

## How to introduce a news clip, interview or package on air – so the listener knows what they're hearing, and the presenter knows exactly how it ends.

When you record a news clip, an interview or a package, it doesn't go out on its own – it needs a **cue**. The cue is the spoken introduction that leads into the audio, plus the tidy way back out of it. Even a very basic cue makes a clip sound professional: it sets the scene, credits the people involved, and tells whoever's presenting exactly what's coming and when it ends.

### THE THREE PARTS OF A CUE

#### 1 The intro (the "throw")

A line or two that sets up the clip and leads naturally into it – the bit that ends with "...and Chris Stone spoke to the organiser and asked...". It gives the listener the who, what and why before the audio starts.

#### 2 The clip

The recorded audio itself – the interview answer, the actuality, the package.

#### 3 The back-announcement (the way out)

A short line afterwards that tidies up and hands back, usually crediting who we just heard: "That was Jane Smith, speaking to Chris Stone."

### ALWAYS NOTE THE OUT-CUE AND DURATION

Two small details make a cue genuinely useful to whoever's on air:

- **Out-cue** – the last few words of the clip, written down, so the presenter can hear it coming and be ready to speak. e.g. *Out-cue: "...somewhere for everyone to enjoy."*
- **Duration** – how long the clip runs, so they can time what comes next. e.g. *Dur: 0'48"*

## A WORKED EXAMPLE

A complete, simple cue sheet for one interview clip:

**SLUG:** Community garden / Alton

**CUE:** Plans for a new community garden in Alton have been welcomed by residents. Chris Stone spoke to the organiser, Jane Smith, and asked what difference it would make.

[ **CLIP:** jane-smith-garden.wav ]

**OUT-CUE:** "...somewhere for everyone to enjoy."

**DUR:** 0'48"

**BACK-ANNO:** Jane Smith there, speaking to Chris Stone.

## TIPS FOR WRITING GOOD CUES

- **Write how you speak.** Read it aloud – if it doesn't trip off the tongue, reword it.
- **Keep it short and present-tense.** "Plans have been welcomed", not a long back-story.
- **Don't steal the clip's thunder.** Set it up, but don't repeat its best line or give away what's said.
- **Always credit people** – the reporter and the interviewee, by name, in both the intro and the back-announcement.
- **Give the context:** who, what, where and why, before the audio rolls.
- **Spell tricky names phonetically** so they're read right on air – e.g. "Cholmondeley (CHUM-lee)".
- **Note the out-cue and duration every single time.**

✓ **Basic is fine – and far better than nothing.** A one-line cue such as "...and Chris Stone spoke to the organiser and asked..." does the job. Don't let writing the perfect cue stop you writing a simple one.

### ★ Cue golden rules

- ★ **Every clip gets a cue** — even a quick one.
- ★ **Set it up, don't spoil it.**
- ★ **Credit the reporter and the interviewee.**
- ★ **Write the out-cue and duration** so the presenter is never caught out.
- ★ **Read it aloud** before you call it done.