

# Graduate from iMovie to Final Cut Express

JEFF CARLSON

---



- Author of  
iMovie HD &  
iDVD 5: Visual  
QuickStart Guide
- Managing Editor,  
TidBITS  
([www.tidbits.com](http://www.tidbits.com))
- [www.jeffcarlson.com](http://www.jeffcarlson.com)
- [jeffc@tidbits.com](mailto:jeffc@tidbits.com)

A digital video editing field trip

# Today's Lesson Plan:

1. Don't Be Intimidated by the Final Cut Interface
2. Capture Footage in Final Cut Express
3. Learn to Think Like Final Cut Express
4. Start Editing Clips Like a Pro



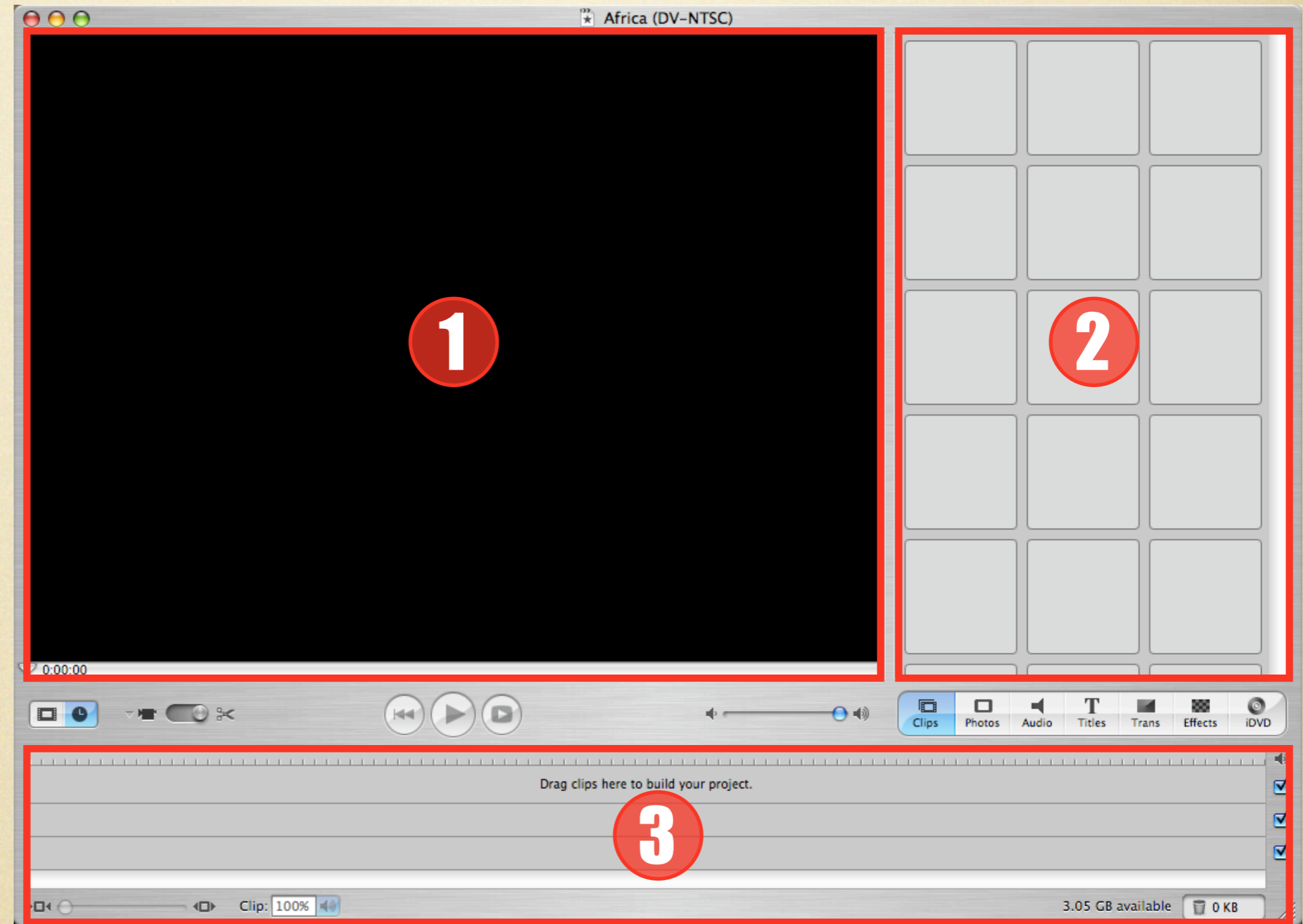
# 1. Don't Be Intimidated by the Final Cut Interface

Unlike iMovie's single, orderly window, Final Cut Express launches with four separate windows (and two toolbars).

You'll see that they correspond easily with the iMovie areas you're familiar with.

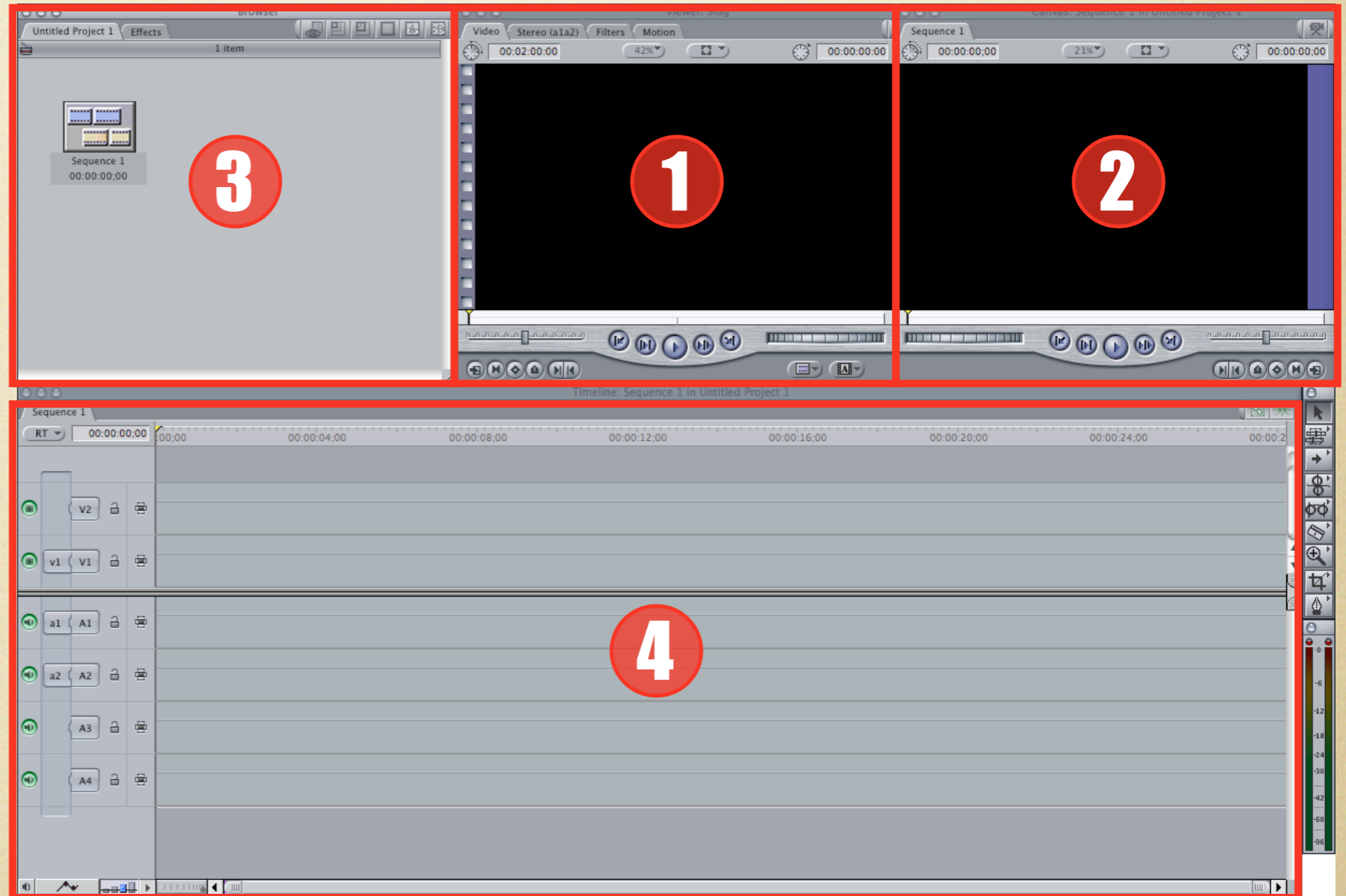
# iMovie: Designed for Users

1. Monitor
2. Shelf
3. Timeline



# Final Cut: Designed for Pro Editors

1. Viewer
2. Canvas
3. Browser
4. Timeline

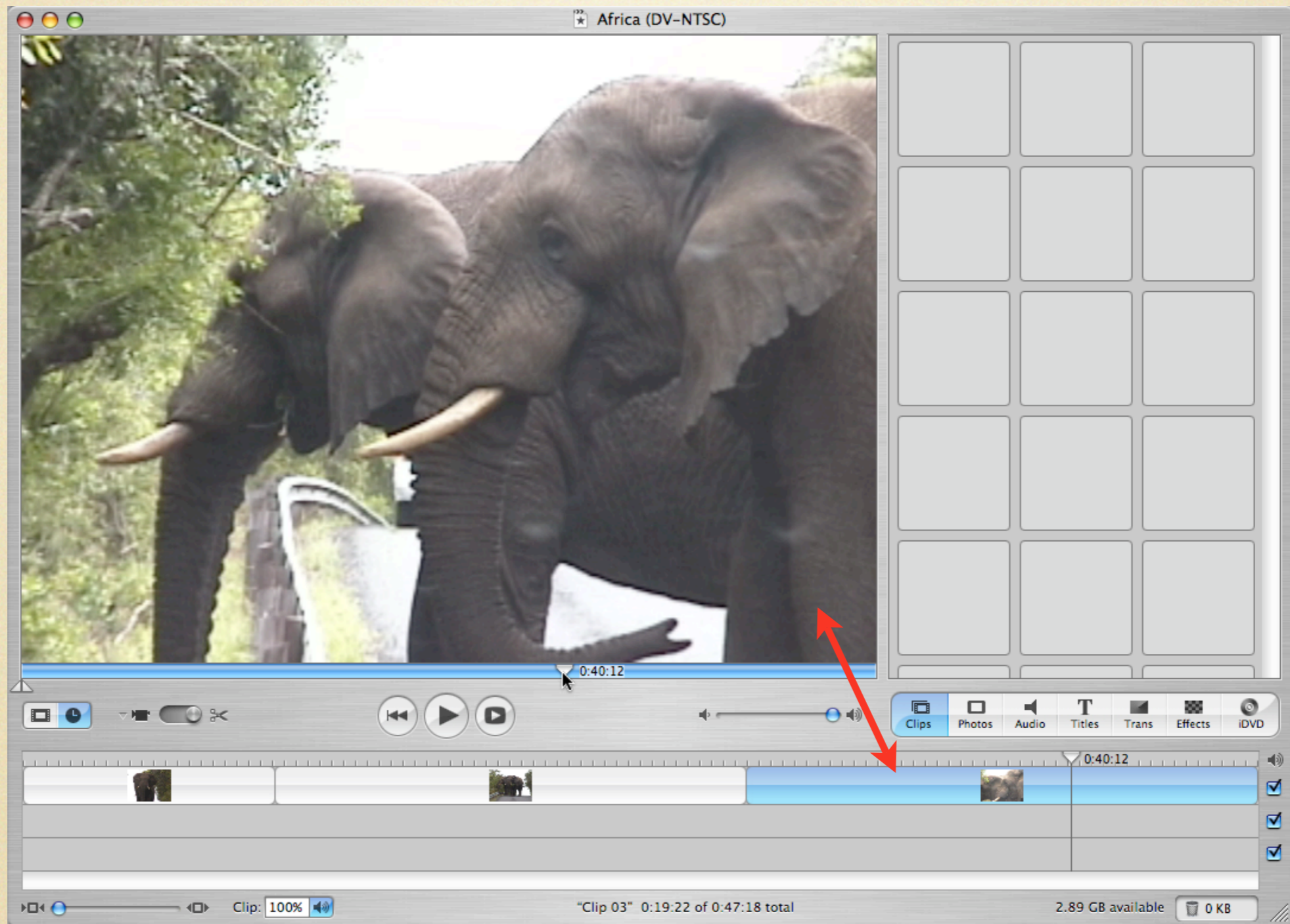


# Tasks & Corresponding Interface Elements

| Tasks                | iMovie   | FCE              |
|----------------------|----------|------------------|
| Organizing Clips     | Shelf    | Browser          |
| Viewing Clips        | Monitor  | Viewer & Canvas* |
| Assembling the Movie | Timeline | Timeline         |

\* iMovie's Monitor does double duty when reviewing footage; in FCE, the Viewer and Canvas operate separately (see next page).

# iMovie Monitor

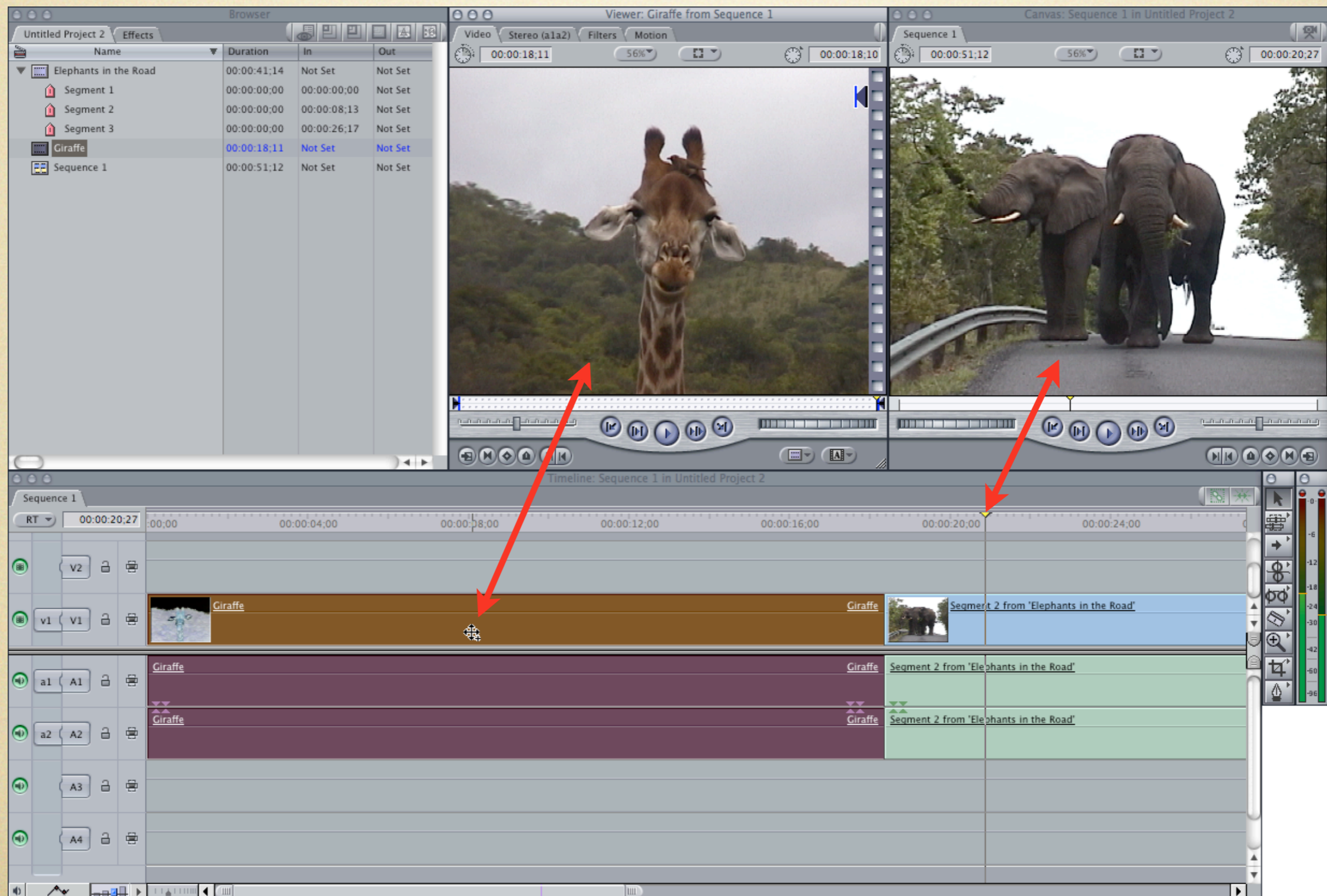


When a clip is selected, the Monitor plays and edits that clip.  
With nothing selected, the Monitor displays the current frame in the Timeline.

# FCE Viewer and Canvas

Viewer displays  
selected clip

Canvas displays  
Timeline



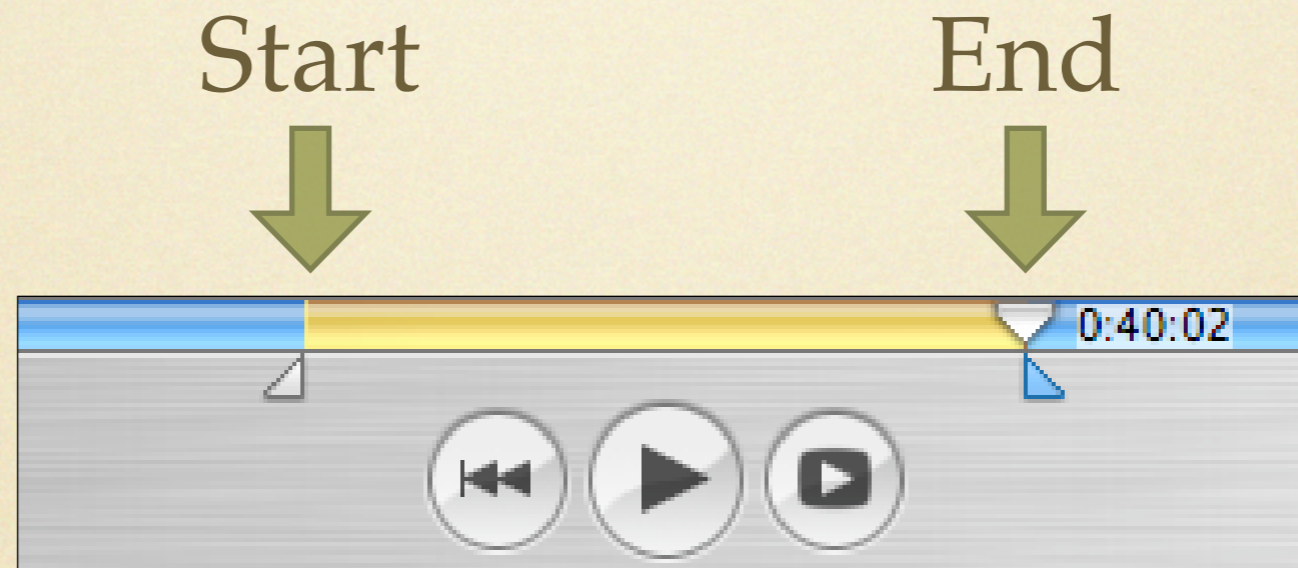


## 2. Learn to Think Like Final Cut Express

One of the biggest differences between iMovie and Final Cut Express is the concept of setting **In points** and **Out points**. It pervades nearly every aspect of how you use Final Cut Express.

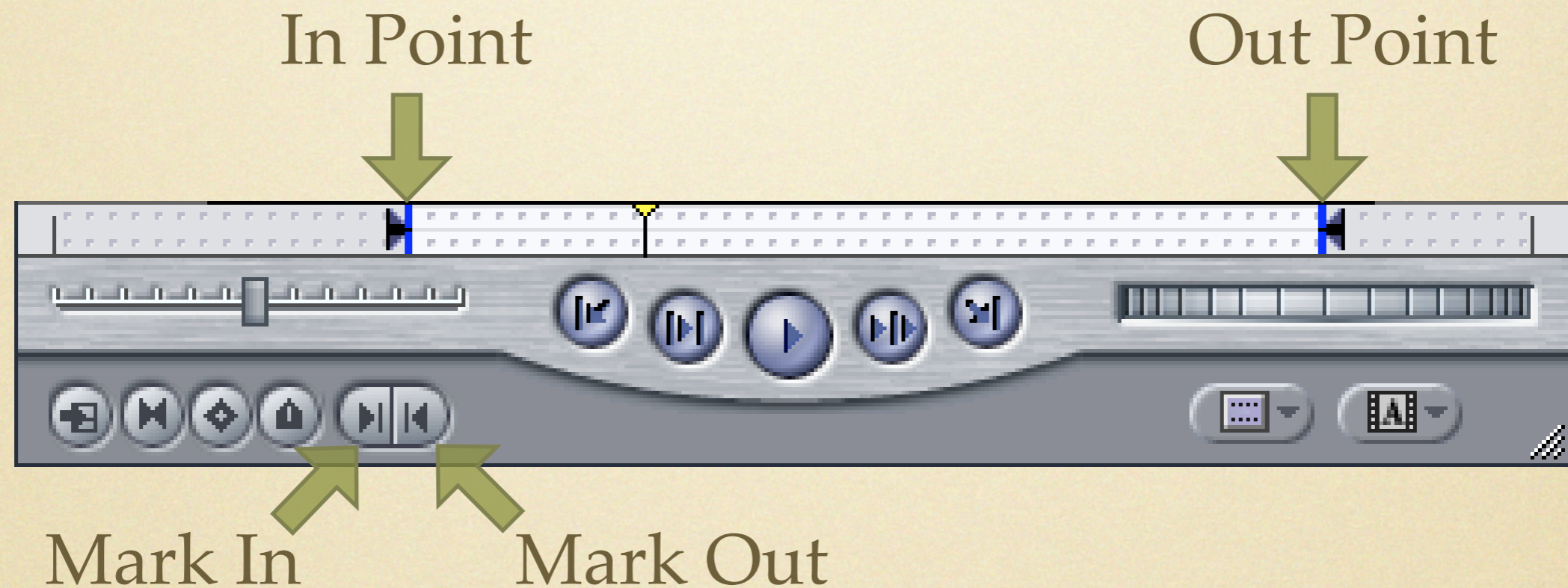
Also important, and easy to forget, is that you **double-click** a clip to load it in the Viewer.

# “In and Out Points” in iMovie



You can choose where a clip begins and ends by selecting a range of frames in the Monitor and then cropping or cutting and pasting. However, the footage outside of that range remains hidden unless you use Direct Trimming to make it visible again.

# In and Out Points in Final Cut Express



In Final Cut Express, you manually set In and Out points in the Viewer using the Mark In and Mark Out buttons (or pressing the I and O keys). This approach makes it easier to adjust a clip if you need a few extra frames on either side.

# 3. Capture Footage in Final Cut Express

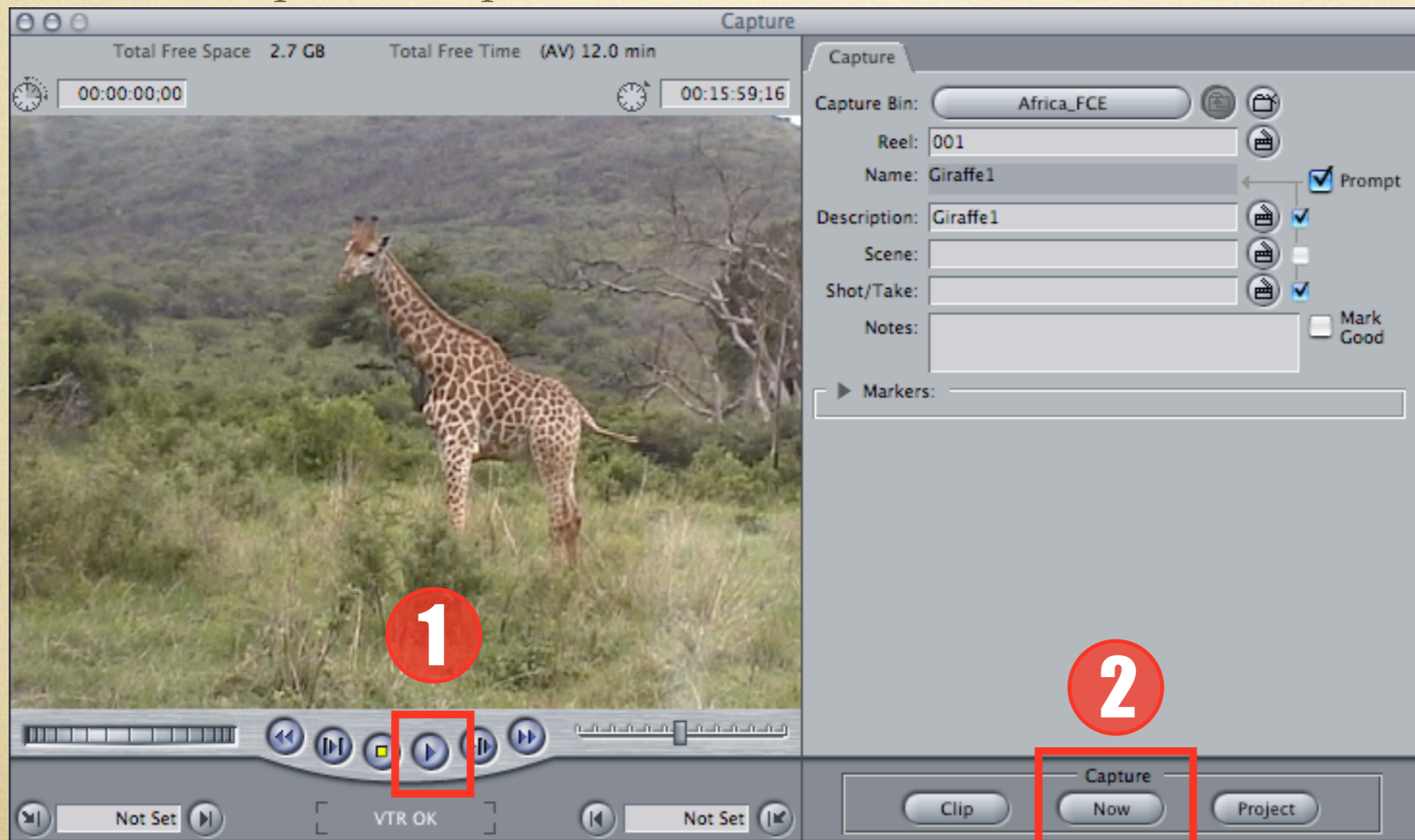
Final Cut Express can import footage similarly to iMovie, but the real advantage lies in its capability to use In and Out points to selectively import only the footage you want. This saves hard disk space and offers more detail when logging clips.

# Importing Footage



iMovie's big Import button is hard to miss.

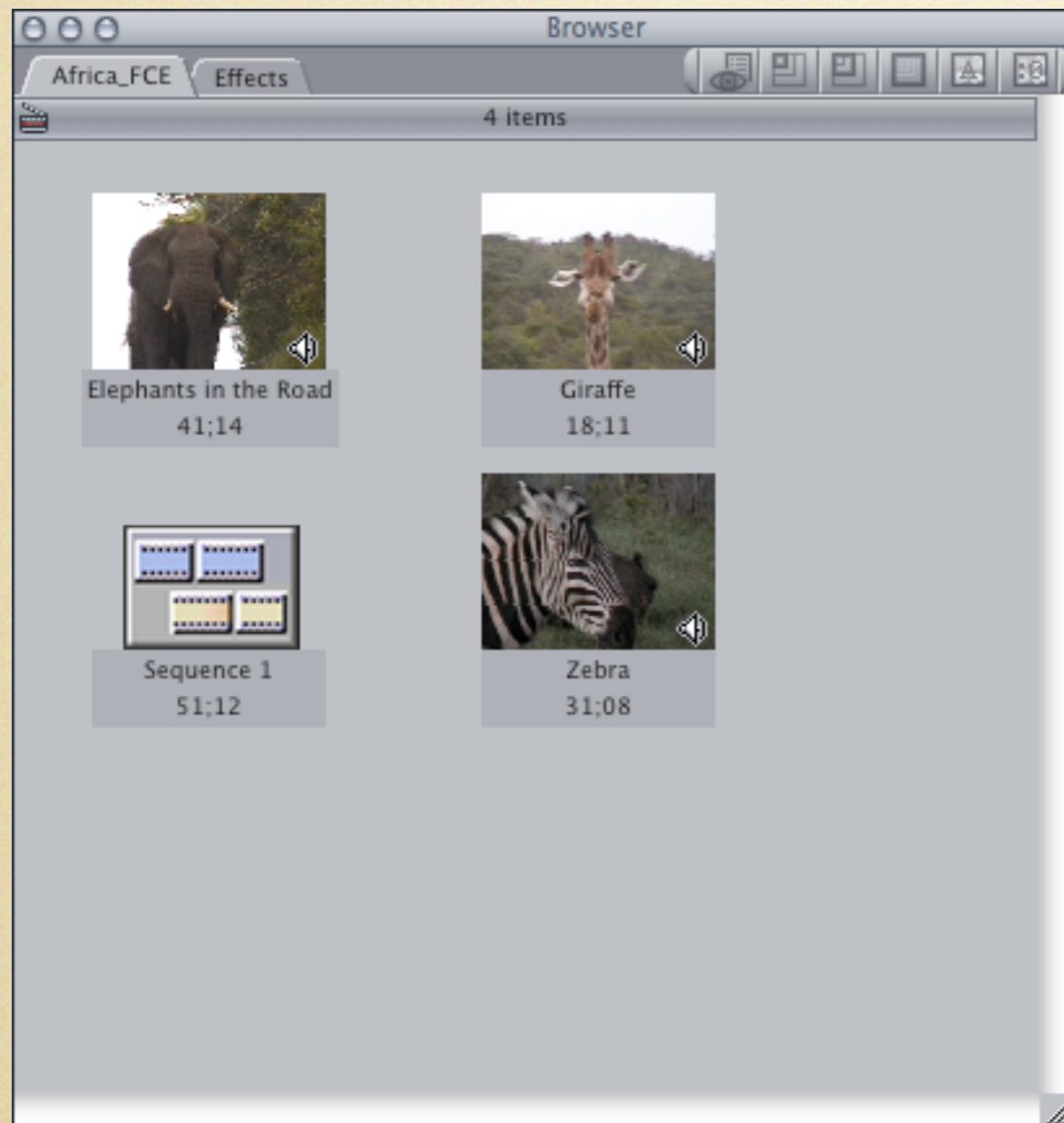
## Final Cut Express's Capture window



The easiest way to capture footage in FCE, iMovie-style, is to press the Play button under the preview (1) and then click Capture Now (2).

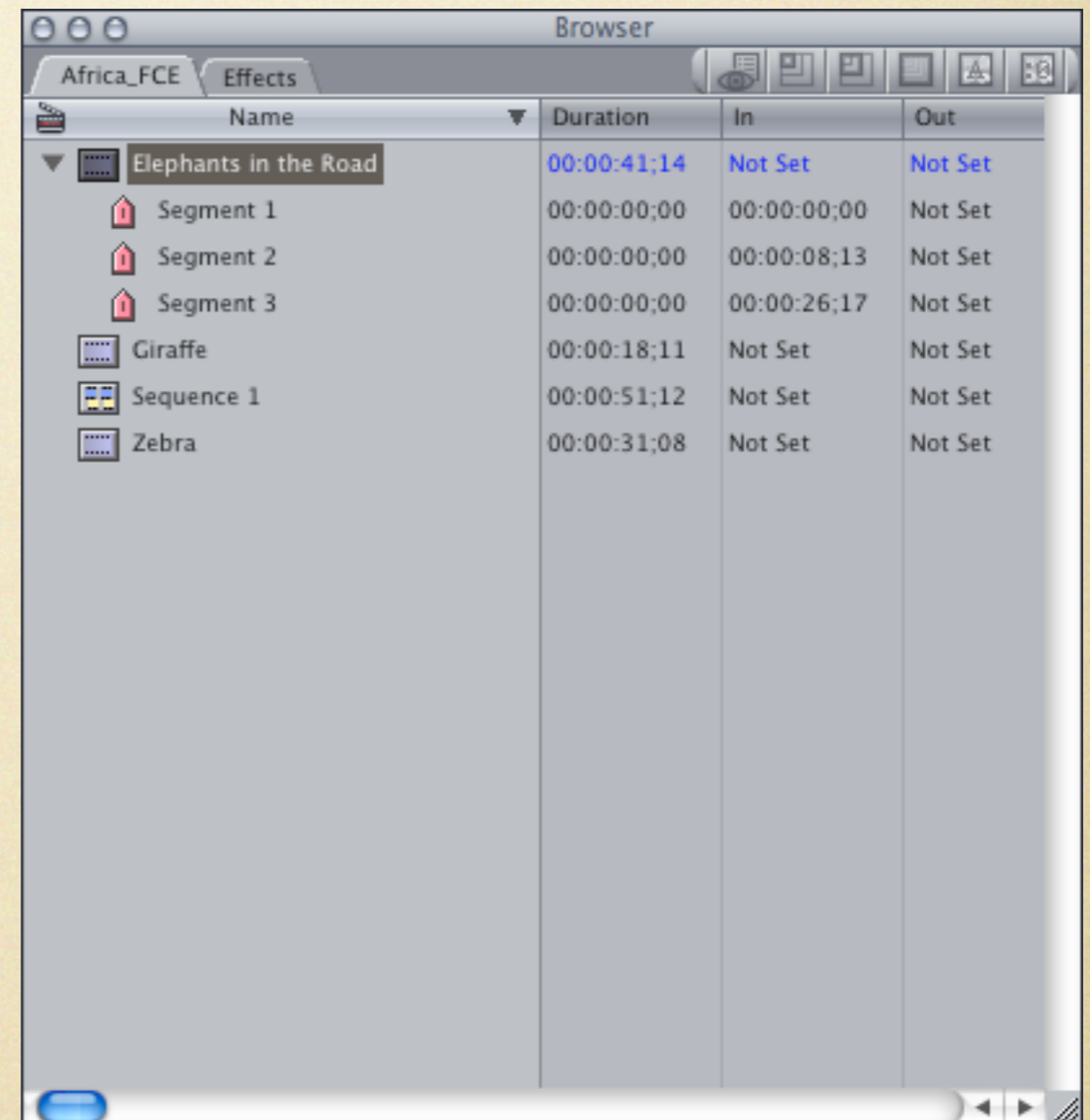
# DV Start/Stop Detection

The Capture Now feature lumps all scene breaks into one clip.



The Browser's **Icon view** most resembles iMovie's Shelf.

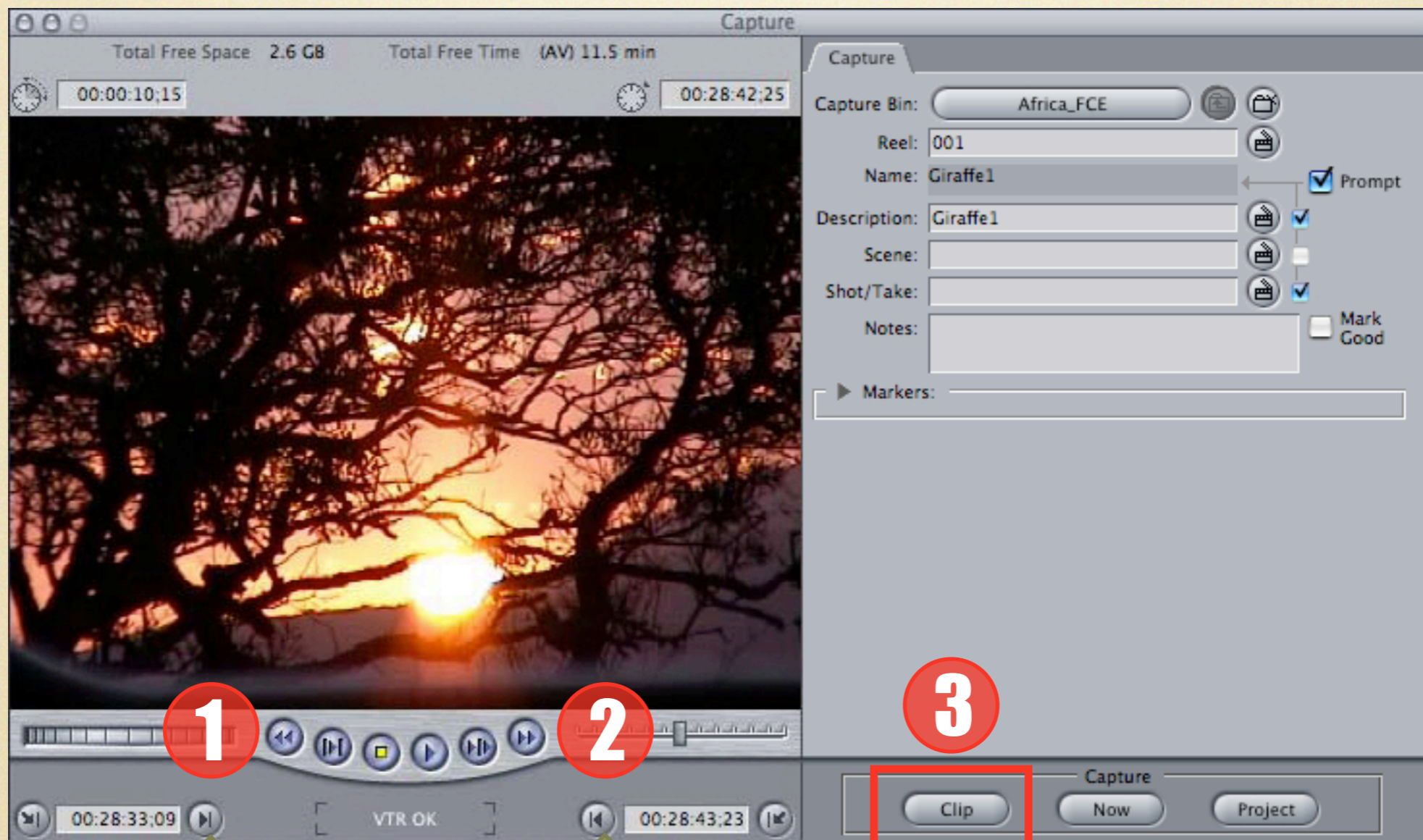
Select a clip and choose DV Start/Stop Detection from the Mark menu to split scene breaks into subclips.



I prefer the **List view**, which shows more information about each clip.

# Capture Clips in FCE

As you review footage in the Capture window, mark an In point (1) and an Out point (2), and click the Capture Clip button (3) to import just that section.



Mark In

Mark Out

# Keyboard Shortcuts

Use these invaluable keyboard shortcuts to make reviewing footage much easier.



In point



Out point



Rewind



Pause



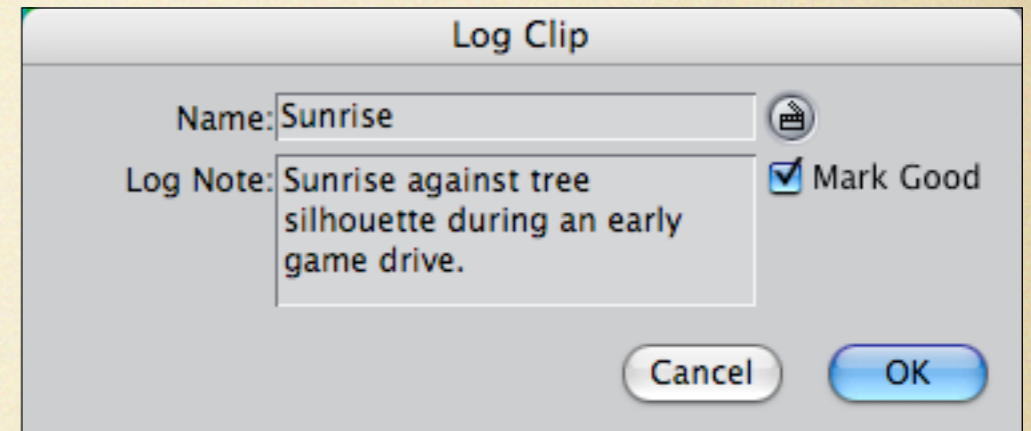
Forward

\* Pressing J or L multiple times increases (or slows down) playback speed.



# Capture Clip Advantages

- Uses In and Out points to define clips
- Adds logging information
- Offers precise, automated capture
- You can go back and recapture lost frames
- Saves disk space



The Log Clip dialog appears when you capture a clip, letting you add more detail and making it easier to find the clip as you're working in the future.

# Capture Clip Disadvantages

- Can't batch capture, as in Final Cut Pro
- Can be time-consuming

# Capturing HDV Footage

Choose Easy Setup from the Final Cut Express menu, and choose the HDV option that applies to your camera. (Note that this setting applies to the next new project, not a currently open project.)

In the Capture window, you can only use the Capture Now option, and will have to press Play on the camera to start importing.



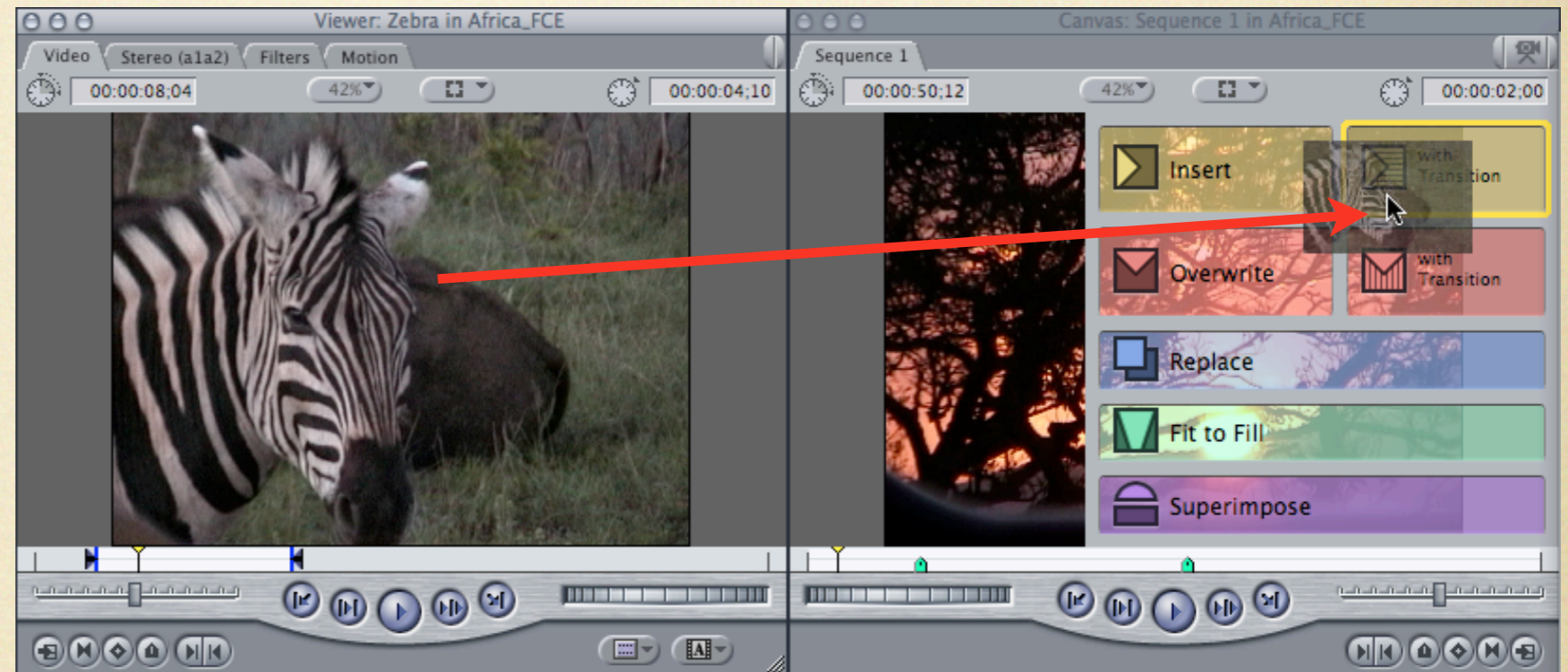
Like iMovie, Final Cut Express uses the Apple Intermediate Codec, which means the footage must be transcoded as you import, so the capture speed is likely to not be in real time, depending on the speed of your Mac.

# 4. Edit Like a Pro

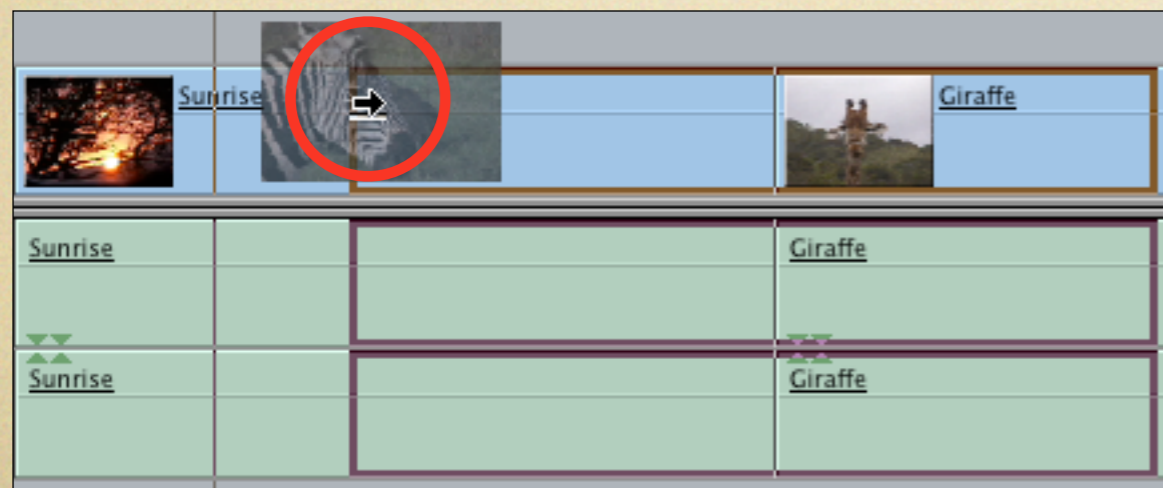
Taking full advantage of the time-saving editing features of Final Cut Express takes experience with the program and repetition, but here are a few important things that will get you started.

# Adding Clips to the Timeline

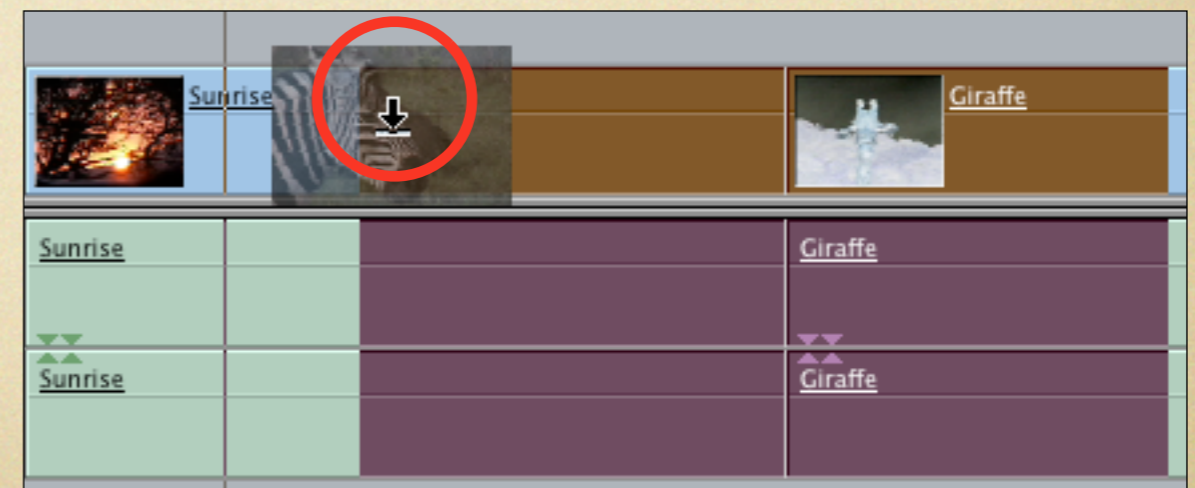
Drag from the Viewer to the Canvas to add a clip to existing footage where the Playhead is located on the Timeline.



Drag and drop at top of track to insert new clip.



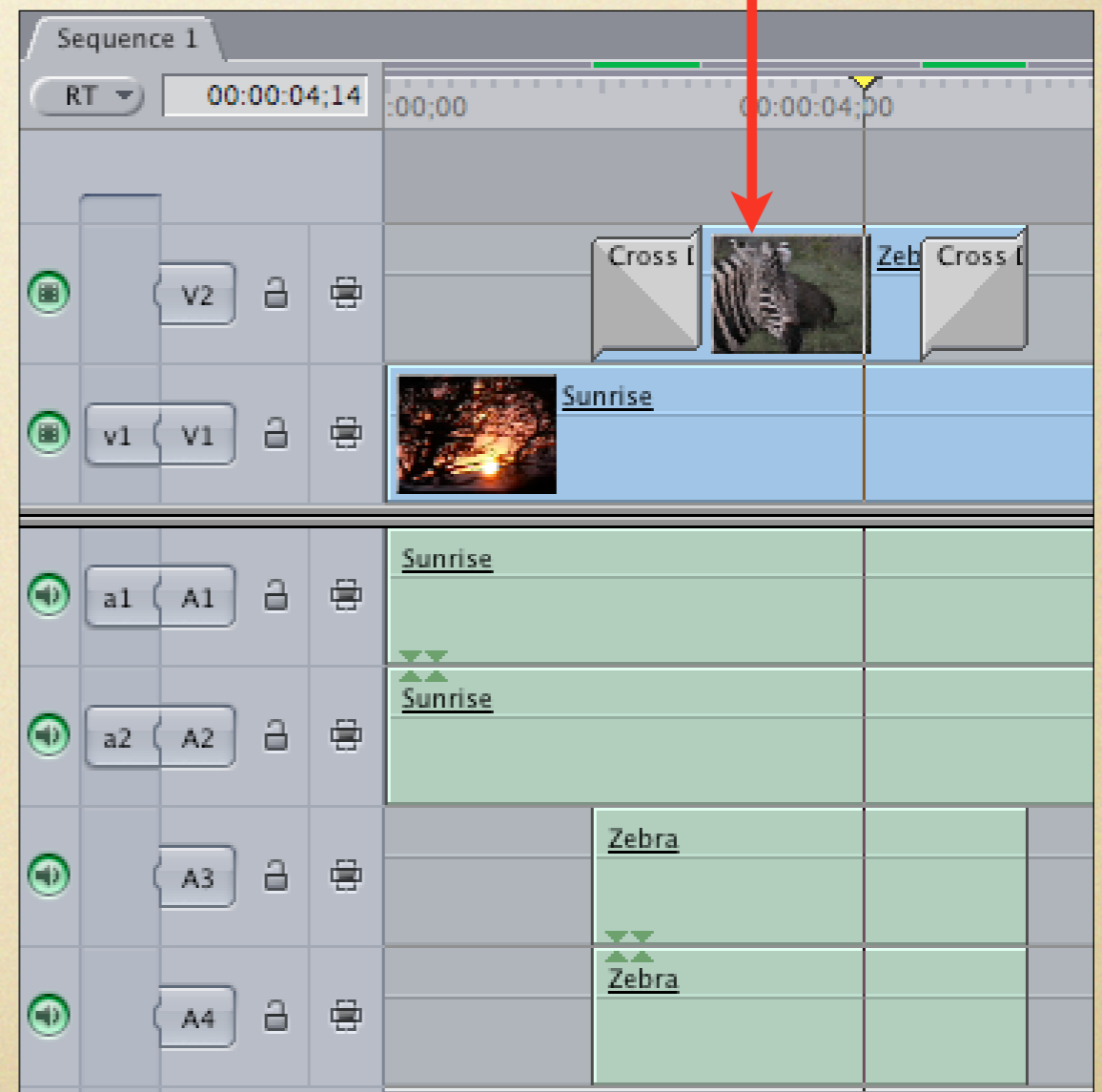
Drag and drop at middle of track to insert new clip and overwrite footage.



# Use multiple tracks

- Encourages experimentation
- Incorporate several elements within a scene.
- Great for aligning elements such as sound sync between two cameras

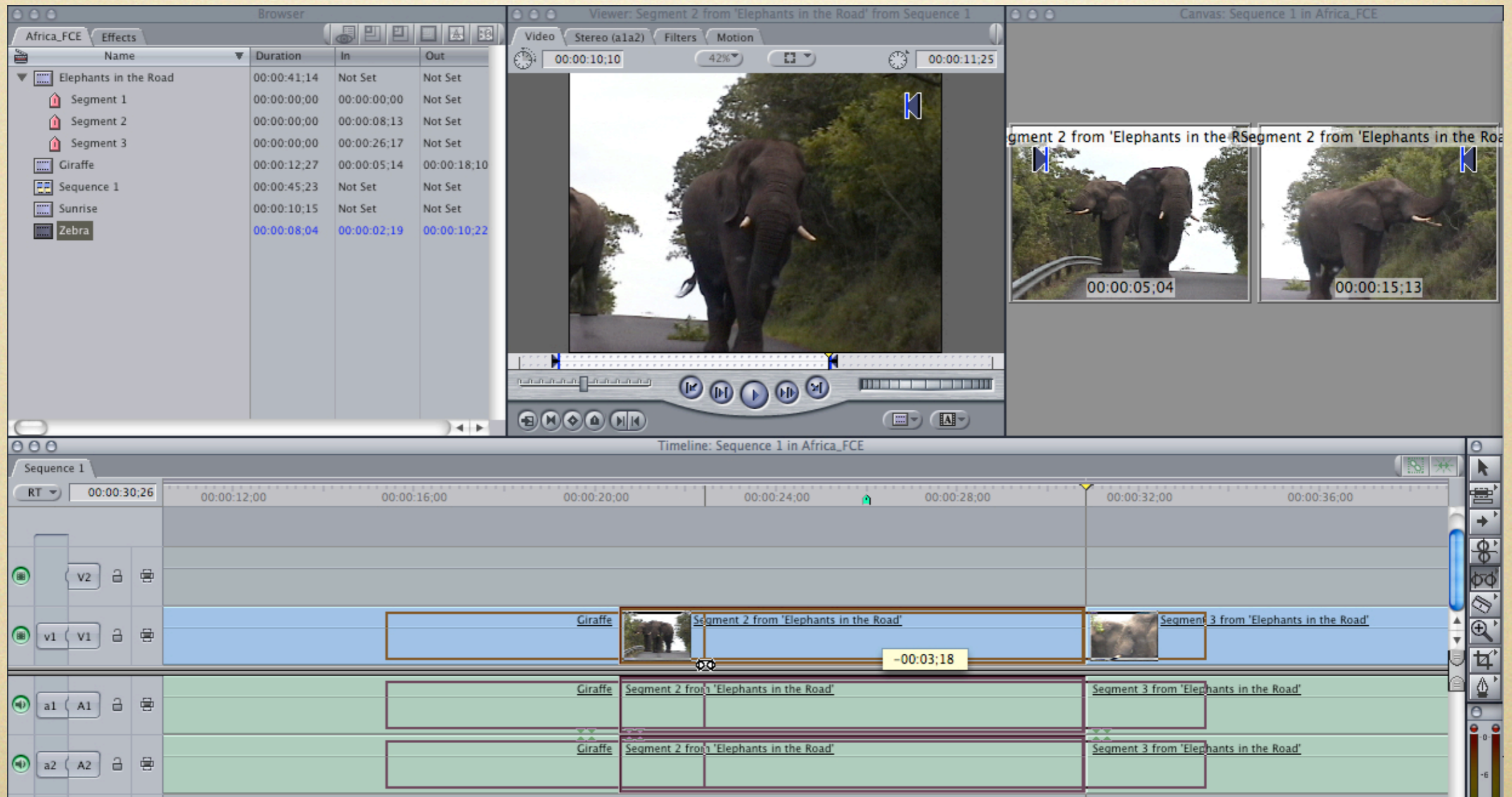
Adding a clip to a second track lets me apply a cross-dissolve transition without cutting into the track below it, as would be required with iMovie's single video track.



# Slip Clips

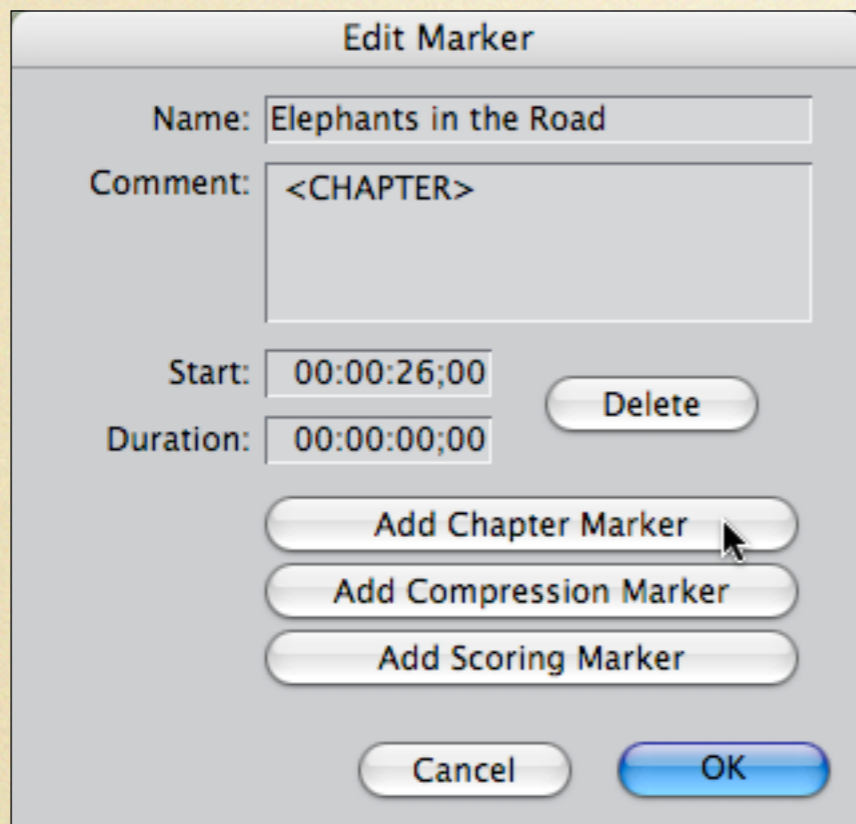
To adjust the In and Out points of a clip without changing the clip's duration, use the Slip tool (press S to activate it) and drag left or right on the clip. The Canvas displays a preview of the In and Out points.

*Slip Clip Tip: In the Viewer, hold Shift and drag an In or Out point.*

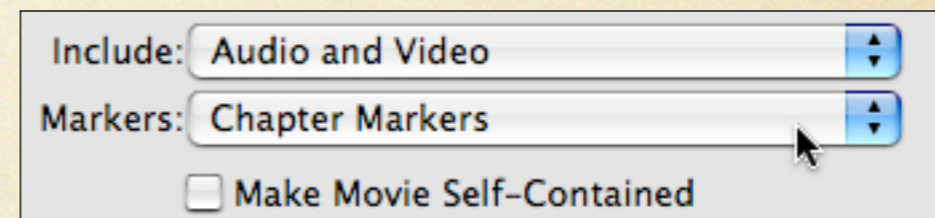


# Export to DVD

Although Final Cut Express doesn't have iMovie's one-click Create iDVD Project feature, exporting for iDVD is still relatively straightforward. The trick is in properly identifying chapter markers so that they're recognized properly.



Be sure to click the Add Chapter Marker button when you add a marker.



Export the movie as a QuickTime movie, and choose Chapter Markers from the Markers popup menu.

Happy Editing!

Jeff Carlson  
jeffc@tidbits.com