

OPERATOR + SELECTOR PLAYBOOK — VOL. 01

# PROGRAM THE FUTURE.

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*A guide for curators, selectors, and programmers who  
do this because they love it — and believe media can  
move people toward something real.*

OPERATOR

ON AIR

SELECTOR

THE BLOCK

THE CHANNEL

THE CATALOG

# WHAT'S IN THIS PLAYBOOK

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## Intro

### Why This Exists

The Blvd isn't a platform. It's a neighborhood. Before the mechanics, we need to talk about what this is for.

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## Module 02

### The Art of Programming

What a block is, how to build one, and why pacing is the thing most curators never think about — until they should.

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## Module 04

### Selector Notes — Context Is Currency

The written or spoken note that frames a piece before it airs. The tool that separates a playlist from a program.

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## Module 06

### Building Your Audience

You're not chasing followers. You're programming for people. The difference matters more than you think.

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## Module 01

### The Calling. Why You're Here.

Curation as a calling, not a career move. What the DJ at the block party understood that the algorithm never will.

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## Module 03

### Becoming a Selector — The Voice Layer

You can run a channel without ever going on mic. But here's why you probably should — and how to make your first drop.

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## Module 05

### Operator Mechanics on The Blvd

The practical layer — dashboards, schedules, catalog management, and how the platform actually works.

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## Module 07

### The Economics — When It Comes

Teleship, channel subscriptions, and the long game. This is the last module for a reason.

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*"The DJ didn't just play music. The DJ told you what to feel about it, and when, and in what order."*

There's a particular kind of person this playbook is written for. You've probably spent years passing things to people — a film, a track, an article, a documentary — and saying "you have to see this." Not because it was trending. Because it was **true**. Because it captured something other things missed. Because you knew, somehow, that this person, at this moment, needed to encounter it.

That instinct is not a hobby. It's a discipline. **The Blvd was built for people who have it.**

A lot of platforms will take your content. Very few are built to honor your judgment. The difference is everything. When you upload a video to a feed, the algorithm sorts it by what catches attention. When you program a block on The Blvd, you decide the sequence, the context, the feeling. You decide what the viewer carries in before the piece starts — and what they leave with when it ends.

This playbook is about **two roles**: the Operator and the Selector. You'll likely be both. The Operator builds and programs the channel — the catalog, the schedule, the sensibility. The Selector goes on air — dropping a voice note before a piece, framing a block, giving the listener or viewer something to grip before the content takes over.

Think about hip hop. Think about how much of the culture lives not just in the music but in **how the DJ moves between records**. The DJ who knows why a particular track belongs after a particular other track, and can tell you — in two sentences or less — is doing something profound. They're not just playing music. They're giving people a framework for experiencing it.

That's what programming on The Blvd can be. **This is that manual.**

MODULE ONE

# The Calling. *Why You're Here.*

*This isn't about building an audience. Not yet. Before any of that, there's a more honest question to sit with: what does your channel stand for? This module is about finding that — and understanding why it matters before you touch anything else.*

CURATION AS CALLING

In 1973, Kool Herc figured out that if you loop the percussion break in a record — the moment where the song strips down to drums — people go completely unhinged on the dance floor. He didn't invent the music. He **edited it in real time**. He created a context for an experience that the original recording couldn't provide on its own. That's curation. And it built a culture that still runs the world fifty years later.

When Martin Scorsese hosts a film program, he doesn't just show movies. He **frames them**. He tells you what the director was reading when they made it, what was happening in the world, what they were afraid of. The film doesn't change. Your experience of it does, completely.

That's the work. The Blvd is built for it.

WHAT A CHANNEL ACTUALLY IS

A channel is not a folder. A channel is not a playlist with a cover image. A channel is a **point of view that programs itself over time**. It has a sensibility — a set of instincts about what belongs and what doesn't. It makes decisions. It has taste. And taste, here, is not a luxury or an aesthetic preference. Taste is a form of **intellectual honesty**.

THE DJ ANALOGY

The Operator is the DJ. Not the DJ who hits play on Spotify and goes home — the DJ who built the crates over years, who knows which record opens a set and which one breaks it open. **What you include says something. What you leave out says even more.** A channel that programs everything stands for nothing.

THE TWO THINGS A CHANNEL CAN DO

## UNCOVER

Bring forward what got buried. The documentary that never found its audience. The short film from 1968 that predicted everything that happened in 1998. The conversation that should be in the canon but isn't. Good channels are acts of **recovery**.

## CONTEXTUALIZE

Show people how things connect. The song from 1975 that explains the movie from 2003. The news interview that makes sense of the speech from last week. Context is what turns a collection into a **curriculum**.

# Write Your *Channel Constitution.*

One paragraph. No more. Your channel's constitution is not a mission statement — it's a commitment. It says what you will and won't put on air, and why. It's the thing you come back to when you're unsure whether a piece belongs.

- 01 — Name your channel's primary *feeling*. Not genre, not topic. What does it leave people with?
- 02 — Name one thing your channel will **never** air. This is as important as what you include.
- 03 — Write the paragraph. Read it aloud. If it sounds like you, it's done.

## REFERENCE

Think of a channel you love outside The Blvd — a label, a publication, a director's filmography. What makes it feel like a *whole thing*? That's a constitution in action.

## MY CHANNEL IS CALLED

*Name it.*

## THE PRIMARY FEELING IT CREATES

*Not a genre. A feeling.*

## MY CHANNEL CONSTITUTION

*This channel exists to...*

## WHAT WE WILL NEVER AIR

*No matter how good it looks on paper.*

# The Art of *Programming.*

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*Anybody can make a list. Programming is something else. It's the sequence, the pacing, the contrast, the breathing room. This module is about what separates a well-built block from a shuffle.*

## WHAT A BLOCK IS

A block is a unit of programming with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Not just content in a row — **content that moves through something.** A block can run twenty minutes or two hours. What makes it a block is intention: each piece earns its position in the sequence.

Think about how a great album works. There's usually an opener that sets a mood, a few tracks that develop it, at least one moment of contrast or release, and a closer that leaves you somewhere different than where you started. That's not accidental. **That's architecture.**

## PACING — THE INVISIBLE CRAFT

Pacing is what most new programmers underestimate. It's not about slow versus fast — it's about knowing when your audience needs to breathe. A block of five intense 20-minute documentaries in a row is not powerful, it's exhausting. A short film between two longer pieces is not padding, it's a **rest stop that makes the next piece land harder.**

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*"The space between things matters as much as the things. Coltrane knew it. The best editors know it. Your block should know it too."*

## ON THE PRACTICE OF PROGRAMMING

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## THREE PROGRAMMING INSTINCTS TO DEVELOP

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### 1

#### Contrast is your friend



# Build Your *First Block.*

Map out a 60-to-90-minute block. Don't worry about what's actually available to you right now — work from instinct. Pick pieces you'd genuinely want to program. Think about what opens it, what develops it, and what closes it.

- 01 — Choose a theme or a mood for the block. Write it at the top.
- 02 — List 4–6 pieces in sequence. Include approximate runtime for each.
- 03 — In one sentence per piece, note why it sits where it does — not what it is, why it's there in that position.

## ASK YOURSELF

Does your block have a moment of contrast? Does the opener earn the closer? Would you watch this yourself, start to finish?

## BLOCK THEME OR MOOD

*What is this block doing?*

## PIECE 1 — OPENER

*Title · Runtime · Why it opens*

## PIECE 2

*Title · Runtime · Why here*

## PIECE 3 — CONTRAST / BREATH

*Title · Runtime · What does this break open?*

## PIECE 4 — CLOSER

*Title · Runtime · Where does it leave the viewer?*

# Becoming a Selector.

## *The Voice Layer.*

*You can run a great channel without ever going on mic. But your voice — your actual voice — does something that no written description can. It closes the distance between you and the person watching. This module is about learning to use it.*

### WHY VOICE CHANGES EVERYTHING

There is a reason people still tune in to hear certain radio hosts introduce records they've already heard a hundred times. The host isn't adding information — they're adding **presence**. They're reminding you that another human being picked this, cared about it, thought about why you needed to hear it tonight. That presence is irreplaceable. An algorithm will never have it.

When you step on mic as a Selector — even for sixty seconds before a piece — you are doing the same thing. You are saying: **I was here. I chose this. Here's why it matters.**

### THE SELECTOR VS. THE HOST

There's a distinction worth making here. A host talks a lot. A Selector talks **precisely**. You're not filling time between pieces — you're framing them. The goal is to say the one thing that makes the next piece land differently than it would without you. That's it. A well-executed sixty-second Selector drop is worth more than five minutes of commentary.

### THE STYLE RANGE

Your voice as a Selector can range from **conversational and warm** (like calling a friend about something you just watched) to **focused and editorial** (like the opening line of a great review). What it should never be: formal, promotional, or generic. *The Selector voice is a person talking to another person.*

### USING THE VJ MIXER — THE BASICS

The VJ mixer is The Blvd's on-air tool. It lets you drop voice notes, queue pieces, and move between them with intention. You don't need to be a broadcast technician to use it. You need to know three things: how to **record a drop**, how to **attach it to a piece**, and how to **set the sequence**. Module 05

covers the mechanics in full. For now, think of the mixer as the instrument. This module is about learning to play it.

#### YOUR FIRST DROP

A first Selector drop doesn't need to be polished. It needs to be **real**. Here's a simple structure: tell us when you first encountered the piece, tell us one thing you noticed that other people might miss, and tell us why it belongs on your channel right now. Three sentences. That's a drop. The best selectors in history started exactly there.

# Record Your *First Drop.*

Write, then record, a 60-second Selector intro for one piece in your first block. Don't overthink it. Use the structure below. The goal isn't production value — it's honesty.

- 01 — Pick the opener from your block in Exercise 02.
- 02 — Write your drop using the three-sentence structure: when you found it / what others might miss / why it's on right now.
- 03 — Read it aloud twice. Record the second take — the first loosens you up.
- 04 — Upload it as your intro drop in the mixer. Don't re-record until you've aired this one at least once.

## ON BEING HEARD

Most people are more self-conscious about their voice than their audience ever will be. Your listeners are not judging your vocal quality. They're listening for whether you *mean it*. Mean it.

## THE PIECE I'M INTRODUCING

*Title + brief description*

## WHEN I FIRST ENCOUNTERED IT

*The memory. The context. Be specific.*

## WHAT OTHERS MIGHT MISS

*The thing worth noticing. The subtext. The detail.*

## WHY IT'S ON RIGHT NOW

*What's happening in the world or in your channel that makes this the right moment for this piece?*

## MY DROP (FULL TEXT)

*Write the three sentences together. Read them as one thing.*

# Selector Notes.

## *Context Is Currency.*

*A Selector Note is the written or spoken context you give a piece before it airs. It's what turns a playlist into a program.*

### WHAT A SELECTOR NOTE IS

A Selector Note doesn't summarize the piece — it **contextualizes** it. It answers the question the viewer hasn't asked yet: why is this here, why now, and why should I care? The note is short. One paragraph, maybe two sentences. But it changes everything about how the piece lands.

Think of the jazz DJ who says, before dropping a 1956 live recording: *"This was recorded three weeks after Coltrane left Miles Davis's band. He's not sure what he's doing next. Listen for that."* You just heard that record completely differently. That's a Selector Note.

IMG

#### The Negotiation (1972)

Dir. Elaine Patterson · 34 min · Documentary

*"Patterson made this film the same year the Equal Credit Opportunity Act was still three years away from passing. The women in this room are negotiating without any legal protection at all. Watching them is watching people who had to be twice as precise and twice as patient just to get to the table."*

history

context

law

labor

### ◆ AI SELECTOR NOTES ASSIST

The Blvd's prompt engine can help you draft a starting note from a title, year, director, or URL. It researches context, era, and significance. You read it, edit it, make it yours. The AI gives you the raw material. Your voice finishes the note.

### THE THREE QUESTIONS

- Why does this piece belong on your channel *right now* — not six months ago, not in theory?
- What's the one thing a viewer might miss without your note — the context, the era, the subtext?
- How does this piece connect to what came before or after it in the block?

### WRITTEN VS. SPOKEN NOTES

Written Selector Notes appear as text cards before a piece. Spoken notes are voice drops recorded into the mixer. **The written note builds your archive.** Every note you write is a record of your curatorial thinking — it builds the permanent documentation of your channel's intelligence over time. **The spoken note builds connection.** When your voice comes through before a piece, the viewer knows there's a person behind the programming. That changes the relationship.

You don't have to choose. The best operators do both: a written note attached to the piece in the catalog, and a spoken drop in the live block. One for the archive, one for the moment.

### WHAT MAKES A NOTE BAD

A bad Selector Note summarizes the plot. A bad note promotes the piece like an ad. A bad note says "this is an incredible film that everyone should see" and gives you no reason to believe it. **Notes that substitute enthusiasm for information are notes that don't do the work.** The

viewer is not looking for your approval of the piece —  
they're looking for your insight about it.

# Operator Mechanics

## *on The Blvd.*

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*The practical layer. How the platform works from the operator side — your dashboard, your catalog, your schedule. You've built the sensibility; now you need the tools to execute it.*

### THE OPERATOR DASHBOARD

Your operator dashboard is mission control. From here you manage your catalog (every piece you've brought into your channel), your schedule (when things air and in what order), and your channel's metadata — the name, the description, the identity that viewers see before they watch anything. Keep it maintained. A messy catalog is a channel that doesn't know what it stands for.

### BUILDING A PROGRAMMING RHYTHM

Consistency is the most underrated part of running a channel. Not consistency of content — *consistency of presence*. Your audience should know when to expect something new from you. That could be a new block every Monday morning. A Friday late-night program. A monthly themed series. The format matters less than the **commitment to showing up**. Audiences forgive a lot. They don't forgive disappearing.

### LIVE VS. ARCHIVED PROGRAMMING

Archived programming is your evergreen catalog — blocks that can be watched anytime. Live programming is scheduled and has a presence. Both are valuable. Start with archived blocks to build your catalog. Add live scheduling as your rhythm develops.

### COLLECTIVE CHANNELS

One of The Blvd's key features is the **collective channel** — multiple operators programming a single shared channel. Think of it as co-hosting a radio station. Different voices, one point of view. This is worth thinking about early; programming with a collaborator often unlocks things that solo programming can't reach.

### ON CATALOG DISCIPLINE

Your catalog is not a library. A library takes everything. Your catalog is a **curated collection** — every piece should earn its inclusion. As your channel grows, you'll face the temptation to add more. Resist it. A smaller catalog with stronger conviction is always more powerful than a large one without it.

The VJ mixer is the Selector's tool. It lets you: record and attach voice drops to pieces, queue and sequence content in real time, move between pieces with intentional transitions, and control the live experience of your block. The mixer is what makes the difference between **programming and broadcasting**. When you use it, you're not just organizing content — you're performing it.

# Building *Your Audience.*

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*You're not chasing followers. You're programming for people. There's a difference, and it runs through every decision you make about your channel.*

## PROGRAMMING FOR PEOPLE VS. PROGRAMMING FOR DISCOVERY

Here's the trap that social platforms set: they reward content that *performs* in their algorithm at the expense of content that *serves* the people who actually care about what you do. On The Blvd, there is no algorithm ranking your choices. There's just your channel and the people who chose to come to it.

This means your growth is organic and real. It also means **it takes longer**. An audience built on genuine programming is not the same thing as a number going up. It's a group of people who trust your judgment. That takes time. Don't be in a hurry to shortcut it.

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*"You don't build an audience by trying to build an audience. You build one by programming so well that people can't stay away."*

## ON THE LONG GAME

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## HOW TO SHARE YOUR CHANNEL HONESTLY

Sharing your channel should feel like passing something to a friend — not broadcasting into a crowd. The most effective thing you can do is **be specific**. Don't say "I have a new channel, check it out." Say "I put together a block of three films about labor and time from the 1970s, and I think you specifically should watch the second one." That specificity is the thing that builds trust. It's also just more interesting.

## CONSISTENCY IS THE STRATEGY

Nothing compounds like showing up regularly with something worth watching. Not viral moments, not cross-posting, not optimization — just consistent programming

## STUDY WHAT YOU LOVE

The best way to improve as a programmer is to pay attention to programmers you admire. Watch how they sequence. Notice how they use contrast. See what they leave out. Your

that holds its standard. In a year, that builds something no shortcut can.

instincts develop the same way a musician's ear develops — by active, critical listening.

# The Economics. *When It Comes.*

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*This is the last module for a reason. The economics of your channel are the result of everything in the previous six — not the starting point. If you build a real channel, with a real point of view, and a real audience, the economics follow. They rarely work the other way.*

## HOW OPERATORS EARN ON THE BLVD

Channel operators on The Blvd earn through the channel subscription model — viewers who want to support what you're building can subscribe to your channel directly. This is not advertising. It's patronage. The same model that funds public radio, independent labels, and great cultural institutions: **people paying for access to something they believe in.**

## TELESHIP — CULTURAL PATRONAGE, NOT ADVERTISING

Teleship is The Blvd's term for aligned cultural partnerships. Think of it the way public radio thinks about sponsorships — a partner organization whose values align with your channel's, whose name appears because the relationship is genuine, not because money changed hands for exposure. When your channel has an audience and a clear point of view, **Teleship partners come looking for you.** The goal before that is to make a channel worth finding.

## THE SEQUENCE

Channel constitution → First block → Consistent programming rhythm → Audience trust → Subscription support → Teleship opportunities. This is the order. There are no shortcuts in this sequence that don't cost you something in the long run. **The channel that builds slowly builds to last.**

## CHANNEL EQUITY AND CATALOG VALUE

Here's something worth sitting with: every Selector Note you write, every block you program, every voice drop you record is building an **archive**. The catalog of your channel has value beyond what it generates today. Five years from now, a channel with a coherent body of work — a programmable history of curatorial decisions — is not just a streaming channel. It's a cultural document. That's what a Catalog of Intention becomes over time.



That's the long game. It's worth playing.

OUTRO

# YOU'RE ON AIR.

*Everything in this playbook points to one moment: the moment you stop consuming and start programming. The moment you go from having taste to exercising it — in public, with intention, for an audience that didn't ask you to but is grateful you did.*

*The DJ at the block party in the South Bronx in 1973 didn't have a roadmap. They had crates and conviction and the ability to read a crowd. You have more resources than that. What you need is the same thing they had: the belief that what you choose to put on matters — to someone, somewhere, at the right moment.*

*Build the channel. Write the notes. Get on the mic. Program like it means something — because it does.*

• ON AIR

A CATALOG OF INTENTION