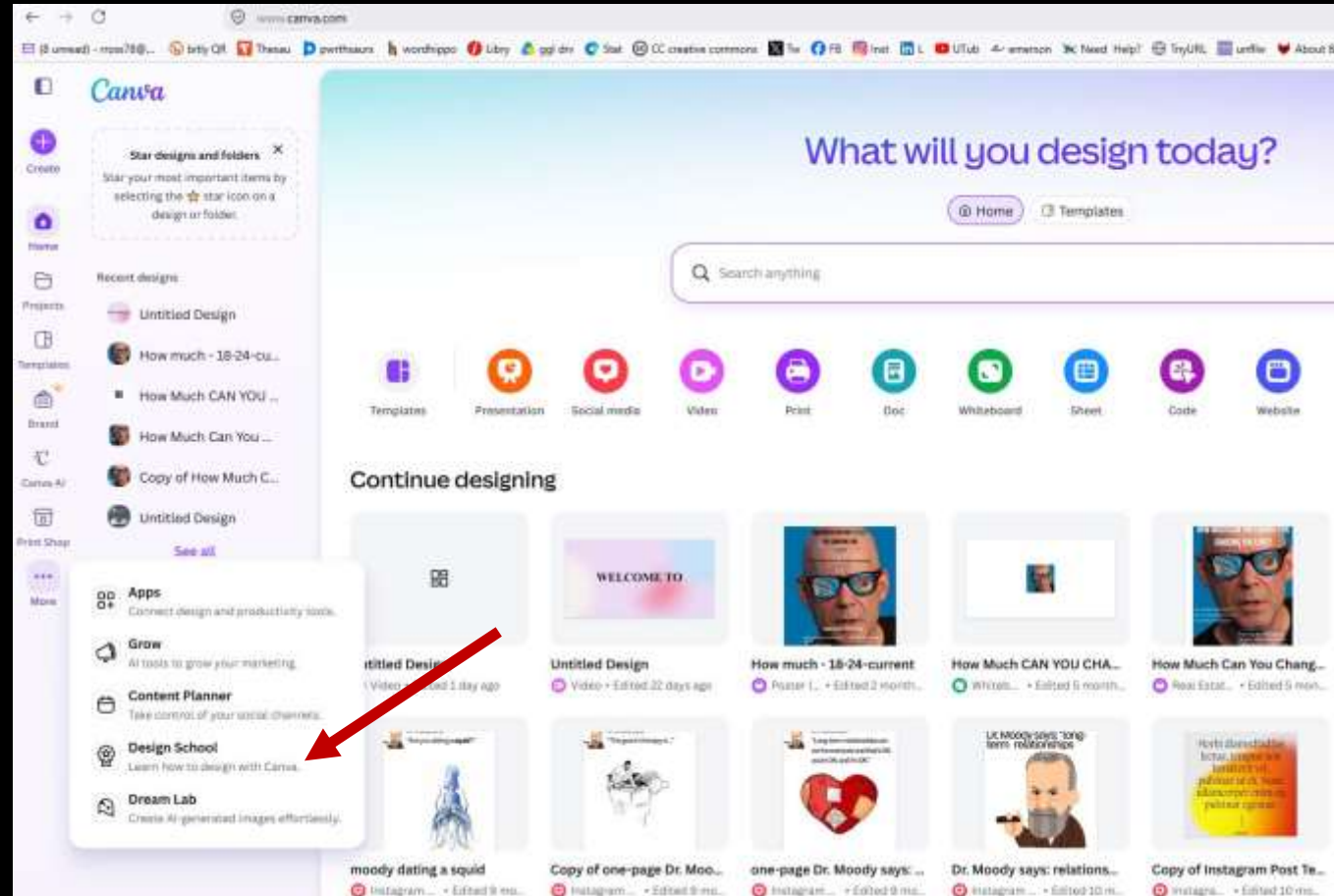
- More features: animations, editing
- More free content
- More templates for social media
- Tutorials

Canva: More Advanced

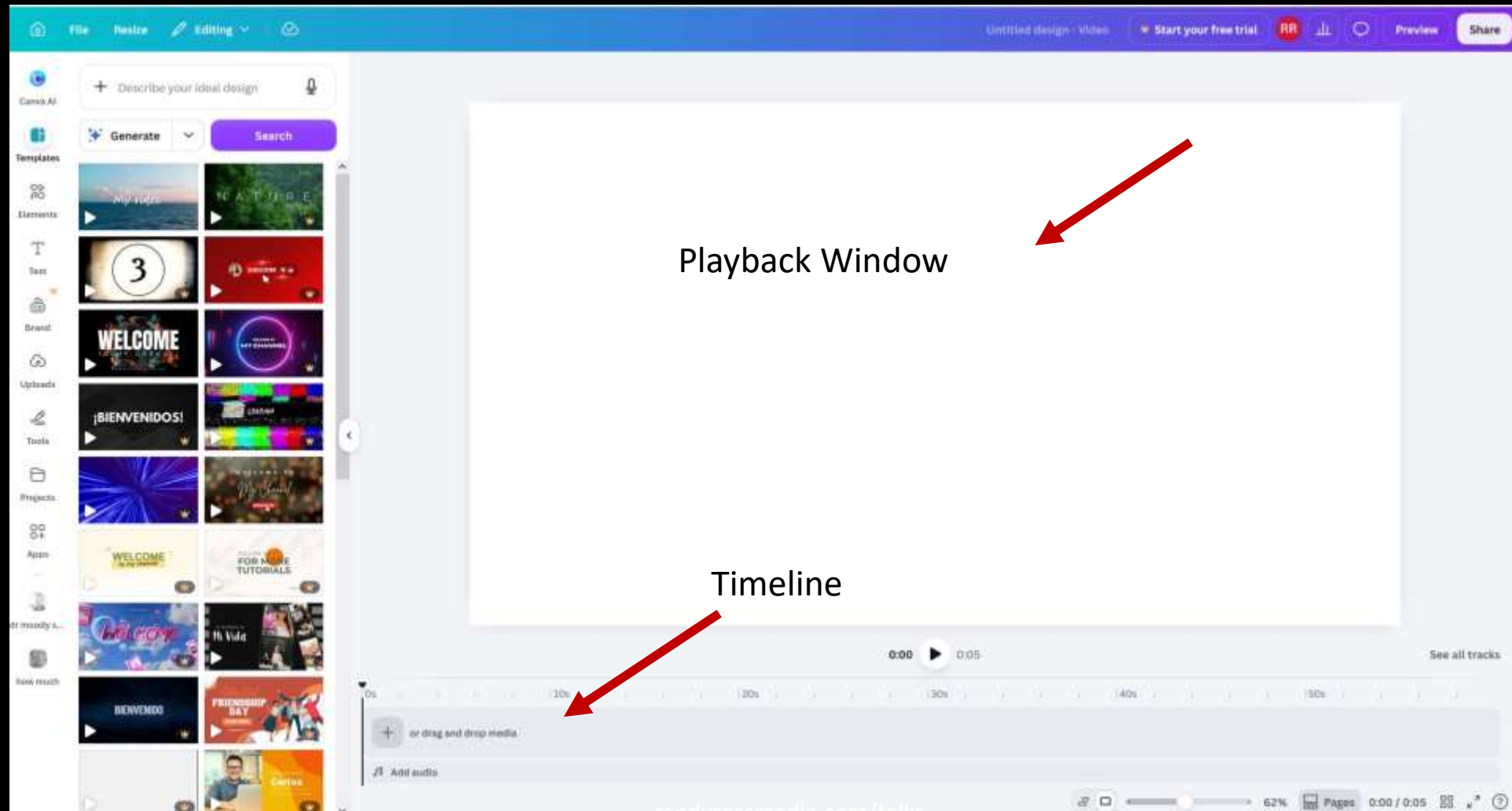


- But:
 - Lives on Web: They own working files.
 - Free version requires image editor to resize photos
 - Owned by Australian company.
 - Better features/content in Pro version (\$18/month)

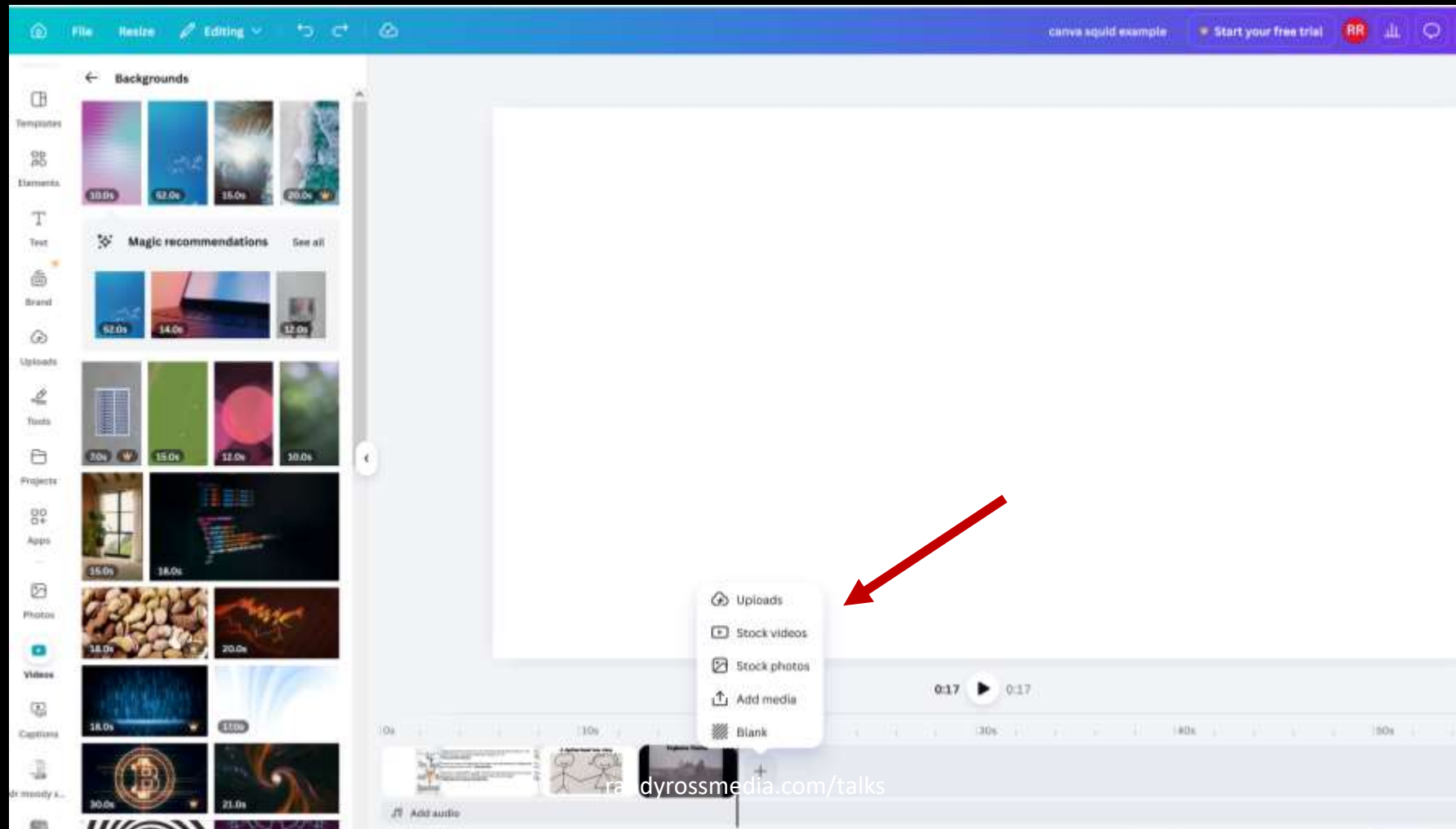
First Time Canva? Do a Few Tutorials



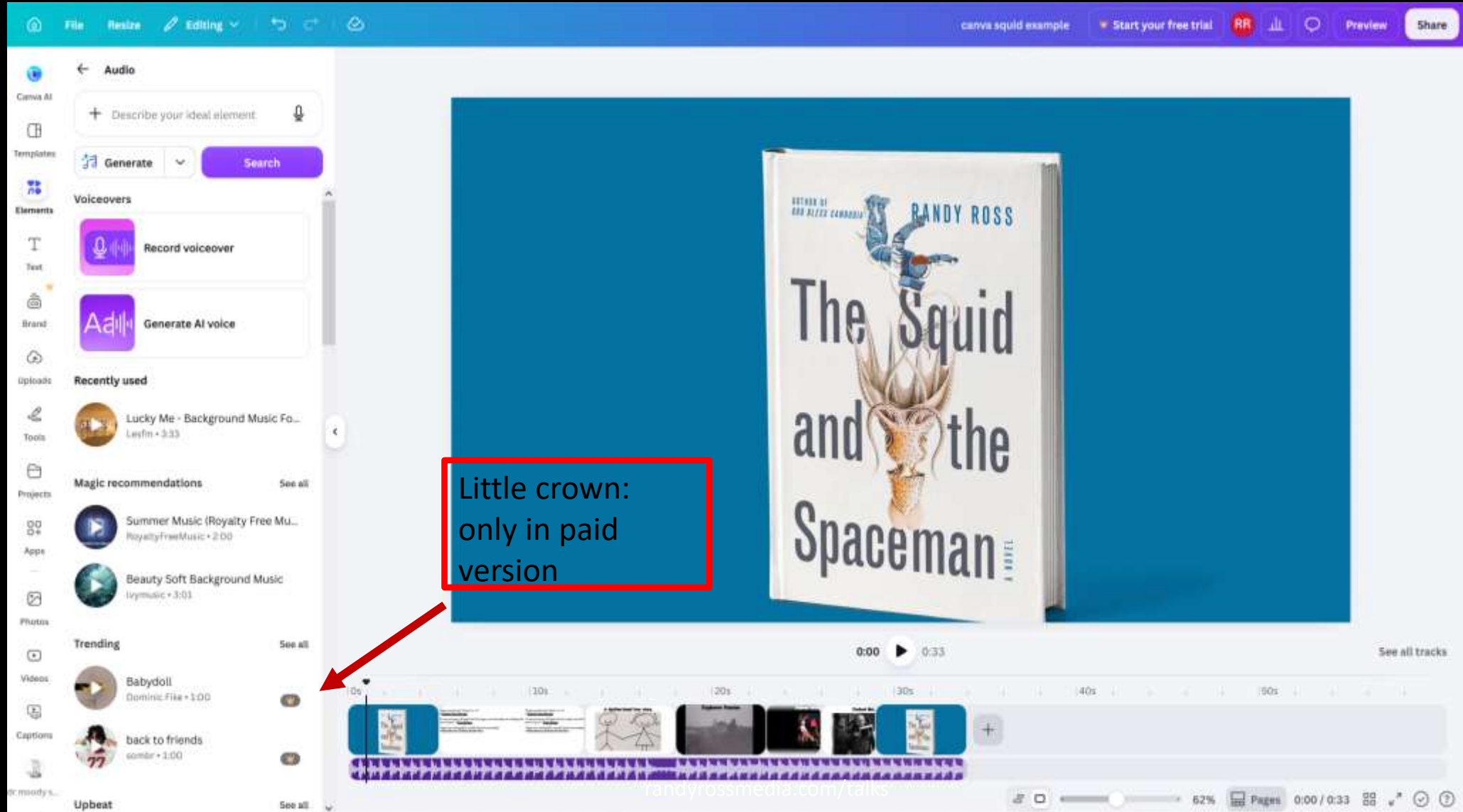
Parts of a Real Video Editor



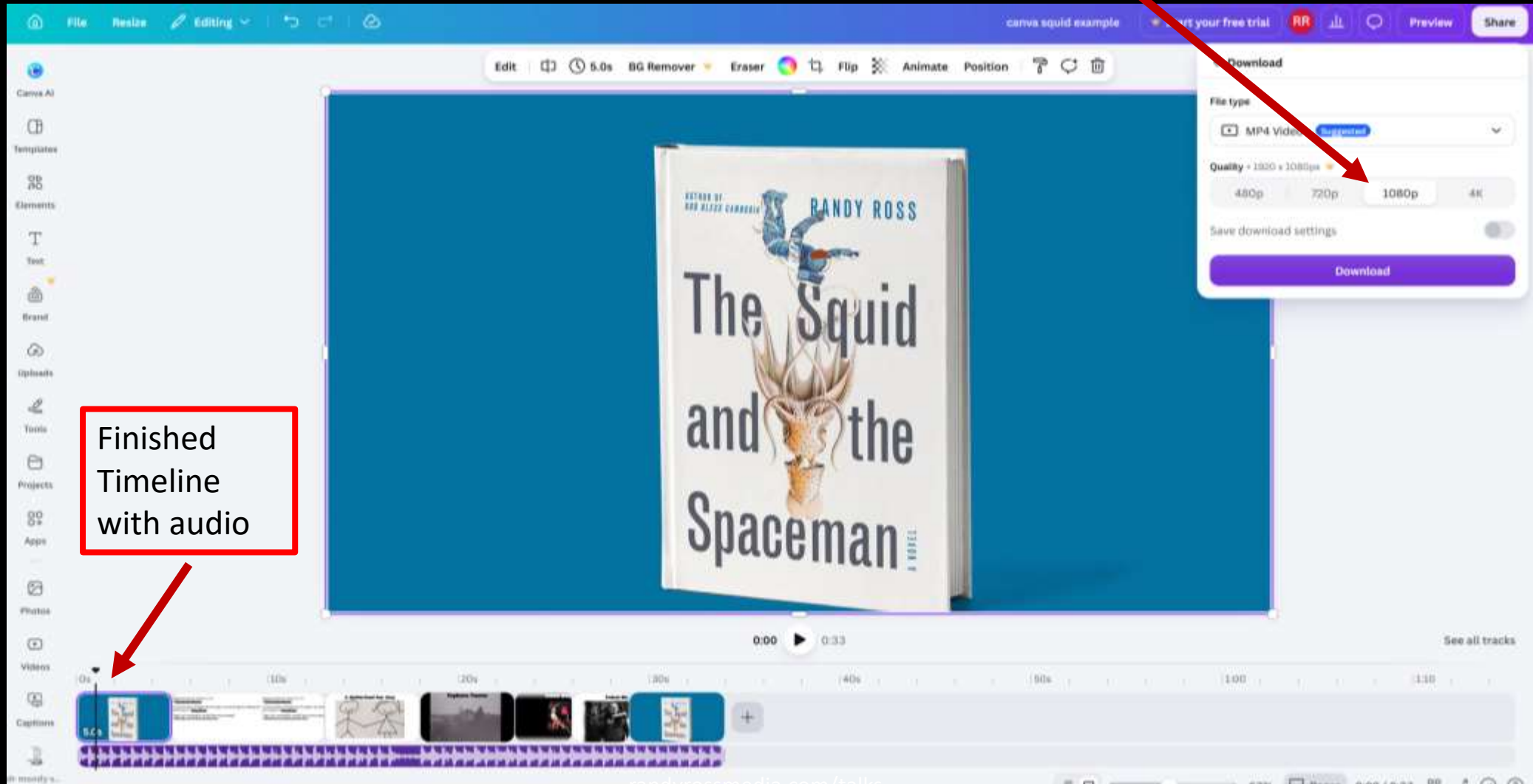
Add Files



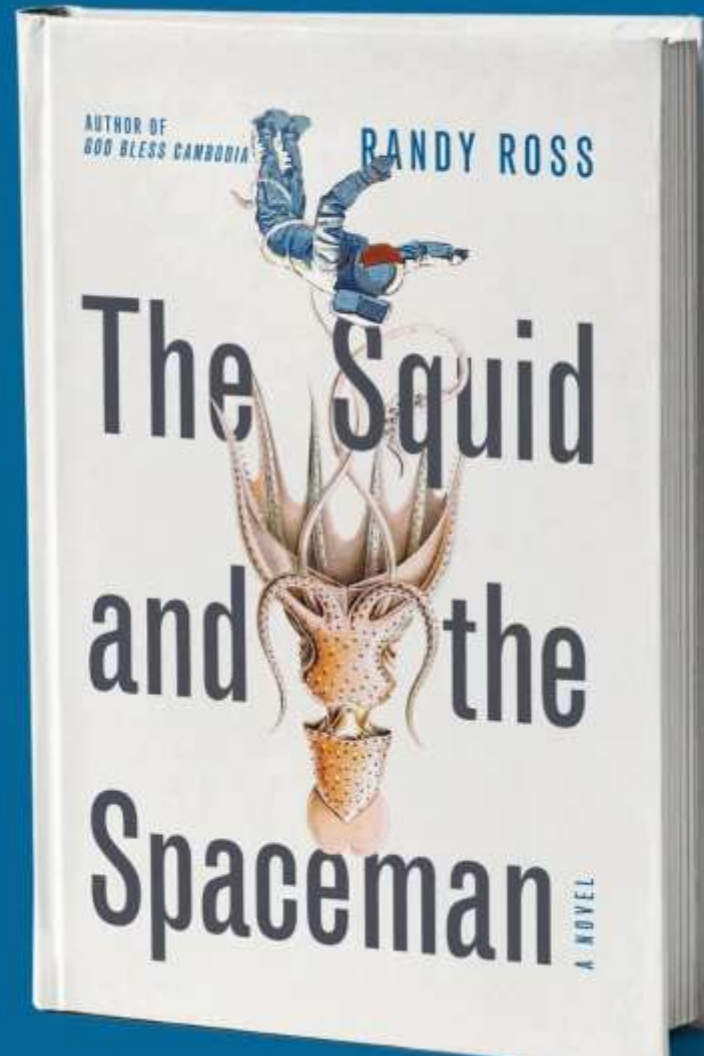
Limitation of Freebie: Content Unavailable



Add Audio, Download File

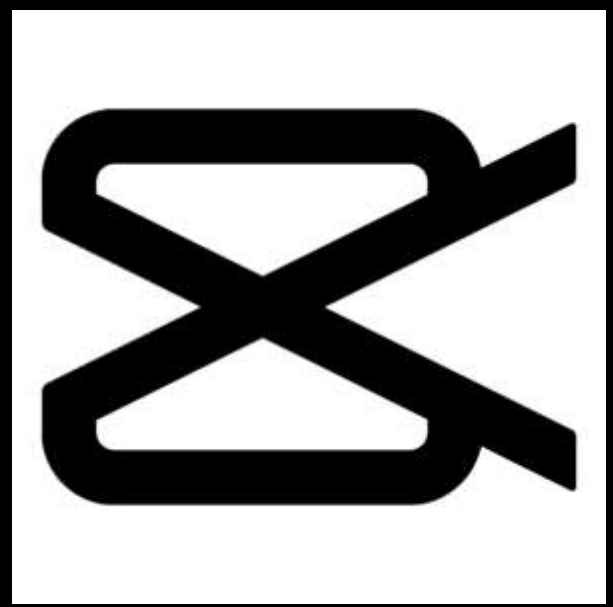


Canva Example



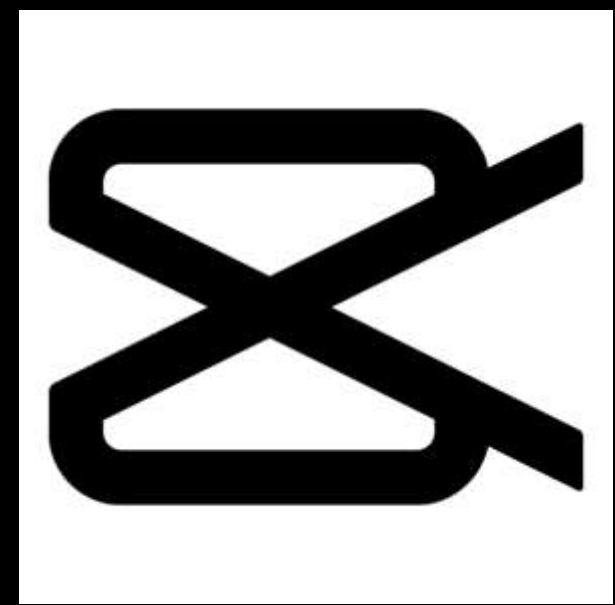
Capcut: More Powerful

- More features, more free content
- Desktop versions for Mac and Windows
- Runs on older computers vs. Adobe (requires Windows 11)
- Great for short videos and social media content

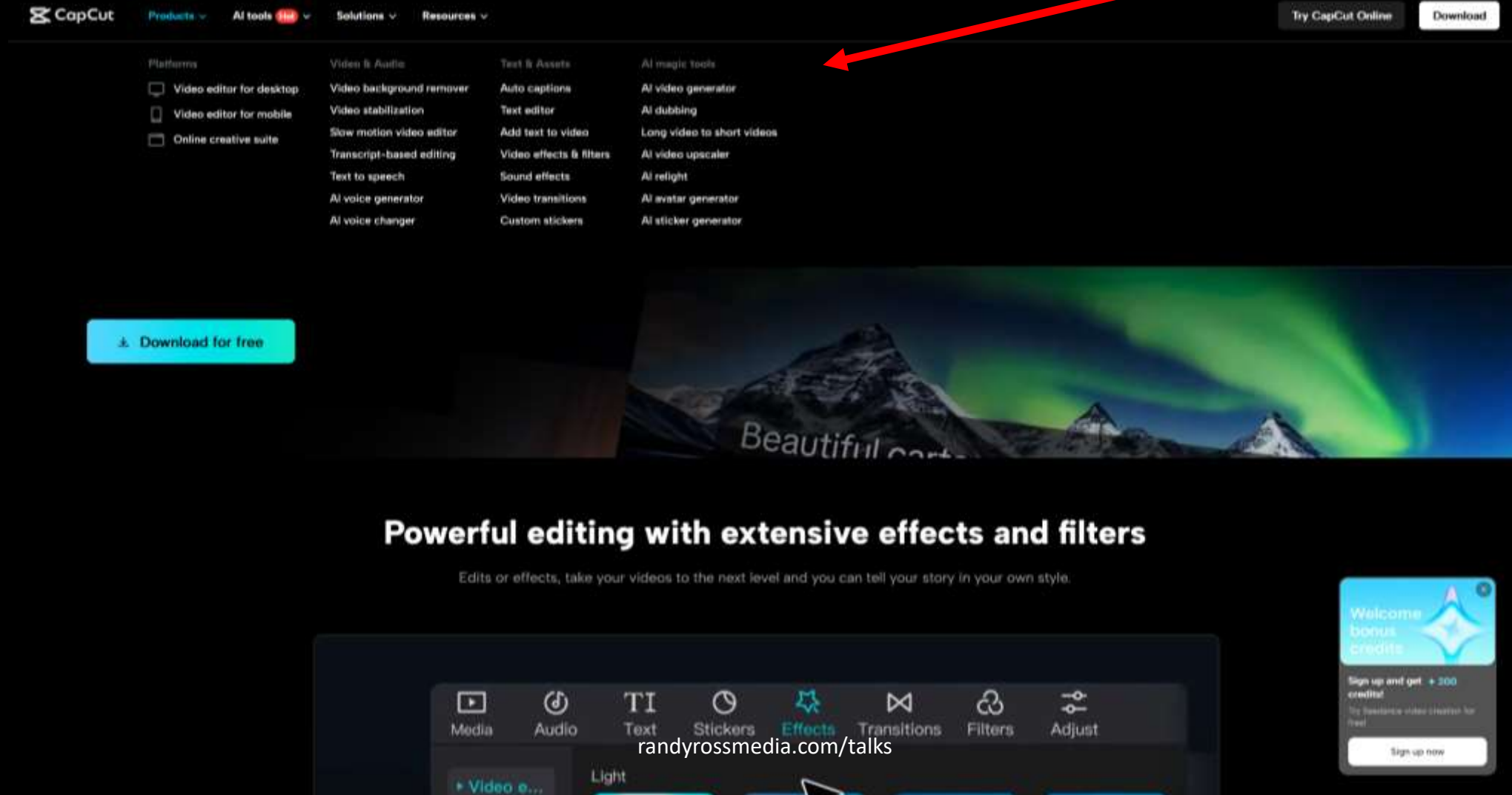


Capcut: More Complex

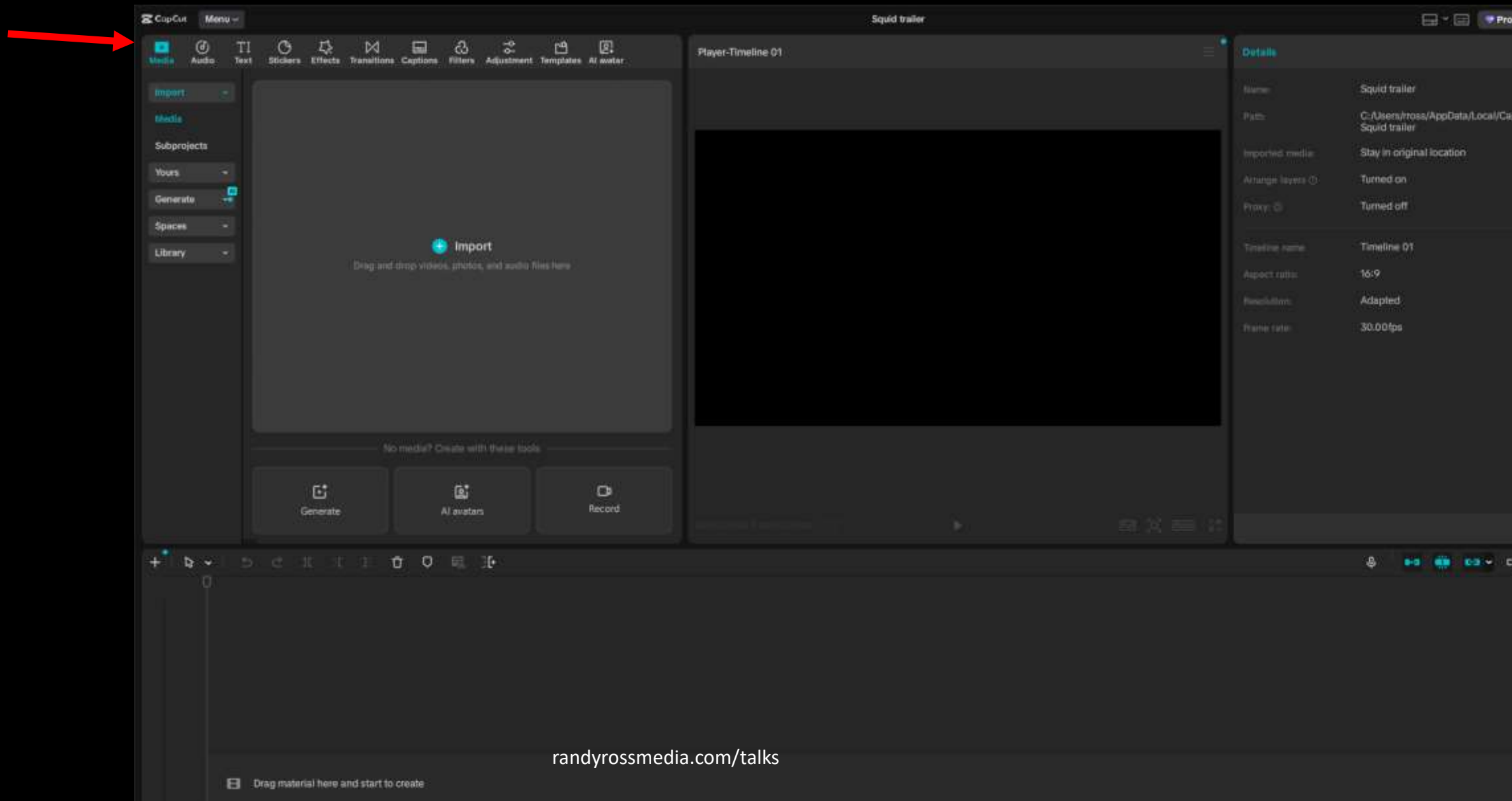
- But:
 - More features = more decisions
 - Owned by Chinese company that owns TikTok
 - Annoying ads, key features only in paid version. (\$19.99/month)



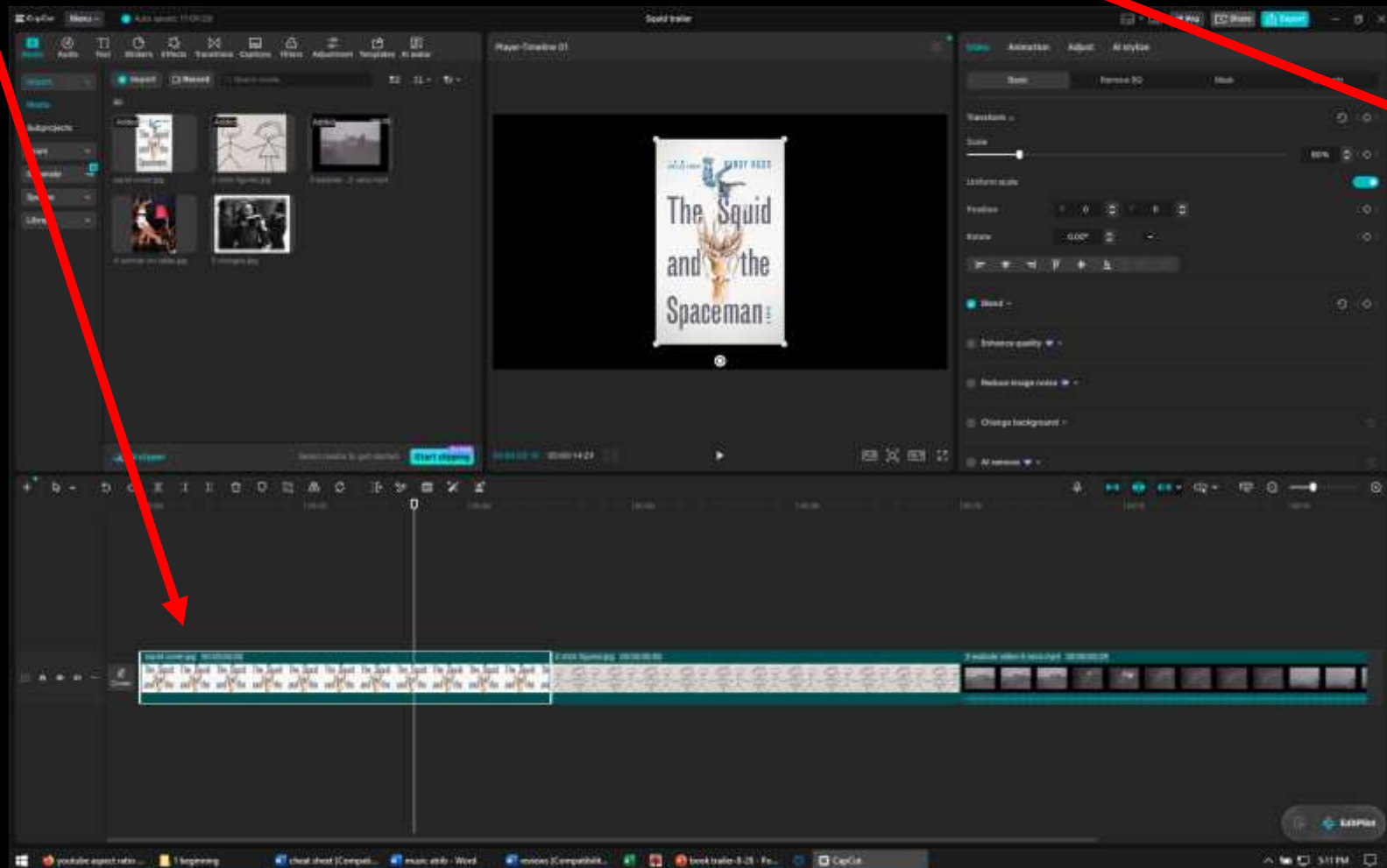
CapCut: More Features, More Complexity



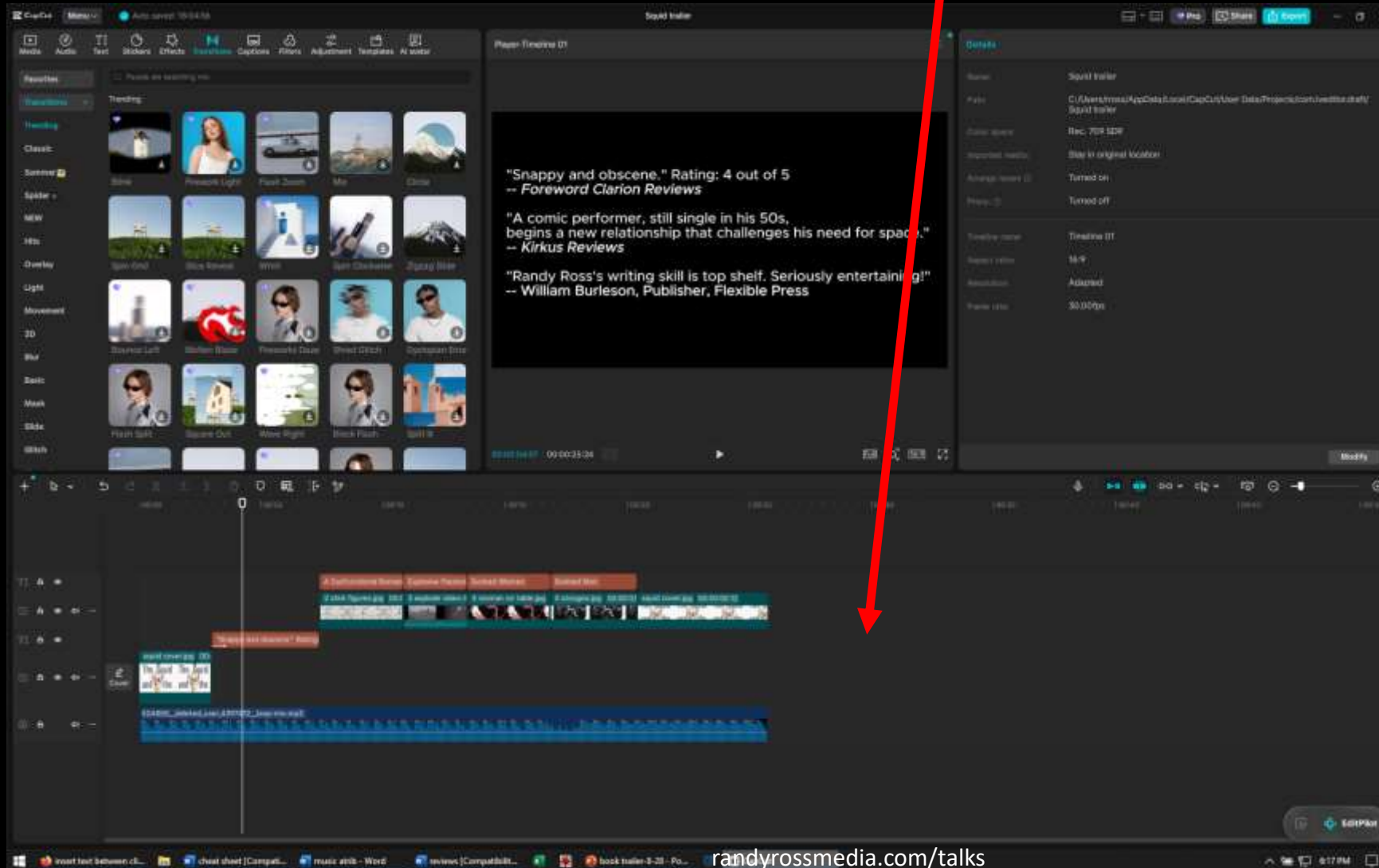
Real Video Editing Tools



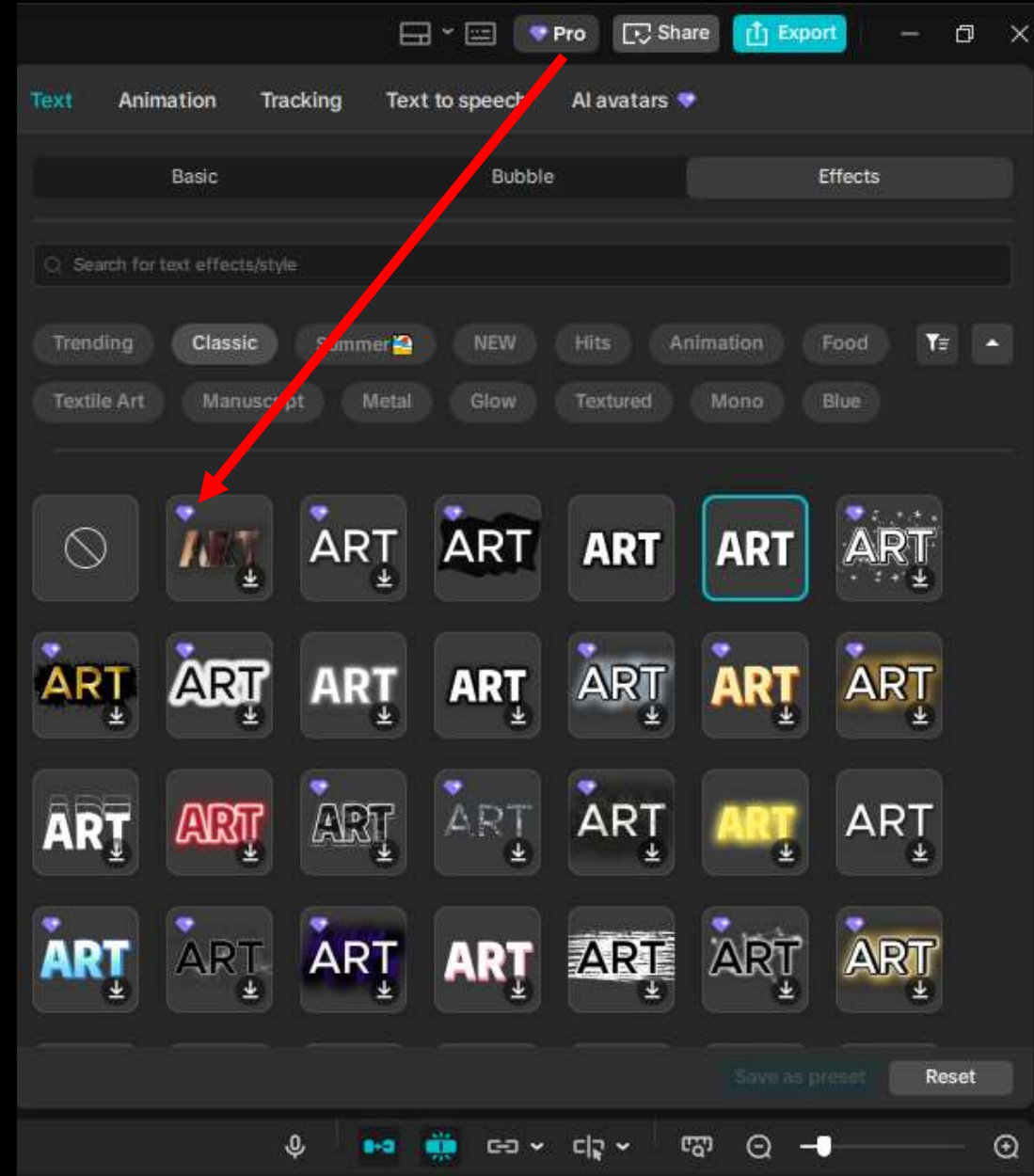
Add Images, Scale to Fit



Add Audio Multi-track Timeline



Purple Hearts = Paid Features



AUTHOR OF
GOD BLESS CAMBODIA

RANDY ROSS

The Squid and the Spaceman

A NOVEL



Advanced: Premiere



Adobe Premiere

- Industry standard
- In business since 1986, based in CA.
- Better for long videos
- Part of suite with Audition (audio), After Effects (animation), Photoshop, Illustrator.

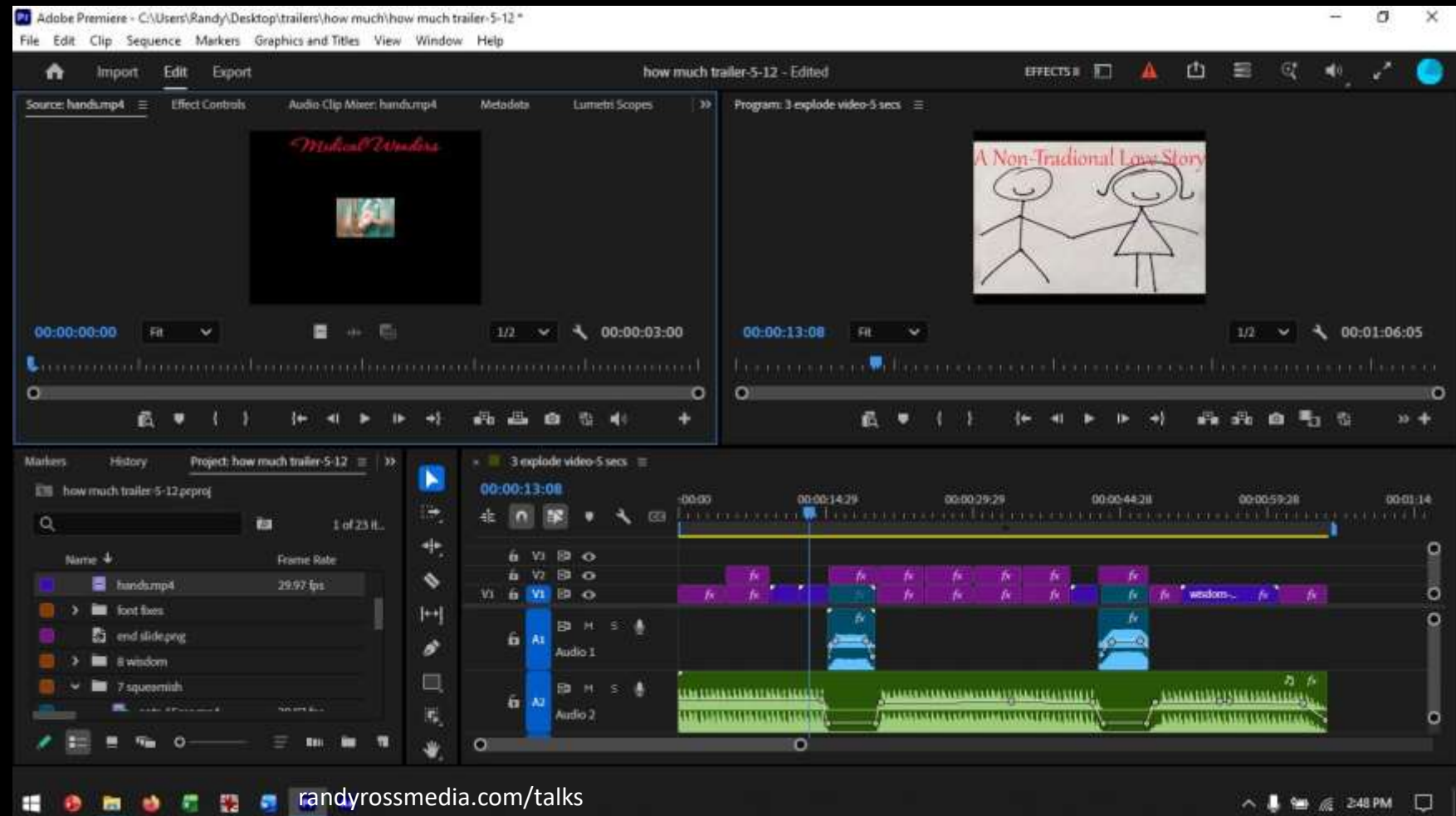
Advanced: Premiere



Adobe Premiere

- But:
 - More expensive: \$23/month (\$80/month for suite)
 - Requirements: for Windows, 16GB RAM, Mid-high CPU (i7), Windows 11.
 - Complicated to learn
 - Emerson offers classes for \$492 (get student rate for Adobe suite for \$40/month)

Premiere Interface



Helpful Free Tools

- Tweaking photos and images:
 - Canva
 - Irfanview
 - Powerpoint
- Adjusting volume, formatting, trimming/combining audio
 - audacity
- Downloading Youtube videos:
 - Clipgrab

DIY Tips

If you get stuck:

- Try to figure out for 5 minutes then Google: “In Canva, how to I ...”
- Try another tool you already have: Powerpoint for graphics and special effects.

Don't need to win Academy Award



Book Talk: A Theme and a Tease

How Much Can You Change for Someone You Love?

An off-kilter author talk

by

comedian and novelist

Randy Ross

Book Talk: Genesis of Book

Tales of a Reluctant World Traveler

a comedy of
adventure and self-discovery

Slides and Links at

RandyRossMedia.com/Talks