

## The Assistant Editor Workflow In Film Tuhan Benarkah Kau Mendengarku

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the workflow of assistant editors in the post-production process of the film Tuhan Benarkah Kau Mendengarku (God, Are You Really Listening to Me?). Assistant editors play a strategic role in managing visual and audio data, maintaining continuity, and providing technical support to the main editor so that the editing process runs efficiently and narratively coherently. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Data was collected through direct observation of the editing process, in-depth interviews with the editor and assistant editor, and analysis of documents such as editing logs and project structures. The results of the study show that the assistant editor's workflow has a significant effect on work efficiency, minimization of technical errors, and the smoothness of the editor's creative decision-making. A structured workflow allows editors to focus their energy on building narrative meaning and emotion. This study contributes to film post-production studies by highlighting the often overlooked role of assistant editors, particularly in the context of Indonesian independent film production.

**Keywords:** Assistant Editor, Workflow Editing, Film Post-production, Data Management.

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### INTRODUCTION

Film editing is a crucial stage in the audiovisual production process because it determines how a story is structured, understood, and felt by the audience. Editing is not merely a technical process of cutting and splicing images, but rather a creative practice that builds rhythm, emotion, and narrative meaning through the relationship between shots, duration, and visual transitions (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019). In this context, editing functions as the language of film that organizes the audience's experience psychologically and aesthetically.

In film industry practice, academic and popular attention often focuses on the editor as the main figure who makes creative decisions. Editors are understood as the ones who "rewrite" films in the editing room. However, this focus often obscures other technical roles that directly support the creative process, one of which is the assistant editor. In fact, without a strong technical foundation, the editor's creative decisions have the potential to

be disrupted by non-creative issues such as data chaos, synchronization errors, or continuity inconsistencies (Dancyger, 2018).

The assistant editor has the primary responsibility of managing raw material from the early stages of post-production. These tasks include data ingest, footage grouping, file naming, audio-visual synchronization, continuity logging, and project version management. All of these tasks are fundamental because they determine the orderliness of the editor's workspace. According to Murch (2001), an effective editing process is highly dependent on the readiness and orderliness of the material before it enters the creative exploration stage.

In the context of Indonesian cinema, studies on the role of assistant editors are still very limited. National film literature mostly discusses narrative aspects, visual aesthetics, or the role of the director as the controller of the film's vision (Pratista, 2017). Discourse on post-production generally stops at discussing editing as the final result, rather than as a work process involving systems and division of roles. As a result, the position of assistant editor is often viewed merely as a technical support role without any strategic dimension.

In fact, in Indonesian independent film production, working conditions often differ from the standards of large-scale film industries. Limited human resources, time, and budget mean that assistant editors often have to perform multiple functions at once. Marselli (2019) emphasizes that independent film production demands high work efficiency and crew role flexibility. In this situation, the assistant editor's workflow becomes a determining factor in the success of post-production.

The film *Tuhan Benarkah Kau Mendengarku* (God, Are You Really Listening to Me?) is an Indonesian independent film that raises the themes of spirituality, crisis of faith, and individual inner struggles. This film relies on the internal emotional strength of the characters, a slow storytelling rhythm, and psychological continuity between scenes. These characteristics require a highly controlled editing process, both technically and narratively. Any synchronization errors, visual inconsistencies, or data structure chaos have the potential to ruin the audience's emotional experience (Oldham, 2012).

In this context, the assistant editor not only acts as a technical manager but also as the guardian of the initial narrative stability. Through continuity logging and material compilation, the assistant editor helps the editor maintain the visual and emotional logic of the film. Bordwell and Thompson (2019) emphasize that continuity is not only visual but also psychological, especially in films that emphasize the inner journey of the characters.

Previous studies have focused more on montage theory, editing rhythm, and editing style as artistic expressions of editors (Pearlman, 2009). However, few studies have positioned the workflow assistant editor as a work system that can be analyzed academically. This gap highlights the need for research that focuses on the post-production process from the perspective of teamwork and technical management.

Based on this background, this study formulates the following problem: what is the workflow assistant editor in the film *Tuhan Benarkah Kau Mendengarku* (God, Are You Really Listening to Me) and how does it contribute to the effectiveness of the editing process? This study aims to describe the stages of the workflow assistant editor and analyze its role in supporting the technical smoothness and creative decisions of the editor.

The contribution of this research lies in its effort to expand the study of Indonesian films to the realm of post-production, which has received little academic attention. Theoretically, this research enriches the discourse on collaborative work in film editing. Practically, the results of this research are expected to serve as a reference for film students, post-production practitioners, and educational institutions in understanding the importance of the assistant editor's role as an integral part of the creative process of filmmaking.

In the development of contemporary film studies, attention to the post-production process has begun to increase along with the awareness that the meaning of a film is not only formed at the production stage, but also through technical and creative decisions in the editing room. Editing is the space where narrative structure, emotional tempo, and relationships between scenes are systematically constructed. Therefore, understanding the editing process cannot be separated from understanding the work system and division of roles in the post-production team.

However, in many academic studies, the editing process is still often treated as the sole activity of the editor. This perspective tends to ignore the collaborative nature of film editing, especially the role of the assistant editor as the manager of the technical work system. In professional practice, editors are highly dependent on the readiness of materials, data organization, and technical stability provided by the assistant editor. Without a well-organized work system, the editor's creative process risks being hampered by technical issues that should have been anticipated from the outset.

In the context of film education in Indonesia, attention to post-production workflow is still relatively limited. Editing education often focuses on mastering software and exploring editing styles, while aspects of work management, role distribution, and post-production technical processes receive less emphasis. As a result, film education graduates often have a good understanding of aesthetics but are ill-prepared to face the complexities of teamwork in real production.

The film *Tuhan Benarkah Kau Mendengarku* (God, Are You Listening to Me?) was chosen as the object of research because it represents the practice of independent film production in Indonesia, which faces resource constraints but still demands strong narrative and emotional quality. This condition makes the workflow assistant editor an important element in maintaining a balance between creative demands and technical limitations. Thus, this study not only focuses on the technical description of the assistant editor's work but also seeks to understand their position in the overall film post-production work ecosystem.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative research design with a descriptive case study approach. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the processes, roles, and work dynamics of assistant editors in depth within a specific production context (Sugiyono, 2018).

The subject of this study was the assistant editor of the film Tuhan Benarkah Kau Mendengarku (God, Are You Really Listening to Me), with the main editor as a supporting informant. The research population included the entire post-production team, while the sample was determined purposively because the assistant editor was directly involved in the workflow being studied (Lodico et al., 2006).

Data collection techniques were carried out in three ways. First, direct observation of the post-production process to record the workflow, data management system, and interactions between crew members. Second, in-depth interviews with the assistant editor and editor to explore their experiences, responsibilities, and the obstacles they faced. Third, document analysis in the form of project folder structures, editing logs, continuity notes, and project version archives (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data from observations, interviews, and documents were coded thematically to identify workflow patterns. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### RESEARCH RESULT

The results of the study show that the workflow assistant editor in the film Tuhan Benarkah Kau Mendengarku does not stop at the initial technical stage, but continues to support the creative editing stages gradually. The workflow consists of several main stages, namely data ingest and organization, audio-visual synchronization, continuity management, assembly, rough cut 1, rough cut 2, final cut, and final rendering and distribution.

The data ingest and organization stage is carried out immediately after the production process is complete. All footage is transferred to the main storage media, given standard names, and grouped into folders and bins based on scene, location, and shooting date. This system facilitates material retrieval and reduces the risk of data loss during the editing process (Dancyger, 2018).

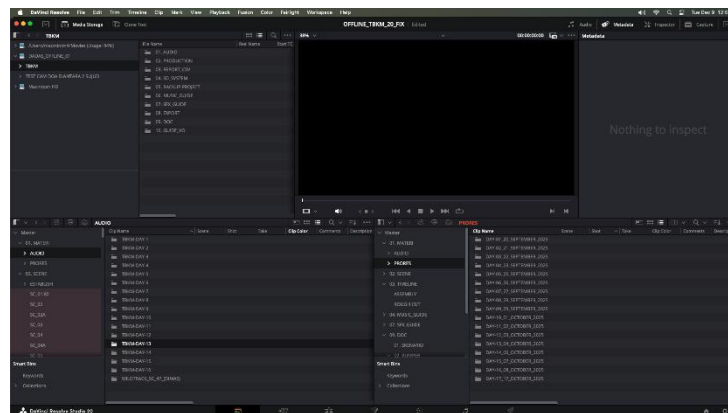
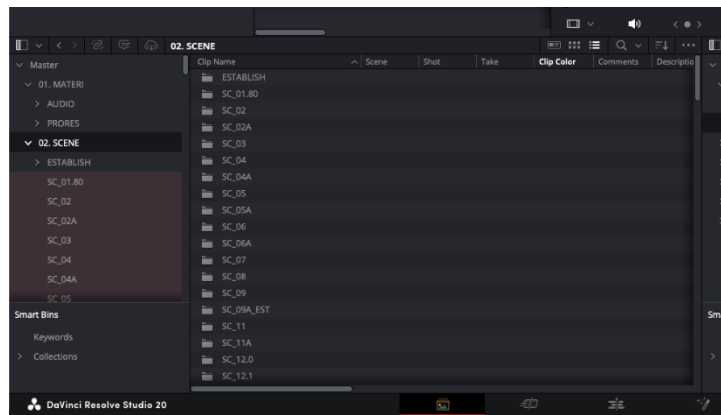
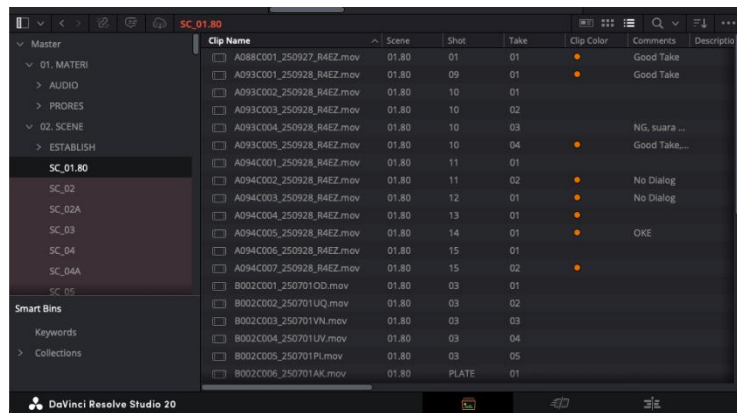


Figure 1: Daily Organization of Audio and Video Data



**Figure 2:** Organizing Audio and Video Data for Each Scene

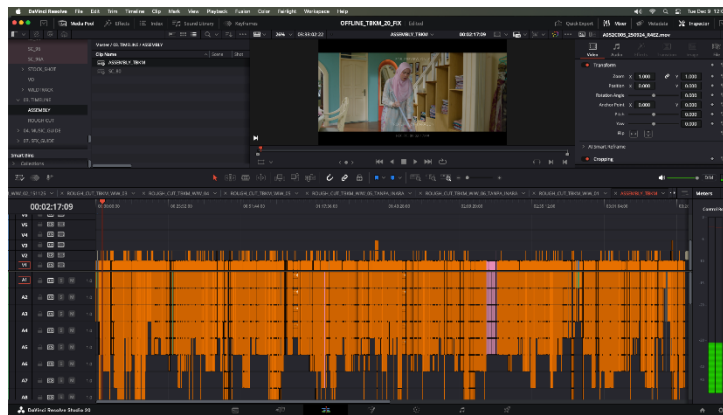


**Figure 3:** Naming Data According to Scene, Shot, and Take

The audio-visual synchronization stage is carried out by matching separate sound recordings with images. The assistant editor ensures the accuracy of dialogue timing, intonation, and the actors' visual expressions. This process is crucial in determining the quality of the performance that can be used in the next editing stage (Murch, 2001).

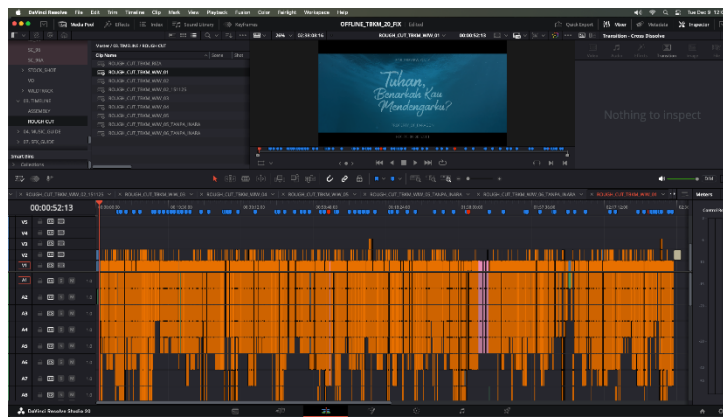
Continuity management is carried out by recording details related to costumes, props, actor blocking, and emotional continuity between scenes. These continuity notes are an important reference for editors to maintain the narrative and psychological consistency of the film (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019).

The assembly stage is the initial stage of compiling the film chronologically according to the script sequence. At this stage, the assistant editor helps compile all scenes without considering the final rhythm or duration. The purpose of assembly is to ensure that all material is covered and the storyline can be read in its entirety (Oldham, 2012).



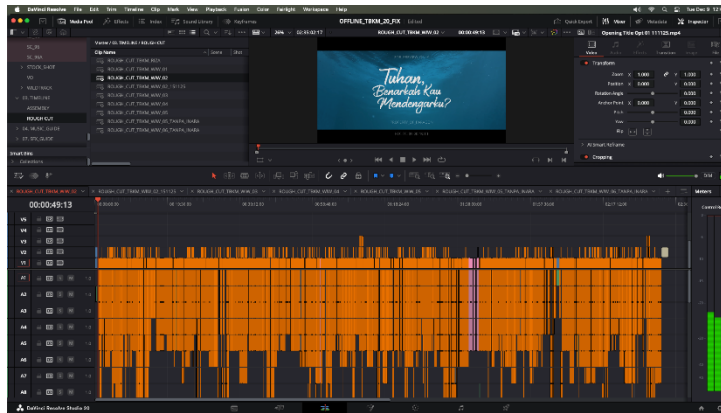
**Figure 4: Timeline Assembly**

After assembly, the process continues to the rough cut stage. At this stage, the editor begins selecting the main shots with a flexible duration. The assistant editor provides alternative shots, prepares technical notes, and ensures there are no synchronization or continuity errors. Rough cut 1 serves as the basis for evaluating the story structure.



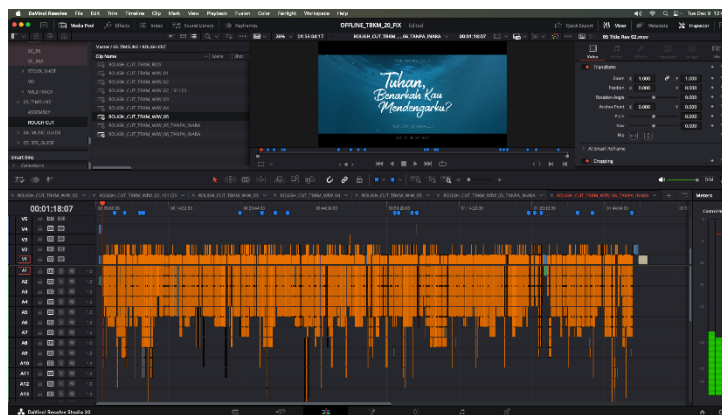
**Figure 5: Timeline Rough Cut 1**

The rough cut 2 stage is a refinement of the previous rough cut. Changes begin to focus on rhythm, transitions between scenes, and strengthening emotions. The assistant editor supports this process by updating the editing log, managing project versions, and adjusting the sequence structure according to the editor and director's instructions (Pearlman, 2009).



**Figure 6: Timeline Rough Cut 2**

The final cut stage is the stage of locking the editing structure. At this stage, the main creative decisions have been made and changes are minimal. The role of the assistant editor is focused on final technical checks, continuity consistency, and project readiness for the finishing process.



**Figure 7: Timeline Fine Cut**

The final stage is rendering, which is the process of exporting the edited results to the final format according to distribution requirements. The assistant editor ensures that technical specifications such as resolution, codec, and audio synchronization meet standards. Errors at this stage can directly impact the quality of the film's broadcast.



**Figure 8: Workspace Rendering**

In addition to the main stages of the assistant editor's workflow described above, this study also found that the effectiveness of the assistant editor's role is greatly influenced by work communication patterns and technical decision-making during the editing process. Assistant editors do not work passively, waiting for instructions from editors, but actively anticipate technical needs that will arise in the next stage of editing.

In practice, assistant editors periodically recheck the completeness of the footage, especially in scenes with high emotional complexity. This is done to ensure that editors have enough shot options to build the rhythm and intensity of the scene. The availability of alternative shots has been proven to speed up the creative decision-making process, especially in the rough cut stage.

Research also found that assistant editors play a role in maintaining the consistency of the editing project structure through a strict version management system. Every significant change to the rough cut is recorded and stored in a separate version. This practice prevents the loss of the previous editing structure and allows the editor and director to conduct comparative evaluations between versions. In the context of independent film production, which often experiences conceptual changes in the middle of the editing process, version management is a crucial aspect.

In the final cut stage, assistant editors are involved in the internal quality control process before the film enters the finishing stage. Assistant editors double-check the frame rate, audio stability, and color consistency between scenes. These findings show that assistant editors serve as an additional layer of quality control that helps minimize technical errors before the film is rendered into its final format.

The rendering stage is not only understood as a technical export process, but also as a final verification stage for the overall editing work. Assistant editors ensure that the render results meet distribution requirements and do not experience visual or audio quality degradation. This process is carried out more than once to ensure that no technical errors are overlooked.

## DISCUSSION

The addition of the assembly, rough cut 1, rough cut 2, final cut, and render stages shows that the assistant editor's workflow is not only administrative but also directly integrated with the creative editing process. The assistant editor acts as a link between the technical work system and the editor's creative decision-making.

In the assembly stage, the assistant editor helps create an initial overview of the film's structure. This stage is important because it forms the foundation for the entire subsequent editing process. In line with Oldham (2012), assembly allows the editor and director to visually reread the story before exploring the rhythm.

In the rough cut 1 and rough cut 2 stages, the assistant editor contributes to maintaining technical stability while the editor conducts creative experiments. With neat version management and systematic editing notes, the revision process can run efficiently without losing important material (Pearlman, 2009).

The final cut stage marks a shift in focus from creative exploration to technical accuracy. The assistant editor ensures that all visual and audio elements are consistent and ready to enter the finishing stage. This confirms Murch's (2001) view that technical readiness is a key requirement for successful creative expression.

The rendering stage highlights the assistant editor's role as the guardian of the final quality of the work. Even the smallest technical error at this stage can ruin the previous long work. Therefore, workflow discipline and meticulousness are the main competencies of an assistant editor.

These findings reinforce the argument that in the context of Indonesian independent films, assistant editors play a strategic role that goes beyond basic technical tasks. A structured workflow allows the editing process to run effectively despite limited resources. However, this study is still limited to a single case study, so the findings should be generalized with caution. Further research is recommended to compare the workflows of assistant editors in various types of film productions and distribution platforms.

The anticipatory role of assistant editors in providing alternative shots shows that their contributions are not entirely neutral in creative terms. Although they do not make major artistic decisions, assistant editors influence the creative possibilities available to editors. In other words, the quality of an editor's creative choices is partly determined by the readiness of the material provided by the assistant editor.

Systematic management of editing versions also reflects a professional approach to work that is often overlooked in film studies. In editing literature, discourse emphasizes the final result or editing style, while the collaborative work process is rarely discussed in depth. The findings of this study show that version management is an important practice that supports the continuity of the creative process, especially when there are differences of opinion between the editor and the director.

In the final cut and render stages, the role of the assistant editor further affirms their position as the guardian of the final quality of the work. The technical precision of the assistant editor serves as a preventive mechanism against errors that could damage the integrity of the film as a whole. In the context of digital distribution and festival screenings,

even the smallest technical errors can have a significant impact on the perceptions of audiences and reviewers.

When applied to the context of Indonesian cinema, these findings indicate that strengthening the role of the assistant editor needs to receive more attention in film education and production practices. Film curricula that have thus far emphasized the roles of directors and main editors have the potential to neglect aspects of post-production workflows that actually determine the smoothness of the creative process. This study provides an argumentative basis that assistant editors should be positioned as strategic roles, not merely as the initial stage of a career ladder.

This additional finding reinforces the understanding that the assistant editor's workflow is dynamic and adaptive, especially in the context of Indonesian independent films. Assistant editors do not only follow a linear workflow but also adjust their work strategies to the creative needs of editors and directors, which can change throughout the editing process.

Thus, the assistant editor's workflow can be understood as a work system that bridges the technical and creative aspects of film editing. The success of the editing process is not only determined by the editor's artistic vision but also by the readiness of the work system established from the outset of post-production. In the film *Tuhan Benarkah Kau Mendengarku*, this work system proved effective in maintaining the film's emotional consistency, rhythm, and narrative integrity despite being produced under resource constraints.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that the workflow assistant editor in the film *Tuhan Benarkah Kau Mendengarku* (God, Are You Really Listening to Me?) plays a very significant role in supporting the effectiveness of the editing process, both technically and creatively. The assistant editor not only functions as an administrative support, but also plays a key role in maintaining the order of the post-production work system.

The workflow implemented includes the stages of data ingest and organization, audio-visual synchronization, continuity management, assembly, rough cut 1, rough cut 2, final cut, and rendering. Each stage demonstrates a direct link between the technical readiness managed by the assistant editor and the quality of the editor's creative decisions. The more structured the workflow, the more room there is for the editor to focus on building the rhythm, emotion, and narrative meaning of the film.

In the context of Indonesian independent films, the role of the assistant editor becomes increasingly strategic due to limited resources and a division of labor that is not always ideal. Assistant editors often take on various technical functions that in large-scale productions are handled by several departments. Therefore, the assistant editor's competence in data management, version control, and team communication becomes a determining factor in the smooth running of post-production.

In addition to emphasizing the strategic role of assistant editors in the post-production workflow, this study also shows that the quality of film editing cannot be separated from the quality of the underlying work system. Effective editing is not solely the result of the editor's artistic intuition, but rather the product of a structured, collaborative, and technically disciplined work process. In this context, assistant editors act as guardians of system stability, enabling the creative process to run optimally.

The findings of this study indicate that failure to manage the assistant editor's workflow has the potential to cause a chain reaction, ranging from delays in the editing process, confusion in the narrative structure, to a decline in the technical quality of the final product. Conversely, a well-organized workflow allows editors and directors to focus their energy on developing the film's emotions, rhythm, and meaning. This confirms that the role of the assistant editor is both preventive and supportive in the overall creative process.

This study affirms that the assistant editor's workflow should be understood as an integral part of the creative editing process, not merely a supporting technical stage. Theoretically, this study expands film studies by presenting a collaborative work perspective in post-production. Practically, the results of this study can be used as a reference for film students, post-production practitioners, and educational institutions in increasing attention to the role and training of assistant editors. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for the development of film post-production studies in Indonesia and encourage further, broader, and comparative research.

Future research is recommended to examine the workflow of assistant editors in various film genres, production scales, and distribution platforms to obtain a more comprehensive picture of film post-production practices in Indonesia.

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