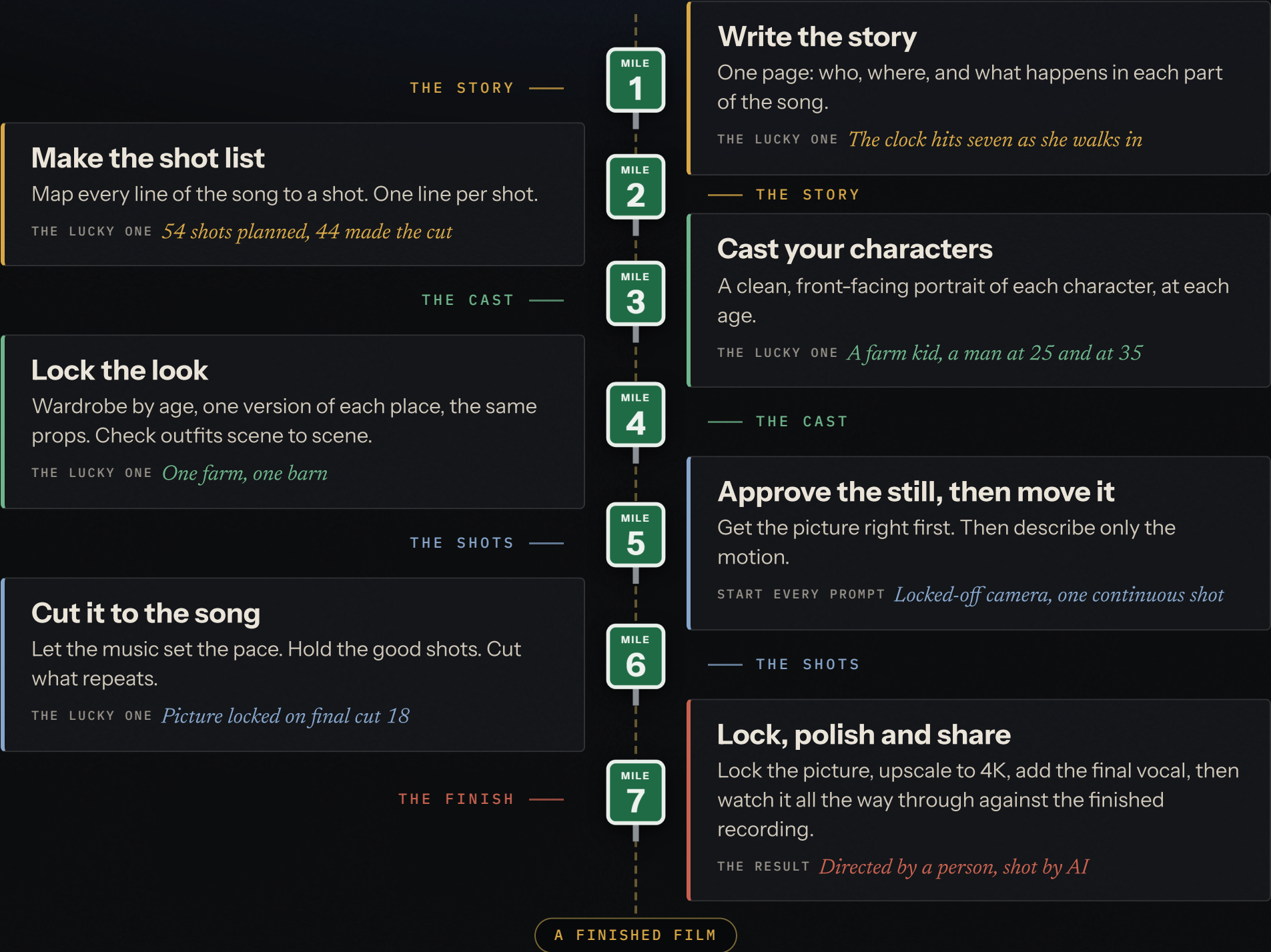


How a Music Video Gets Made

Seven miles from a finished song to a film, the way *The Lucky One* was made.

- THE STORY
- THE CAST
- THE SHOTS
- THE FINISH



Who does what

YOU, THE DIRECTOR

The story, every face, every choice, and saying no to what's wrong.

THE AI TOOLS

Your camera crew and your cast. They do what they're told and need correcting often.

THE SONG

Sets the pace of every cut, from the first frame to the last.

The story behind each mile

You don't need a camera or a crew. You need a story, a good eye and the patience to redo a shot.

MILE 1 Write the story

THE STORY

Filmmakers call this a treatment: one page that says who the people are, where it happens and what we see in each part of the song. Give the film its own ideas, too. In *The Lucky One*, the clock hits seven as she walks in. That number lives in the film, not the lyric.

MILE 2 Make the shot list

THE STORY

Time the song: when each verse, chorus and bridge starts. Then write one line for every shot: what we see, how close, and how the camera moves. Gather a few reference pictures for the look. Plan more shots than you need; some won't work.

MILE 3 Cast your characters

THE CAST

Make one sharp, well-lit, front-facing portrait of each character on a plain background, and one for each age they appear. Test a few and keep the one that holds up best. Never use a real person's face without permission, and never name a celebrity in a prompt; describe the look instead.

MILE 4 Lock the look

THE CAST

Write down what each character wears at each age, and what each place looks like. One farm, one barn, the same table. Decide who sits where and keep it. Check outfits from one scene to the next: they should change only when the story moves to a new day or a new age. Viewers notice when a jacket changes color or a ring jumps hands.

MILE 5 Approve the still, then move it

THE SHOTS

Make the still picture first, and fix it until the faces are right. Then use it as the first frame of the video. Describe only the motion, not what's already in the picture. Start with *“locked-off camera, one continuous shot”*, or the tool will invent cuts and camera moves. Make cheap low-resolution drafts first; make finals only for the shots that earn a place.

MILE 6 Cut it to the song

THE SHOTS

Lay the shots on the song in order and let the music set the pace. Hold the shots that move you. Cut anything that repeats. Watch it on the biggest screen you have, then on a phone. Show it to someone you trust and fix what they notice.

MILE 7 Lock, polish and share

THE FINISH

When nothing else needs to change, call the picture locked. Upscale every shot to 4K, then add the singer's final vocal. Before anything else, watch the whole edit against the finished recording: every cut, every lip movement and every lyric moment has to land on the new vocal. Then make a wide master for YouTube, and tall and square cuts for phones with the action in the center. Share it privately until it's ready.

LEARNED THE HARD WAY

- ❑ **Watch every frame.** A dog's tongue glitched for one second. Only the first four seconds of that shot were usable.
- ❑ **One tear, not two.** Glistening eyes move people. Matching tears look fake. So do crowds.
- ❑ **Hide a face and it changes.** If the still doesn't show a face clearly, the video invents a new one.
- ❑ **Never mirror a shot to fix a ring.** It swaps who sits where. Fix the ring instead.

REALITY CHECKS

- ❑ **It costs money.** AI video is paid by the second. Set a budget and draft cheap.
- ❑ **Click it yourself.** Most tools ban auto-clickers. Click once, and check you weren't charged twice.
- ❑ **Say it's AI.** YouTube asks you to label realistic AI video.
- ❑ **Going to festivals?** Showing a film publicly first can rule it out.

Every film starts with a song. Write yours first.

HOW A SONG GETS WRITTEN