

FLASH ANIMATION TUTORIAL

This tutorial will show you how to make a simple flash animation using basic graphic elements and sounds. It will also work as the display page for your Bullet Movie soundtrack project. The example will be a simple layout with a few moving parts, but the techniques can be applied to something much more involved if you are ambitious.

Prepare a Storyboard on paper first to guide your animation. Get it initialed by your teacher before proceeding.

STEP 1: Prepare Flash Document

The first thing to do is set up the .FLA (CS4 Flash) document.

- Settings for the example are ActionScript 3, 700px by 400px at 30 frames per second.
- Your settings should reflect your specific needs as laid out in your website.

Create a folder called "BulletWeb" on your D drive and save this Flash document to that directory, call it "Bullet fla".

At this point you should also move your final Bullet movie FLV (as output from Adobe Premiere) to this BulletWeb folder as well. For the final deployment of this project onto your website, the video will have to reside in the same directory as your flash movie (SWF file).

STEP 2: Create Background

Rename layer 1 to "background". In the first frame of this background layer create a background or "container" for the slideshow. You can either make something in Flash or import a background if you already have one made in Photoshop (a sample background is included in the Assets folder for this lesson). Please keep your portfolio website design in mind as this layer will be visible at all times.

You can adjust the size of the background to match your Stage by selecting the Properties Tab (beside Library). You can unlock the Width from Height and adjust as needed.

In the Timeline at the bottom of your screen, select from 180, right click and insert a frame. This will place the background image in every frame of your movie.

After you are done creating your background or "container", lock the layer (select the white dot under the lock so it changes to a lock) so you can't select it by accident.

STEP 3: Import Assets

For this exercise you will need to import several images into your library.

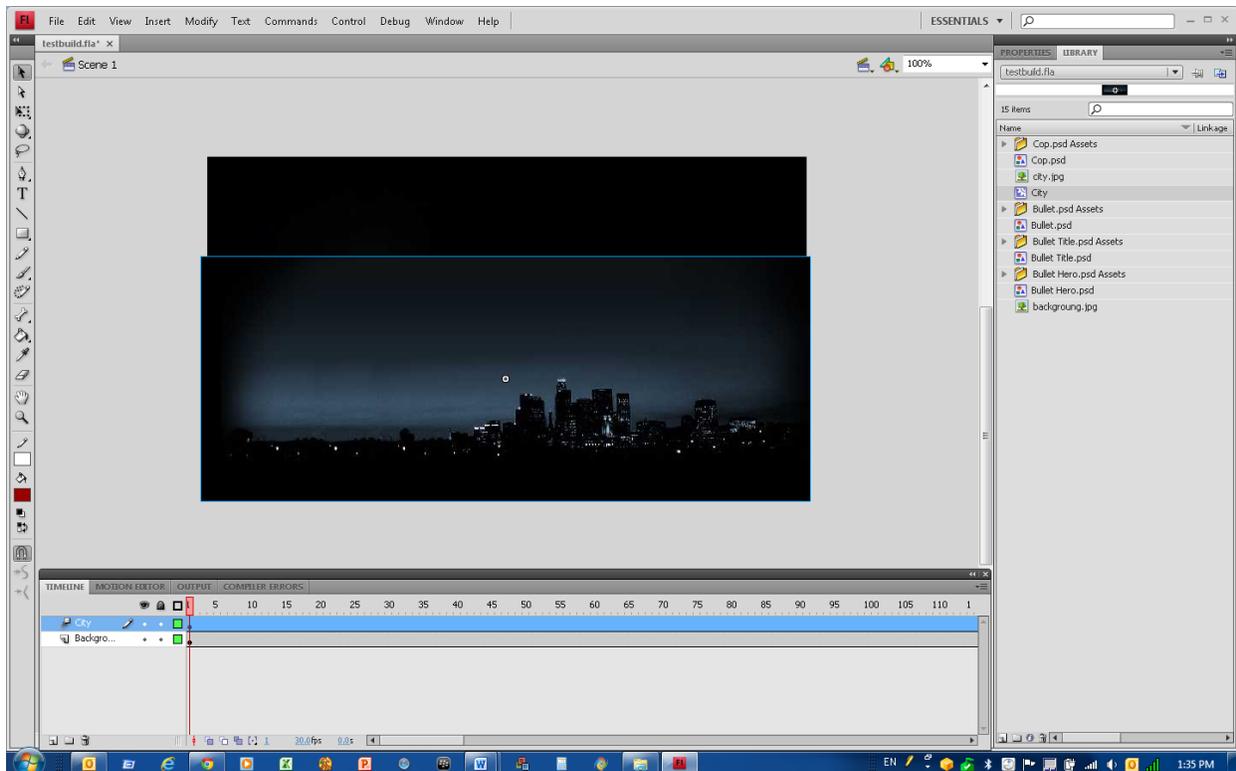
- Go to File > Import to Library, find the following files in your Assets folder:
city.jpg, Cop.psd, Bullet.psd, Bullet Hero.psd, and Bullet Title.psd.

You will notice the PSD files were created in Photoshop, and Flash preserves the layers as they are imported. Ensure the layer is selected and Hit OK to import them as Flash Layers.

STEP 4: Animating Position

Create a new layer and name it “city”. Drag the “city.jpg” from your library and position it centred horizontally with its bottom along the bottom of the stage.

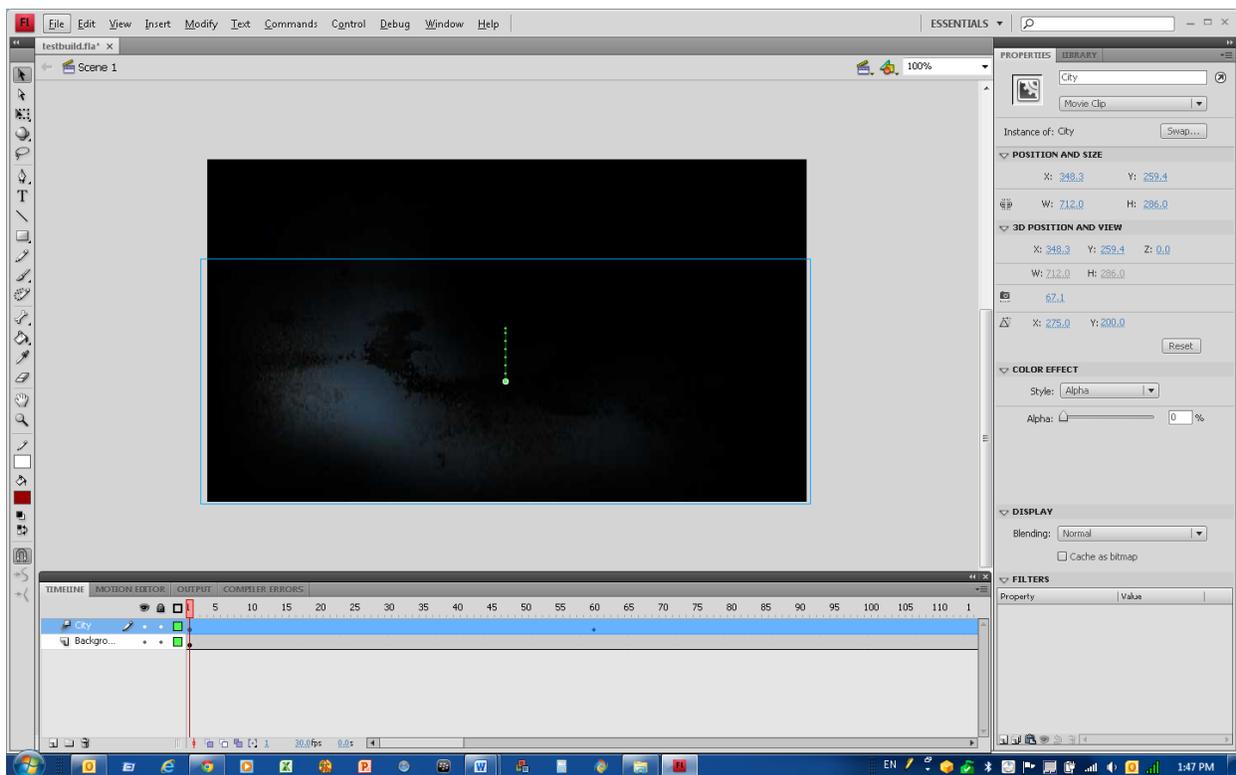
- Select it, hit F8 to Convert to Symbol, name it “City”, ensure the Type is Movie Clip, and hit OK.
- In the Properties Inspector window give it the instance name “City” as well.



Left click on Frame 60, right click and insert a Keyframe (select ALL as the type of keyframe). Now drag the image up and centre it vertically on the stage. You will see the program insert a path on the stage to show you where the image path is, and it automatically creates all the frames between 1 and 60. Press ENTER to see it move.

To create a little more drama, move the Playhead to Frame 1. Click on the City symbol on the stage and it should select the properties panel on the right.

- Under the Color Effect section, select Style > Alpha, and drag the slider to 0. This makes the city transparent when it first appears.
- Select Frame 60 and set the Alpha value to 100, and the program automatically creates all the frames to Frame 60, creating a fade in effect.
- Press ENTER again to preview the fade with the move. Lock your City Layer once your happy with it.

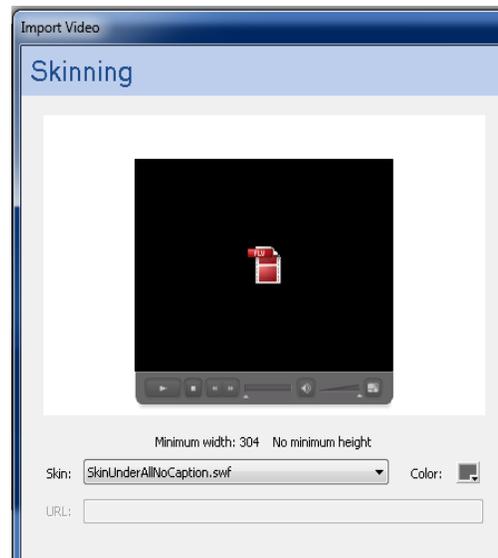


STEP 5: Adding Your Video

Now we will put your video in place. Right Click in the timeline and Create a new Layer, call it Video.

- Select File > Import > Import Video . Select “On Your Computer” and browse to your Bullet FLV movie. Hit OK.
- Load External Video with playback component should be selected, if not, please select it. Hit Next.

- You will now select a skin for the playback, for the example we used SkinUnderAllNoCaption.swf (which means the controls will be under your video, it will have all the playback controls, and no captions.) Choose a colour that works with your design. Hit Next and then Hit Finish.



- We don't want the video to appear right away, so we'll need to animate it. To do so, we need to convert it to a symbol. Press F8, name it Bullet Movie, and ensure Movie Clip is the Type. Hit OK.

- We want the movie appear near the end of our little animation, so now select the movie on the stage and hit Delete (don't worry, its still in your library).
- Still on the Video Track in your timeline, left click on frame 120 to move your Playhead, then right click and insert a Keyframe.

- Drag your movie onto the stage and position it in the centre. You can select the Properties Tab to name this Instance, call it BulletMovie (no spaces).
- Use the X and Y coordinates to position it exactly where you want it. For the example, we'll use X-350 and Y-200. Just below, you can size the video (using W and H) to an appropriate size, we'll use W-400 by H-300.

- With the Playhead still on frame 120, right click on the BulletMovie instance, and select Create Motion Tween, and you'll see the program automatically generates frames between 120 and 180.



- Move the Playhead to Frame 180, right click and insert a Keyframe > All.

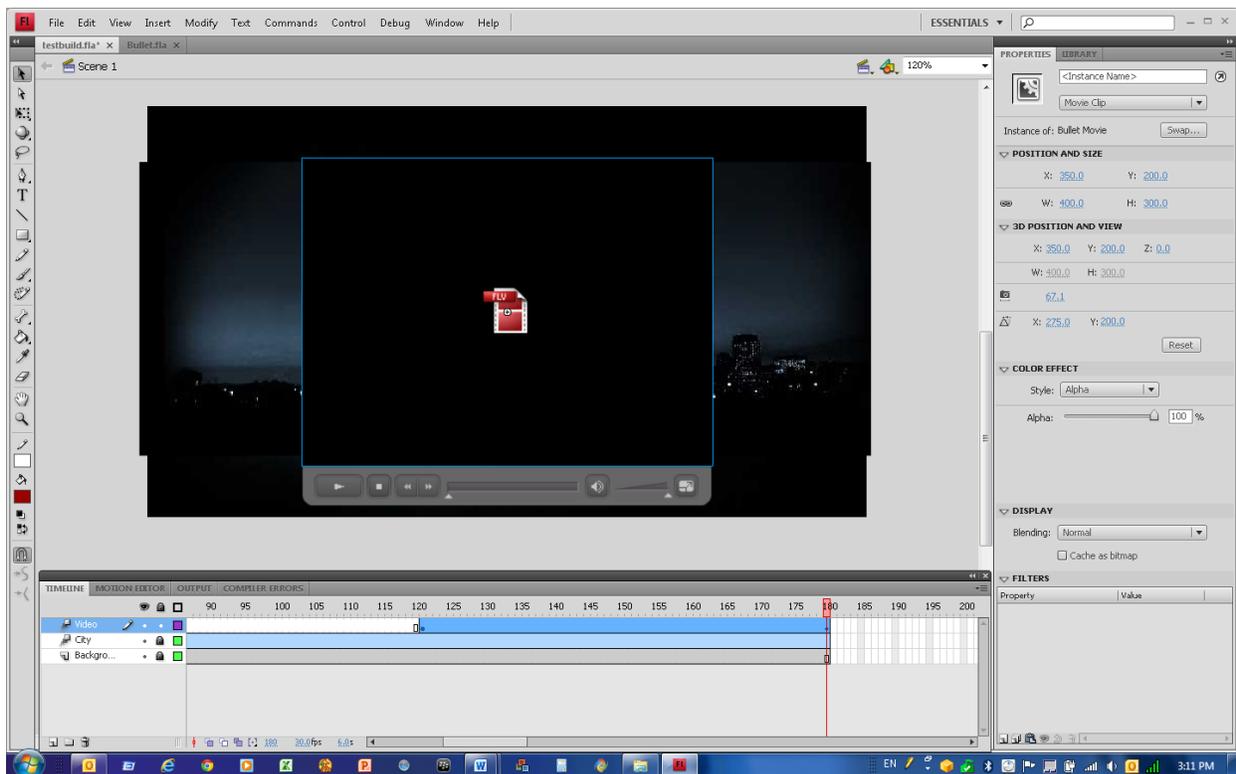
We'll create another fade in:

- so select Frame 120 again,
- select the BulletMovie instance
- in the property tab, under the Color Effect section, select Style > Alpha, and drag the slider to 0.
- Move the Playhead back to 180, and change the Alpha value back to 100.

For any changes you make in properties between Frame 120 and 180, the program automatically generates all the frames in between.

Press ENTER a few times to see the how the animation is coming together.

To change the duration of the fade in of your movie (or any animation), you can simply grab Frame 120 (click and drag) and move it left (to make the fade in slower) or right (to make it faster). Try moving frame 120 and hit ENTER to see the change.

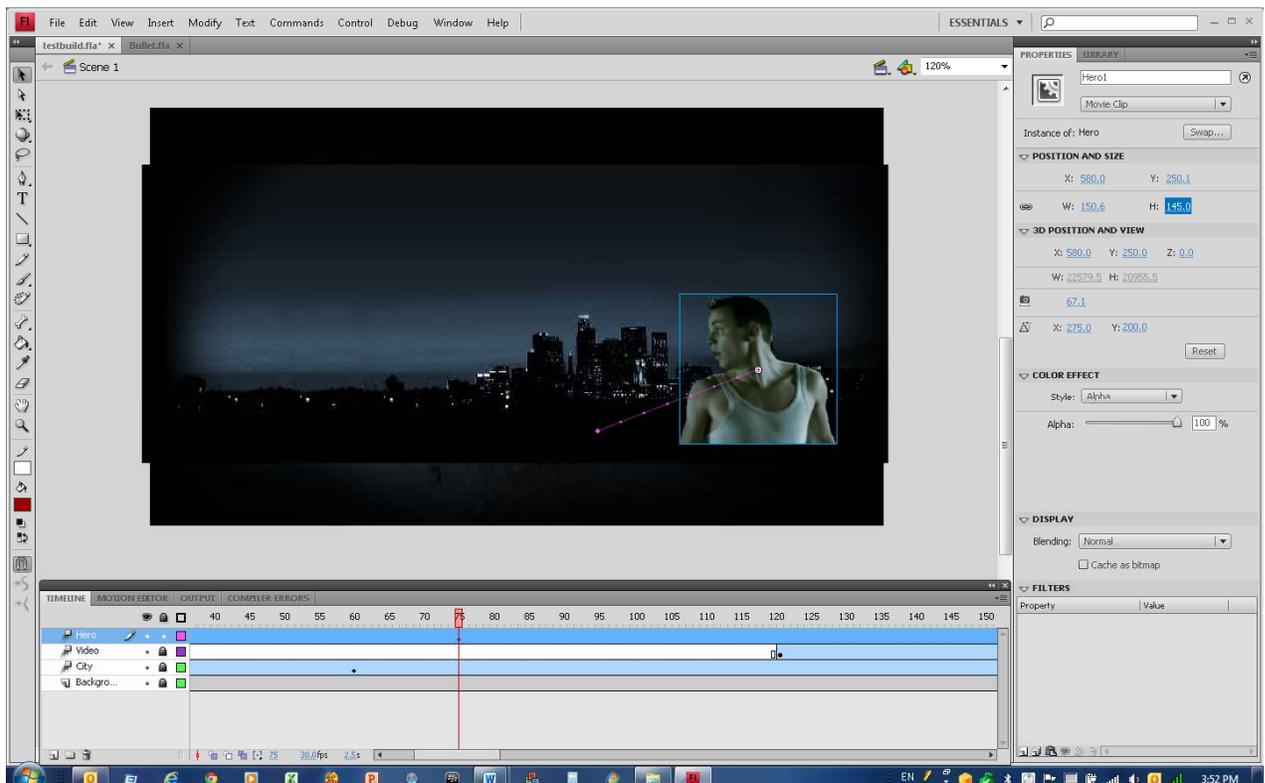


Lock the Video Track once you're happy with it.

STEP 6: Adding The Hero

To dress the scene up a little more, we'll add in our Hero and one of the cops pursuing him.

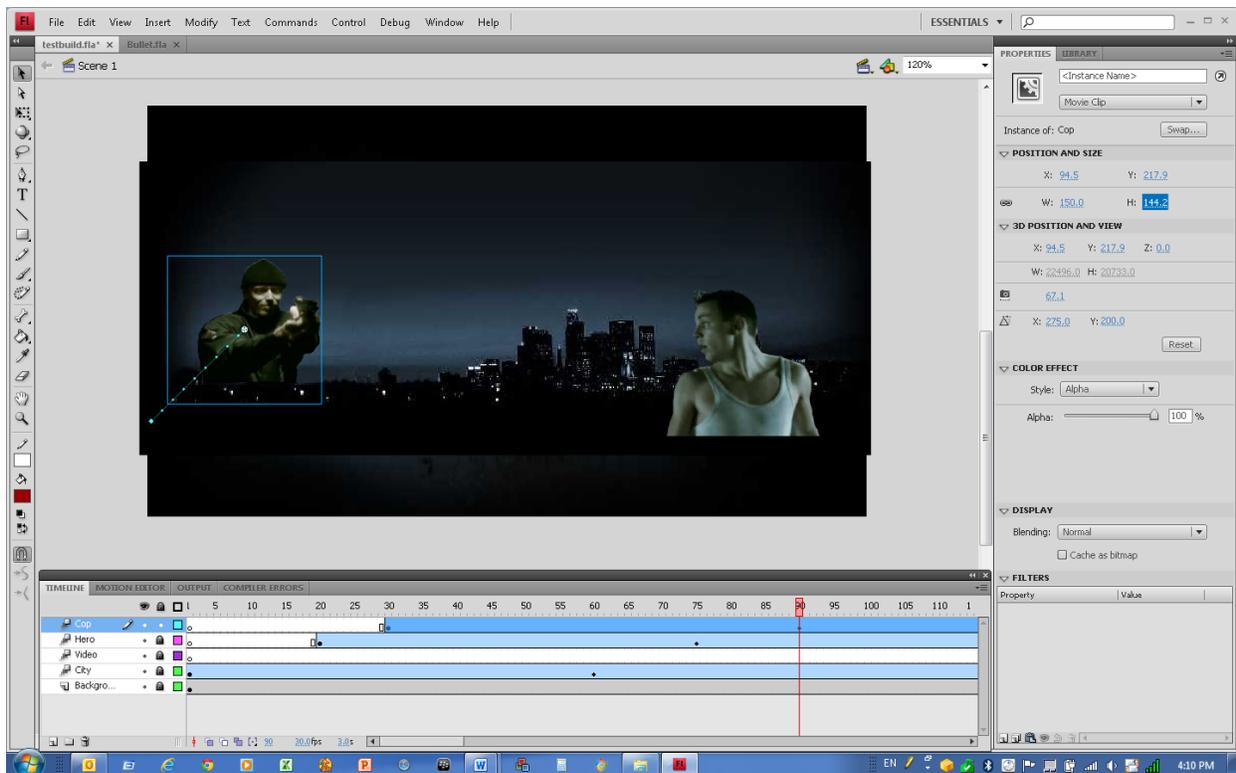
- In the timeline, add a track and call it "Hero".
- From your Library, drag your "Bullet Hero.psd" onto the stage. Hit F8 to convert it to a symbol, call it Hero, and ensure it's a Movie Clip. Delete the image from the stage.
- On the Hero track, select Frame 20, right click and insert a keyframe.
- Drag your Hero symbol onto the stage. Select the Properties tab on the right, and name this Instance "Hero1".
- We're going to be animating him, so right click on the track, and select > Create Motion Tween.
- For this example we'll add another Keyframe (All) at Frame 75, this will create a point in time where he is prominent in our animation.
- With the Playhead at Frame 75, and Hero1 selected, we'll position our hero where we want him.
- Firstly, he is too large. Under Properties > Position and Size, change the W value to 150.
For him to land to the lower right of the movie playback position him down and to the right (X-580 and Y-250).
- Move the Playhead back to Frame 20 and we'll set up how he first appears.
- Under Properties > Position and Size, set his Width to 1, and position him to appear coming out of building.
You can do this by clicking and dragging on the white circle which marks the beginning of his path of motion.
(for the example we used X-427 Y-309). Hit ENTER to see how it looks.
- For a little more drama, we'll add a Color Effect at Frame 20, and set his Alpha to 30 to start. Go back to Frame 75 and set the Alpha back to 100 to complete the fade.
- Hit ENTER to preview, then Lock the layer once you are happy.



STEP 7: Adding The Cop

We'll follow the same process for the Cop, but start him a little later.

- Add a new layer called Cop
- Drag the Cop.psd to the stage, convert it (F8) to a Movie Clip Symbol.
- Call it Cop. Delete it from the Stage.
- Select Frame 30 on the Cop layer, insert a Keyframe
- Drag the Cop Symbol onto the stage
- Right click and Create Motion Tween
- Insert another Keyframe (All) at Frame 90
- Under Properties set the end size (W-150) and position (X-94 Y-217) for the cop
- Return to Frame 30 and set his start size (W-1) and position (X-3 Y-307)
- Change his Alpha from 30 at Frame 30, to 100 at Frame 90
- Hit ENTER to preview and Lock the layer once happy



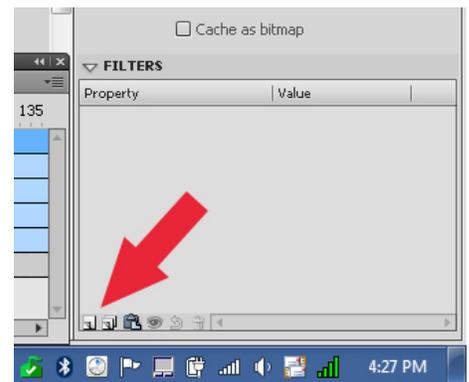
STEP 8: Bullets!

Why not add a few bullets to set the mood. Create a new Layer – Bullet 1

- Drag the Bullet.psd to the stage, convert it (F8) to a Movie Clip Symbol. Call it Bullet. Delete it from the Stage.
- Select Frame 55 on the Bullet 1 layer, insert a Keyframe
- Drag the Bullet Symbol onto the stage, right click and Create Motion Tween
- Insert another Keyframe (All) at Frame 90
- Under Properties set the end size (W-50) and position (X-740 Y-175) for the bullet (it ends off the stage)
- Return to Frame 55 and set his start size (W-30) and position (X-50 Y-180)

Now we'll add a Filter to blur the bullet a little

- At the bottom of the Properties tab, you see Filters. The bottom left icon in the Filter Box should be Add Filter
- Click Add Filter, then Select Blur
- The default values of 5px are fine



For a little more fun, we'll add a gunshot sound effect

- Move the playhead to Frame 57
- Select your favorite effect, import it to your library, then simply drag it onto the stage on the proper frame.
- Hit ENTER to preview and Lock the layer once happy

Follow the same process for a second bullet, but have it appear slightly lower and later.

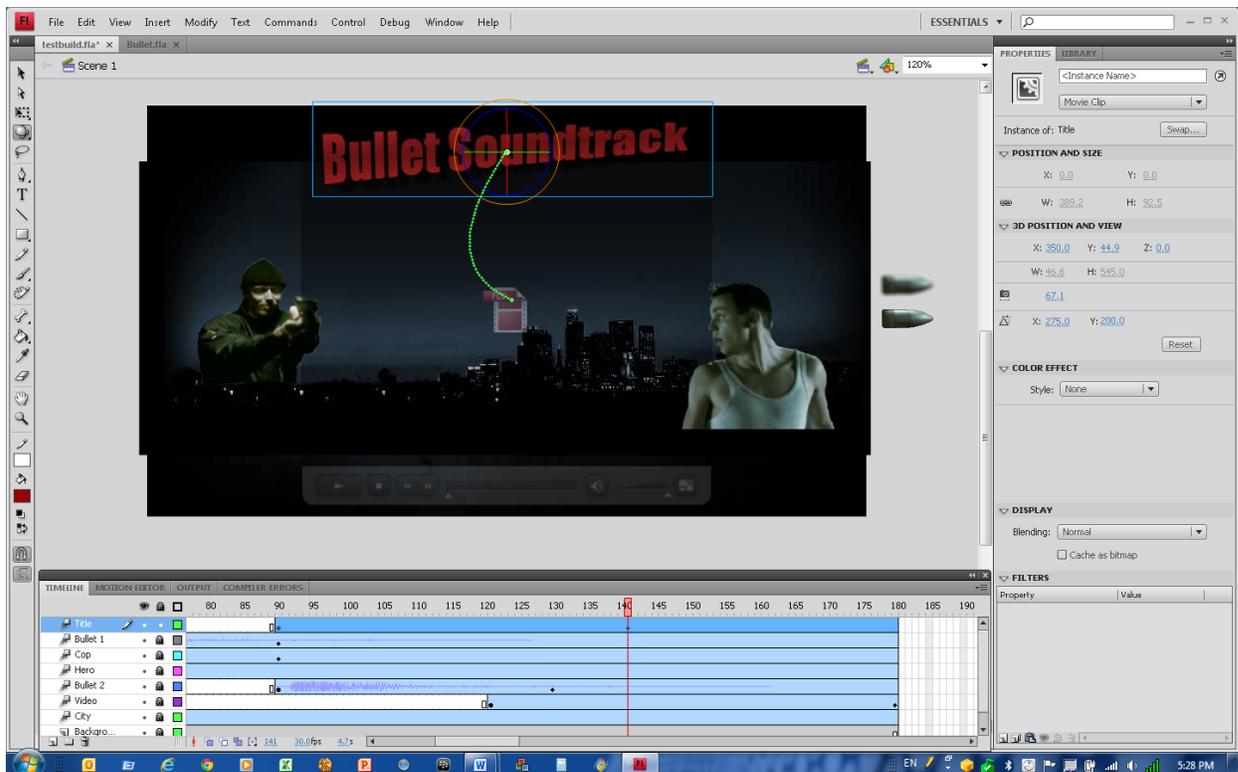
- Use a new Track – Bullet 2 for this. The example runs from frames 90 to 130 at a height of 195
- You can reuse the Bullet Symbol you already created, this will simply be a new instance of it.
- Try starting the bullet with a slightly smaller size (W-10), then growing larger, so it appears to come closer.
- To make it looked more like a missed shot you can drag this layer below the Hero layer, and it will appear that the bullet goes behind our Hero. As usual, once happy, lock the Layer.



STEP 9: Add a Title

We'd like to add a title to this scene.

- Insert a new Layer called Title
- Drag "Bullet Title.psd" to the stage, convert it to a Movie Clip Symbol "Title" and delete it from the stage
- Insert a Keyframe at Frame 90 and drag your Title symbol on the stage, roughly centred
- Insert a Keyframe at Frame 140, and position your Title at the centre and Top of the screen so it overlaps your final movie playback window slightly (example used X-355 Y-45)
- Move the Playhead to Frame 115, grab the white crosshairs on the path display and drag the path to the left slightly. You will see you can distort a path to add some curve to it. Leave the path slightly curved
- Return to Frame 140, and select the 3D rotation tool from the toolbar (4th one down)
- Deselect the Global Transform tool (very bottom icon on the Toolbar), this constrains you to only working on the x and y axis in 3D space
- Add a little bit a X rotation (click and drag on Red Line) and some Y rotation (use the Green Line)
- Return to Frame 90 – click on the X (Red) axis and spin the title so it completely vanishes to a sliver. Give it a little Y rotation if your daring.
- Hit ENTER and preview your changes
- Lock the Layer once happy



STEP 10: Final Touches

While the movie is playing, we'd like the other items on the screen to be a little less distracting, so we'll reduce the Alpha values slightly after Frame 130

- Unlock the Hero track and add Keyframes (All) at 130 and 180
- At frame 180, reduce the Alpha value from 100 to somewhere in the 30-40 range
- Repeat the process for the Cop

Now, to do a test render of your Flash Movie, hit CONTROL and ENTER together

You will notice that it loops endlessly. To fix this we need to add a stop command.

- Insert a new Layer call Stop
- Insert a Keyframe at 180
- Right click and select Actions
- On line 1 type the command: `stop();`
- Hit Enter
- This tells your movie to stop playing, however your video playback will not be affected as it has its own controls

Try another CONTROL ENTER and you should be good.

Save your file

To Output for use on a webpage, under FILE, select PUBLISH

This will create a web page (HTML) and a Flash Movie (SWF) in your BulletWeb folder.

To use the SWF file on a different Web page (like your portfolio) you will need 3 files:

- Your Bullet Movie FLV file
- The published Bullet.SWF file you just created
- The SkinUnderAllNoCaption.SWF (or whichever skin you chose) which is the controls for the video playback within your animation

SUBMIT BOTH your FLA and SWF file to your teacher in the Hand in Folder