The Storyboard Edit

A step by step walkthrough of how I get Claude Code to edit a video from one sentence, storyboard included.

Why I built this

Opening an editing app for a 60 second talking head video means learning a timeline, keyframing text, color grading by hand, and matching caption styles across dozens of cuts, for every single video. I kept watching myself redo the same four or five moves (warm up the color, drop in a title, tighten a pause, scale up a caption) in an app I never actually got fast at, so I wanted to describe the edit in a sentence and let Claude Code do the repetitive part.

The promise is simple: tell Claude what you want in plain language, review the plan it hands back, then let it render. No app, no timeline, no manual color work, no dragging a caption box to the right size by eye.

In the demo video this guide comes from, I drop in the raw take with a bad line still in it, say one sentence, and a few minutes later I have the finished cut. The process replaces four tools I used to open for this kind of video: CapCut for the cut, Instagram's Edits app for captions, Canva for titles, and Adobe Express for thumbnails. All four are gone from the workflow, not because Claude recreated each one, but because the storyboard step covers what I used them for.

This guide walks through the exact loop I use on my own talking head videos, from the raw take to the final render, including the actual sentences I typed and the one thing that will waste your time if you skip it.

01

How it actually works

1. Claude reads the raw take and the script, then decides where the hook, the demo, and the call to action land in the footage, so it knows which seconds matter before it plans anything.
2. Claude writes a storyboard, one entry per beat, listing the shot (wide, close, or tight), the color grade for that section (raw, warm, or moody), the on screen text and when it appears, and the sound cue that goes with it.
3. Claude renders the beats into one finished video, baking in the music, the captions, and the grade, only after you have approved the storyboard. Nothing exports before that approval.

02

The one thing almost everyone gets wrong

Skipping the storyboard review and asking Claude to just render it straightaway.

WATCH OUT

If you do not read the storyboard before you say render, a one word fix means re rendering the whole video instead of one beat. In my own workflow, a note as small as "make the CTA offer the guide" only changed the text on that one beat, because I caught it in the storyboard before the render, not after.

WHY THIS MATTERS MORE AS VIDEOS GET LONGER

A render is not instant. The longer the video, the more expensive it is to find out your instruction landed wrong after the fact instead of in the plan.

03 The prompts I actually used

Every one of these is a single sentence, typed straight to Claude Code. No settings menu, no sliders, no dropdown of presets.

> **START THE EDIT**
>
> `I want you to take a pass at editing this.`

That one sentence turned a raw, unedited take (including the retake I meant to cut) into a first full version with a hook, a structure, and a CTA.

> **PUSH THE LOOK**
>
> `make it more aesthetic`

The color grade shifted from raw to warm, my best past videos floated in as proof, and the titles switched to a cleaner, magazine style layout.

> **SHIFT THE MOOD**
>
> `make it moody`

The grade shifted dark for that section, and the music bed dropped under it to match the tone, then returned to the warm grade once the moody section ended.

> **TIGHTEN IT**
>
> `tighter cut, bigger captions`

The pacing sped up and the caption size scaled up to roughly 1.6x for that beat, both from one sentence, not two separate edits.

> **FIX ONE BEAT WITHOUT A RE RENDER**
>
> `make the CTA offer the guide`

This was a note left directly on the storyboard, not a new prompt after a finished render. Claude updated the call to action text on that single beat and left the rest of the plan untouched.

Set it up in Claude Code or Codex

1. In Claude Code, create a folder at ~/.claude/skills/your-skill-name/. In Codex, use your project folder, or a folder at .codex/skills/your-skill-name/ with a pointer added to AGENTS.md so Codex knows to look there.
2. Inside that folder, write a SKILL.md whose name: field matches the folder name exactly. If the name does not match, Claude will not pick up the skill when you ask for it.
3. In SKILL.md, tell Claude explicitly to write a storyboard file first and stop there, not to render anything until you say so. This one instruction is what turns a black box edit into a reviewable one.
4. Drop your raw take into the project folder and give Claude one sentence describing the first pass you want, the same way I opened with "I want you to take a pass at editing this."
5. Open the storyboard file Claude hands back, read every beat, and leave a one line note on anything you want changed before you approve the render. A successful first run looks like this: Claude hands you a plan you can actually read, and nothing exports until you say render.

> 💡 **QUICK TIPS**
>
> - Keep the storyboard as a plain file you can actually open and read, a JSON or an HTML page both work, so you are never guessing what is about to render.
> - Ask for one change per sentence. Stacking three requests into one prompt makes it harder to tell which beat update caused which result.
> - If your edit needs an actual render engine instead of just a plan, Claude Code can wire the storyboard into whatever you already render with, Remotion, ffmpeg, or your own editor's command line tools. The storyboard step works the same either way.

04

The commands I actually run

START THE EDIT

```
I want you to take a pass at editing [RAW_FOOTAGE_FILENAME].
```

SET THE MOOD

```
make it [more aesthetic / moody / energetic]
```

TIGHTEN THE CUT

```
tighter cut, bigger captions
```

FIX ONE BEAT

```
on beat [BEAT NUMBER], change [WHAT YOU WANT CHANGED]
```

APPROVE THE RENDER

```
storyboard looks good, render it
```

When it breaks

ERROR	FIX
Claude renders before you have reviewed the storyboard	Tell it explicitly, in SKILL.md and in the prompt, to stop after writing the storyboard and wait for your approval.
A one word change triggers a full re render	Name the exact beat number when you ask for a fix, not a vague description like "the part where I talk about the price."
Music or voiceover is too loud under dialogue	Ask Claude to duck the music under your voice for that section instead of lowering the whole track.
Final export sounds clipped or distorted	Ask Claude to drop the limiter by a couple dB before the final master pass.
Captions come in the wrong size on one beat	Set a caption scale override for that specific beat instead of changing the global caption size.
The raw take still has a bad line or retake in it after rendering	Point Claude at the exact timestamp of the bad line and ask for that section trimmed, rather than asking it to "clean up the footage" in general terms.

Ready to go deeper?

This free guide is just the beginning.

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