

Back in college, when I was first learning how to edit film—how to construct a scene—my professor, Mr. Baron, said to me, “You don’t have to show people using a door to walk into a room. If people are already in the room, the audience will understand that they didn’t crawl through a window or drop from the ceiling or just materialize. The audience understands that a door has been used—the eyes and mind will make the connection—so you can just skip the door.”

Mr. Baron, a full-time visual aid, skipped as he said, “Skip the door.” And I laughed, not knowing that I would always remember his bit of teaching, though of course, when I tell the story now, I turn my emotive professor into the scene-eating lead of a Broadway musical.

“Skip the door, young man!” Mr. Baron sings in my stories—my lies and exaggerations—skipping across the stage with a top hat in one hand and a cane in the other. “Skip the door, old friend! And you will be set free!”

“Skip the door” is a good piece of advice—a maxim, if you will—that I’ve applied to my entire editorial career, if not my entire life. To state it in less poetic terms, one would say, “An editor must omit all unnecessary information.” So in telling you this story—with words, not film or video stock—in constructing its scenes, I will attempt to omit all unnecessary information. But oddly enough, in order to skip the door in