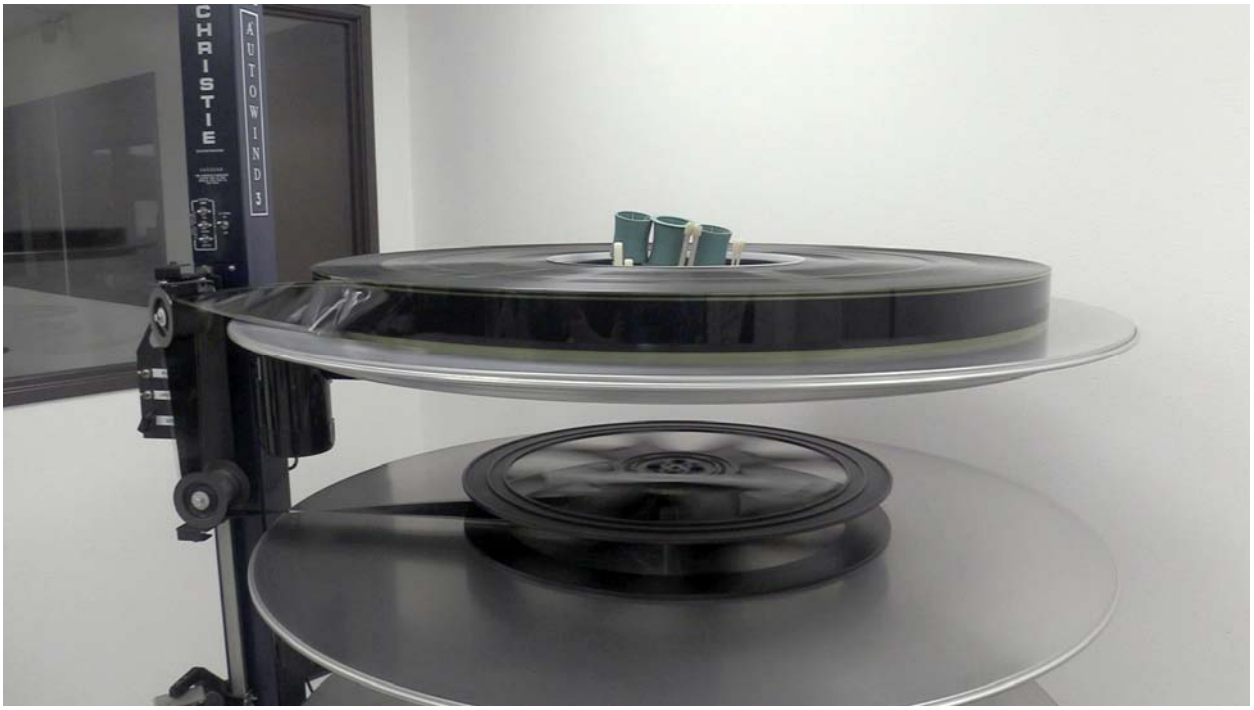
FILM-TECH
CINEMA SYSTEMS

PLATTER LOADER OPERATION MANUAL FOR CHRISTIE AW3R PLATTERS



Revision 1, July 2023

You may download the latest revision of this manual at www.film-tech.com
It is located under the headers: Warehouse > Manuals > Platters and Film Transport

= = = INTRODUCTION = = =

This manual explains in detail the proper way to assemble a 70mm film print on a Christie AW3R platter using the Film-Tech Platter Loader.

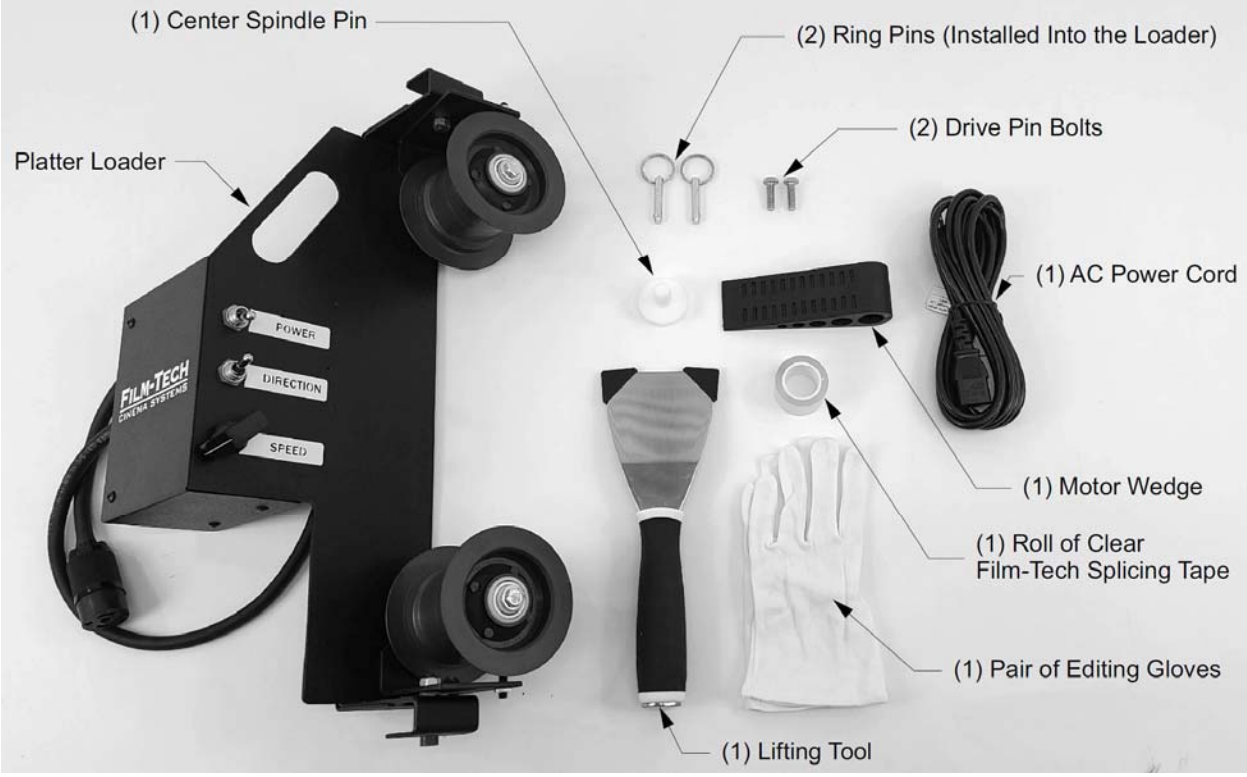
We have attempted to compose this manual in such a fashion that every detail of every step is explained, so please don't let the level of details discourage you into thinking this is a complicated device. The Loader is actually very easy to setup and operate once you have seen or used it once.

Although there ARE extra sections in this manual which are NOT covered in the demonstration video, we do recommend watching the online video of the Loader in operation, as in some regards it may be more informative than the text and photos herein.

You can watch and/or download the demonstration video here:
www.film-tech.com/platterloader

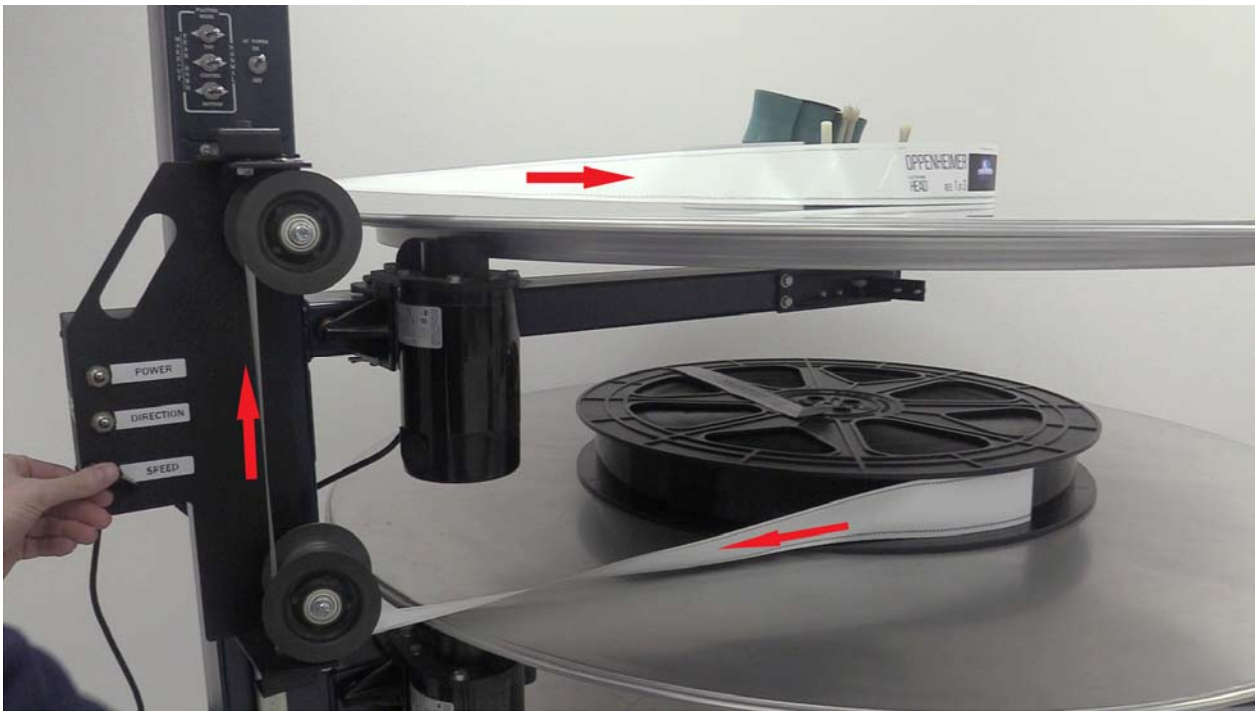
= = = PARTS LIST = = =

Inside the shipping box will be:



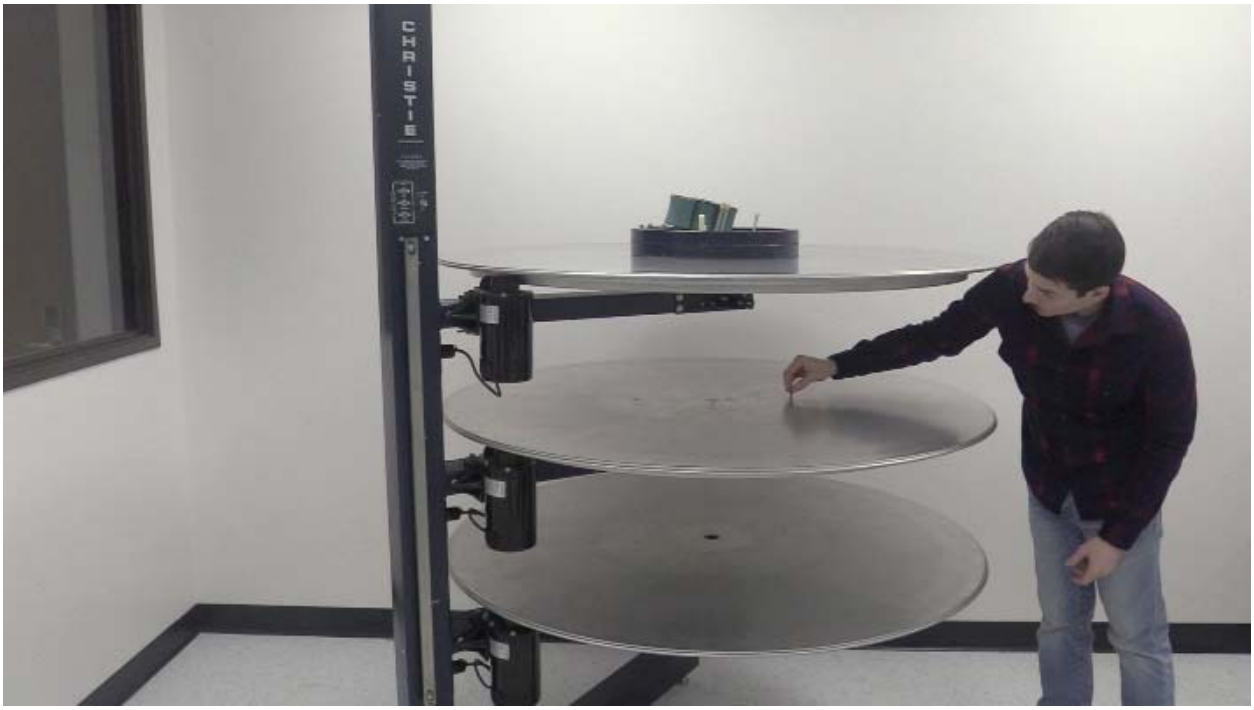
= = = INSTALLING THE LOADER = = =

The first step is deciding which of the 3 platter decks you want to load the finished print onto and which platter deck you want to load the print off of its shipping reels. In this most common example, we are going to perform the makeup from the middle deck to the top deck.



To begin, move the platter's center feed brain to the top deck and also place the platter's center ring onto the top deck.

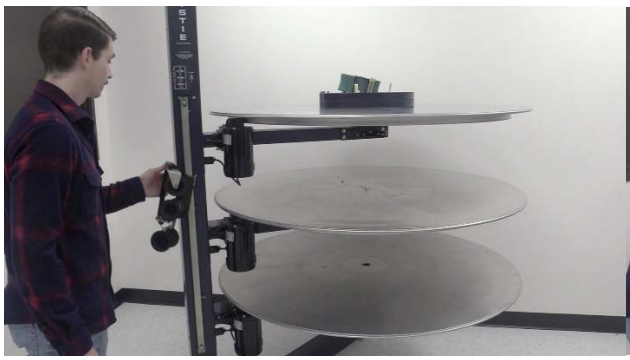
Insert one of the drive pin bolts into one of the two holes in the platter designed to hold the center ring into position. Make sure the bolt is flush with the platter deck. This bolt is very important as it serves as a drive pin to secure the reel to the platter deck.

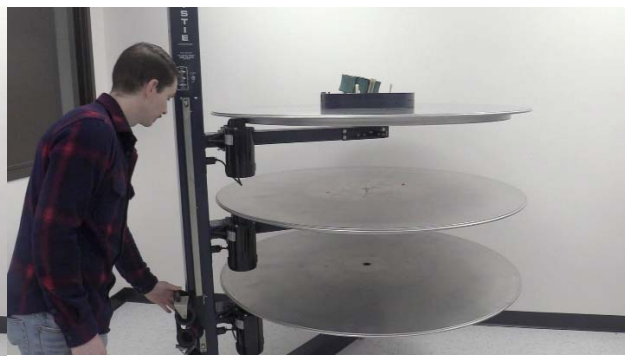


Pull backwards on the middle deck's platter motor so the drive puck on the motor is no longer touching the edge of the platter deck. (See the differences between the blue arrows in the below 2 photos.)

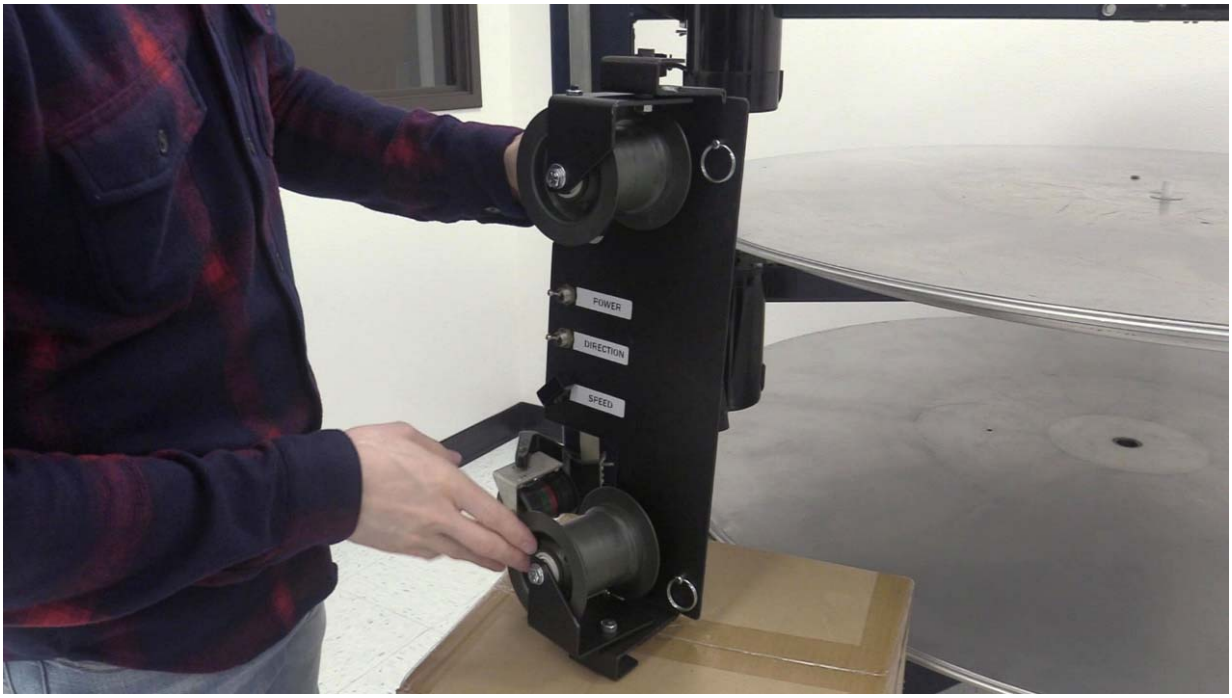
While holding the motor back, insert the thin end of the wedge in between the motor and the arm of the platter so that the drive puck on the motor is not touching the platter deck. The middle deck should now spin freely.

Lower the platter's takeup roller cluster on the slidebar to the bottom deck so it is out of the way. You are now ready to mount the platter loader onto the slidebar.





Before mounting the platter loader, flip both roller brackets so the two ring pins which are normally hidden behind the two rollers in their operating position, are visible. Remove these two ring pins by pulling straight out towards you.



Align the Loader with the left edge of the platter's takeup slidebar and gently push the Loader towards the platter until the Loader is fully seated on the slidebar.

Now gently raise the Loader as far up as it will go on the slidebar and install the top ring pin. At this point gently ease the loader down onto the slidebar's set pin just like you would with the takeup roller cluster. Once the Loader is resting in position, install the second lower ring pin and flip the two rollers back towards the platter decks.

Unplug the two platter deck's motor cables which the Loader will be utilizing from the platter tree. To disconnect the motors, grab the end of each cord and give a slight counter-clockwise twist and the plug will then pull straight out.

Connect the upper platter deck's motor cable to the shorter of the two motor connect cords on the loader. Remember to turn the motor connector a slight clockwise twist after coupling together. The longer motor connect cord is then used to connect the lower platter deck's motor cable in the same fashion.

Verify that the Loader's POWER switch is in the down ("off") position and that the SPEED control is turned fully counter-clockwise to the minimum position.

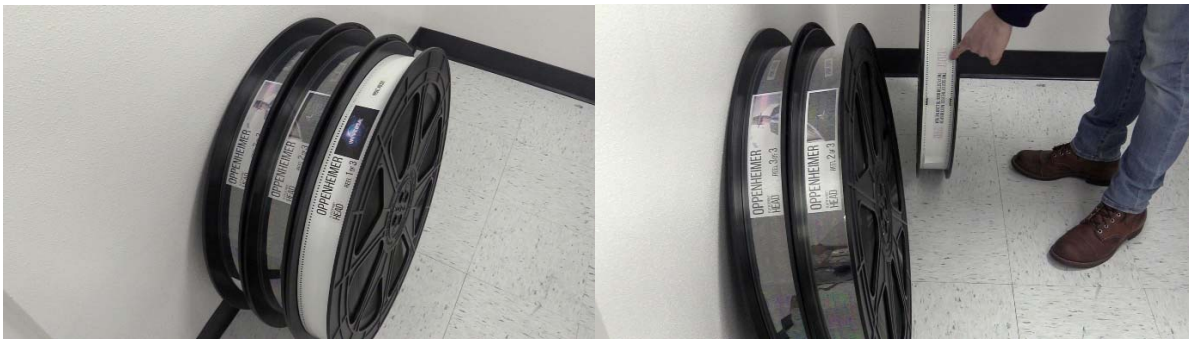
NOTE – the position of the 3 makeup buttons on the platter's tree have no relevance when using the platter loader. Leave them in the normal position.

At this point you can now connect the AC power cord to the loader, connect the cord to live power and flip the Loader's power switch back on. If for some reason there is not a second empty power outlet available within reach, you can unplug the Christie platter's power cord and use that outlet during loading or unloading, as the Christie platter does not need to have any power.

The system is now ready to load the film.

= = = LOADING THE FILM = = =

Your 70mm film print will arrive on plastic reels specifically designed to work with the loader. Each of these reels is capable of holding over an hour of 70mm film. For a long movie such as Oppenheimer (pictured below) which has a running time of 3 hours, you will receive 3 reels of film. This means the projectionist will only need to make two splices to assemble the entire film. As an example, a shorter movie such as Dunkirk would arrive on 2 reels and only require one splice during loading.



Starting with reel 1, locate the label with the 3 red arrows which point to the TOP side of the reel which must be facing UP once placed on the platter deck. This orientation is critical, as the dts soundtrack edge of the film (also marked with “red” on the “Christmas” threading leader) must be DOWN against the platter deck for loading. Place the center spindle into the center hole in the BOTTOM side of the reel.

The easiest way to load the reel onto the platter deck is of course to enlist a helper.


If you do not have a helper to assist, the best way to install the full reel of film on the platter deck is to set the reel on its edge at an angle (as seen below) about halfway in between the edge and center of the platter deck.

Then give the platter deck a half spin so the edge of the reel sitting on the deck is rotated to the other side of the deck.

Once the reel is in approximate position on the platter's deck, you will likely need to make slight adjustments to the reel's position in order to align the center spindle pin with the center feed ("brain") socket, but once you have the center spindle pin in the platter axle's center feed socket, let the reel fully rest on the platter.

Once you have the reel sitting on the platter deck, make sure to verify that you did not accidentally set the reel down to where the flange of the reel is laying on top of the drive pin bolt. Give the platter deck a full spin and watch the bottom edge of the reel to ensure it is in constant contact with the platter surface. If it is raised up at one point of the reel, the reel needs to be rotated slightly so the drive pin bolt aligns with one of the open areas of the reel flange.

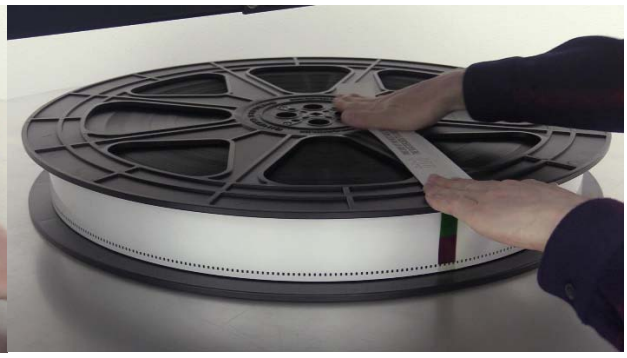
To remedy, lift up the reel using the Lifting Tool just enough to get a couple of fingers underneath it and hold the reel still while giving the platter a gentle twist until the drive pin bolt is in between the flanges of the reel. Once the reel is installed properly, it should lay fully flat against the platter deck's surface around the entire perimeter of the reel.

To use the Lifting Tool, make sure you place it flat against the platter's deck and then gently slide it under the edge of the reel. Never angle the lifting tool and push downward into the platter's surface, as that could cause damage to the platter deck.

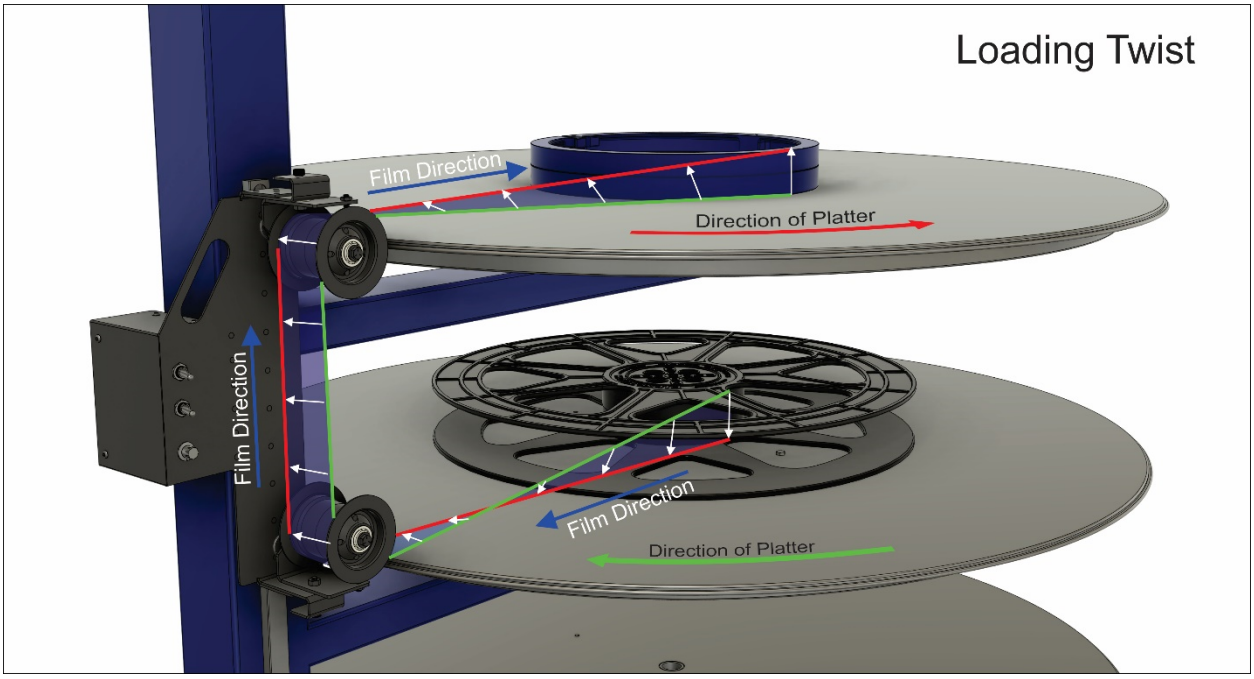
You are now ready to thread the film.

As a reminder the Loader's controls should now be set to:
Power on = UP
Direction of film = UP
Speed = MINIMUM

Remove the tape securing the leader during shipping and do not discard it, as you will need it to re-tape the leader down upon return. It is fine to simply place the tape on the outer flange of the reel as can be seen here.



Gently and slowly pull enough leader from the feed reel to thread through the two rollers on the Loader as shown. Then hook the end of the leader into the center ring. If you have threaded correctly for loading from reel to platter, you will note that the soundtrack (or "red") edge is now facing UP on the takeup platter as well as facing toward the platter tree. If your threading twists are not exactly like this, rethread properly before continuing.



Select which direction you want the film to go on the Loader. In this case you want to flip the lever UP since the film is starting on the lower deck and winding onto the upper deck.

Finally before starting the actual film loading, make sure you do not have any slack in the film's path by gently spinning the lower platter with the supply reel of film on it backwards until you have removed any slack. Now turn the SPEED control up to about the 10 o'clock position and triple check the film path at a low winding speed.

IMPORTANT - For loading, the feed platter deck needs to have its motor disengaged, as without the motor wedge installed the film will be wound so tight on the center ring that it would be impossible to remove the center ring to run the show. If you have heavy tension during loading, be sure to check that the motor wedge is properly installed.

Once you are sure everything is threaded correctly, go ahead and turn the speed control all the way to maximum. The loader will not permit you to increase the speed too quickly, so don't be surprised if it seems like the loader is sluggish to your speed commands. That is intentional and is to protect the film from a jerky start.

NOTE - The actual top speed of the loading process will depend on the particular motors installed on your platter, as well as the version of the motor drive puck installed. Some platters in the field will load faster than this, while other platters may load a little bit slower. Unless you have a platter that is loading extremely fast when the speed control is at top speed, you should leave the speed set to the maximum setting and leave the system alone until the entire first reel is loaded.

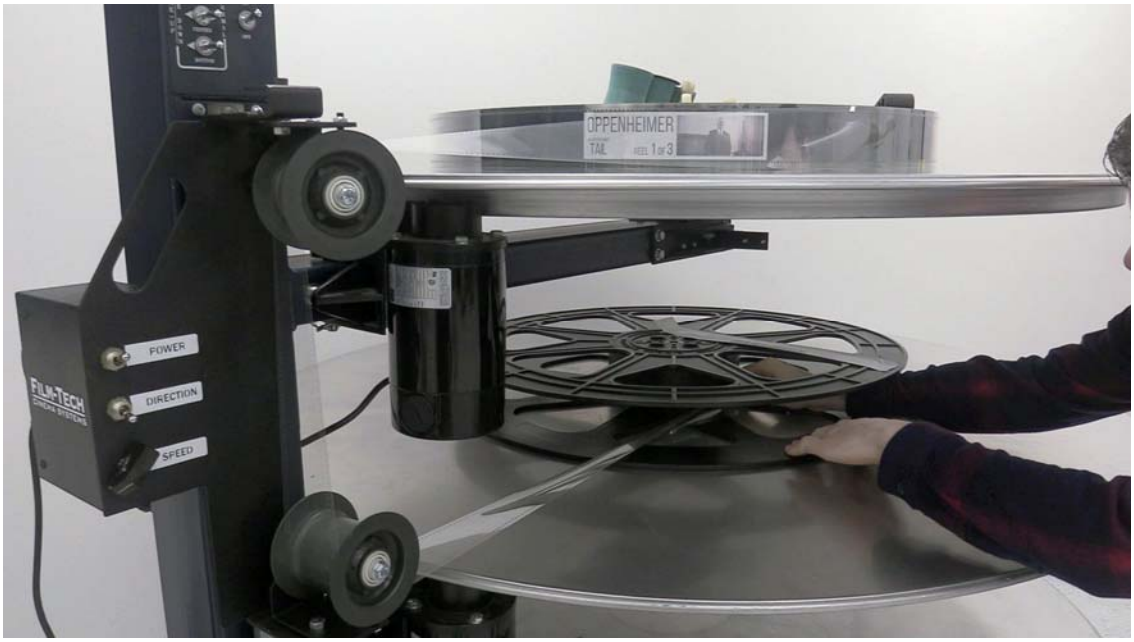
WARNING – It is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED that you intentionally let the ENTIRE reel INCLUDING the tail leader "tail out" rather than attempting to slow things down towards the end of the reel. This is because it can be difficult to slow down on the speed to not cause the tension to slack and jerk back tightly, which could potentially damage a section of the film. For those projectionists who are used to a belt driven motor on the platter Make Up Table (MUT), remember that "this" belt cannot slip like a MUT motor as it is rim drive and also has significantly more inertia than a MUT reel. For this reason please ALWAYS let the reel FULLY tail out instead of attempting to slow down to a stop before the tail leader exits the reel.

Once the first reel has transferred to the top deck and fully tailed out, turn the speed control back to minimum / off and stop the lower deck from spinning.

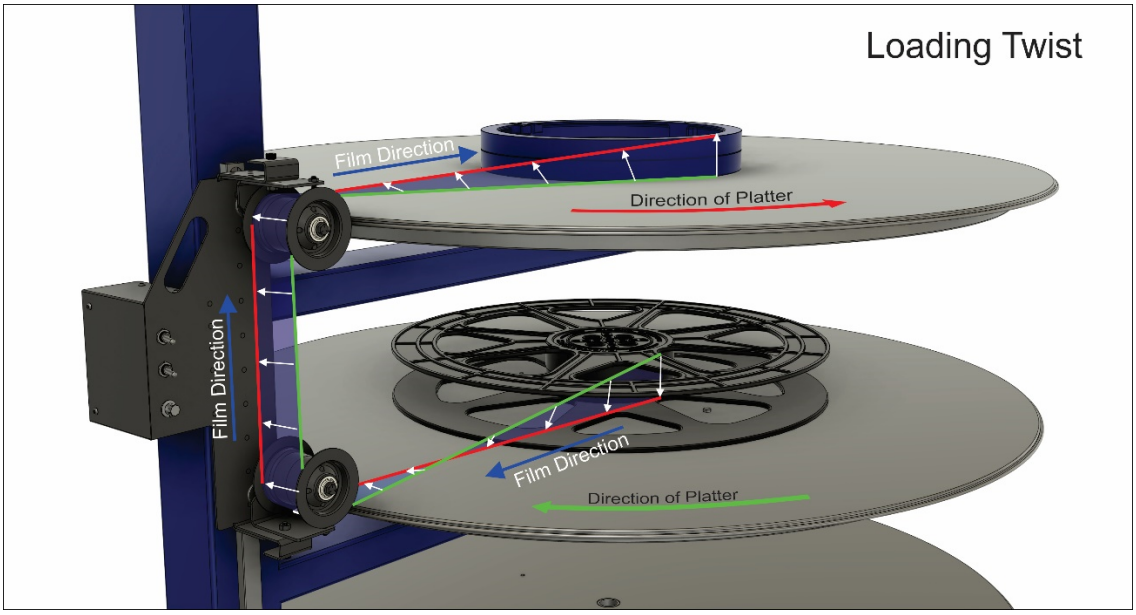
To load the tail leader back onto the shipping reel, make sure you first flip the DIRECTION switch to the downward position. If the DIRECTION switch is still in the upward position, the tension on the upper platter will be significant.

Remove the motor wedge from the lower deck and set it on top of the print on the upper deck. This will serve as a reminder to re-install it after switching to the next reel so you don't forget. You will note that even with the DIRECTION switch set to the downward position, there will still be some backtension from the upper deck as you pull several feet of tail leader off of the roll to re-thread it onto the empty shipping reel. This tension is intentional and necessary. You may backspin the upper deck by hand if you find it is easier while you are getting the tail threaded to the reel.

Be sure to thread the film with the exact same twists that you originally had when loading the first reel and connect the tail end of the leader to the empty reel. Remember this means that the tail end of the film on the top platter will have its soundtrack edge up. This edge of the film should be facing the tree and down on the platter containing the empty reel. You may likely find that using a small piece of tape to secure the tail leader to the empty reel hub makes things easier. This is fine provided you use the smallest piece of tape possible. Spin the lower platter to achieve just over one full wrap of film on the empty reel.



As a reminder, the twists should be as seen below for loading:

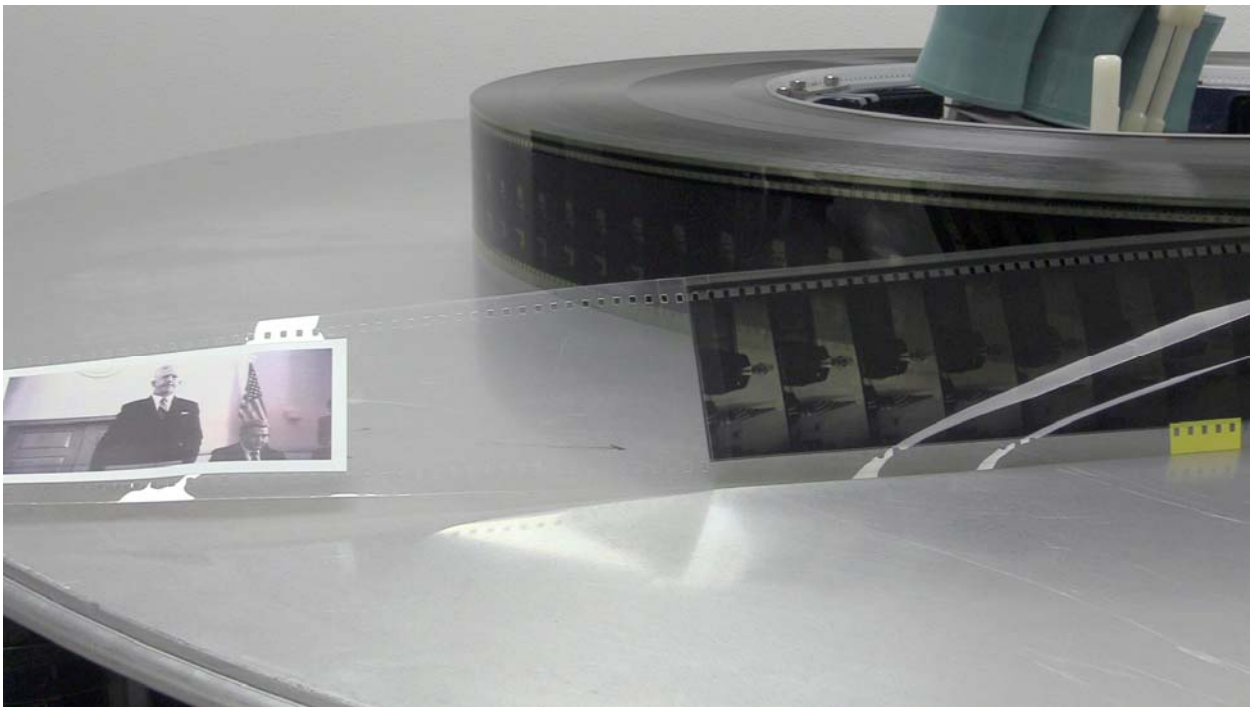


Make sure all slack is taken out by hand and then increase the speed control to SLOWLY rewind the tail leader off of the upper platter and back onto the reel. Stop the transfer when you see the splice approaching so that the last frame of the first reel does not reach the platter loader's rollers. You need to make the splice on this upper deck, NOT on the lower deck with the film reel.

The tail leader is clear film to easily identify the actual film print against the tail leader. There are a few specific things to note here:

First, you will see a couple of yellow tape marks on the inboard edge of the film near the splice. Leave these on the print and do not remove them. They will assist with the breakdown of the print and will NOT be seen on screen.

Second, there is a label next to the splice identifying the title, reel number and head or tail orientation. This label has an image of the "ID frame".



Third, the actual splice from the movie to the leader is joined with a single sided tape splice. This splice will cleanly pull apart by merely twisting the edges. You now have an in-frame cut which has been pre-made.

Fourth and very important, do NOT cut off an ID frame! That is what the image on the leader's label is for.

Under no circumstances should you use the cutting blade on your splicer when assembling a print.

Now that you have the tail leader wrapped back around the first reel's hub, use a small piece of tape to hold the end against the reel flange during storage so it does not unravel and place the reel back into the shipping container.

At this point you should re-install the motor wedge onto the middle deck just as you did before loading the first reel.

With the loader's power set to OFF, place the splicer onto the top deck and position the last frame of reel 1 onto the right side of the splicer in preparation for the splice.

Never place a splicer onto a platter deck if the Loader's power is turned on.

Place the second reel of film on the deck just like you did with the first reel. There will be a couple of full wraps of clear head leader around this reel to protect the beginning of the film from damage. Do NOT unroll this leader onto the floor! It needs to stay clean, as upon completion of the film's run it needs to be spliced back onto the print to protect the beginning of the reel during return shipment.

Roll the head leader up and stop a few feet before the splice to the first image of the reel.

Take the loop of film and slide it into the two rollers. Make sure you ONLY do this on the clear leader and that you are NOT sliding the actual film print onto the roller in this manner as sliding the film onto a roller from the side will usually leave a scratch. Gently pull those last few feet of clear film through the rollers so the first frame of action on the reel is at the splicer.

Pull the single-sided splice apart and use a piece of tape to hold your loop of film from unraveling. Set this aside until this next reel is finished loading.

NOTE - Included with the platter loader is a roll of Film-Tech splicing tape. Please be sure to use this roll of tape when splicing, as other brands of tape leave residue over time and ooze adhesive. Also enclosed is a pair of editing gloves. If you have oily hands, please make sure you wear these during splicing.

When making the splice, remember to NEVER use the cutter on the splicer itself. Simply align the two ends, ensuring that the edge with the DTS timecode track matches and make the splice.

TIP - A commonly seen improper method of making a splice is laying the tape on the film. The mistake is that the tape is pulled over and laid on top of film, then an attempt is made to smooth out air bubbles. Splicing tape performs strongest when it is stretched taut during application. Once the adhesive makes contact with the film, if the tape was not kept taut at the point of making contact, it will be an inferior quality splice.

Shown here is an example of the proper way to make a splice. Pull enough tape from the roll to make the splice and hold the end of the tape up high with your left hand. Now take the side of your right thumb in a wiping motion and apply the tape from rear to front (blue arrow). It is important that your left hand is not lowered until your right thumb has applied the tape across the entire width of the film. At this point now you can let go of the end of the tape and punch your splice. This method ensures proper adhesion of the splicing tape and will also ensure you do not have any air bubbles. Then flip the film over and splice the other side. (See 2 photos below.)

At this point ensure you have gently spun the middle deck to take out any slack in the film. Make sure the SPEED control is turned all the way counter-clockwise to its minimum setting, the DIRECTION switch is in the UP position and then turn the POWER to the loader back on.

Increase the speed to about the 10 o'clock position and watch carefully for a few revolutions to ensure the film is properly seated on the rollers and everything is good. Then slowly increase the speed to about the 3 to 4 o'clock position and let the rest of this reel load all the way through completely tailing out.

If for some reason you start to notice the deck with the film being loaded onto it starts shaking a bit at the end of the second reel, you should VERY slowly ease down on the speed. This can be caused by an out of round center ring or worn platter deck / axle in combination with the sheer speed of loading at that point of the film. Do NOT quickly turn down the speed as the platter feeding the film off of the reel is free-spinning with only a minimal amount of drag to it and such an action could cause the film to lose tension and create slack. If there is a third reel to the movie, be forewarned that the film will be loading incredibly fast on that third reel, so we recommend the 1 to 2 o'clock position as the typical highest speed on the third reel of a 3 reel movie. Remember as the diameter of the film on the platter increases, the film will pull substantially faster.

If the print you are loading has a third reel, repeat the above steps for swapping out reels and making the splice. Also don't forget to take the head leader which you previously coiled up and tuck it into the reel before placing back in the case so it does not get lost.

= = = EMERGENCY LOADING PROCEDURE = = =

The design of the loader is such that it does not use any of the platter's electronics. This is why the platter's power switch as well as the platter's make up switches have no bearing on the operation of the Loader. This design was chosen because it does not rely on functionality of the MUT connector or internal circuitry of the platter in order to function for makeup. If the platter motors themselves are functional (which has to be the case in order to run a show), then the loader is still capable of loading the film.

Although we believe the loader will essentially work forever, as with anything electronic there is always the rare chance of experiencing a failure. If such a failure of the Loader's circuitry should occur, keep in mind you can still load a film without ANY of the Loader's circuitry working, you just won't be able to break it back down onto reels when you are done showing the movie.

To load a film in emergency mode, make sure your two motors are connected for normal platter operation, the Christie platter's power switch is turned on and all 3 makeup switches are off. None of the Loader's electrical circuitry will apply here. This emergency loading method is using the loader strictly as a physical bracket for the necessary rollers.

Make sure you have installed the MOTOR WEDGE into the deck with the shipping reel, then follow the EXACT same loading instructions for the Loader, except instead of turning the SPEED control up and down, use the center feed brain's payout arm as the speed control. Simply set something such as a small bottle of lens cleaner in the brain to hold the arm at the desired winding speed.

This emergency operation mode will not permit you to break the film down, but it will guarantee that even if the loader experienced a complete electrical failure, you can STILL get the film loaded for the show.

= = = REMOVING THE LOADER = = =

To remove the loader and reset the platter for normal operation:

Turn the POWER to off.

Turn the SPEED to minimum.

Unplug the AC power cord.

Unplug the two platter motors.

Re-connect the two platter motors to the platter tree's motor sockets.

Flip the two rollers 180 degrees so they are pointing away from the platter decks.

Raise the Loader up slightly on the slidebar and pull the two ring pins.

Remove the Loader away from the platter's takeup slidebar.

Re-install the two ring pins into the loader so they do not get lost.

Place the Loader back into the box and store it underneath the platter.

Make absolutely sure you have also placed these items back into the storage box for future use:

- 1 AC power cord
- 1 lifting tool (used only during breakdown)
- 2 ring pins (should be stored in the Loader itself)
- 2 drive pin bolts
- 1 center spindle pin
- 1 motor wedge

You are now ready to use the platter normally to run shows.

= = = 70MM ABORT LEADERS = = =

The head leader on your print follows the BLS red/green “Christmas” design introduced in 2015. The RED side is the DTS timecode side. The RED side should be UP on the platter and the RED side is TOWARD you as you thread the projector.

The head leader may be longer than you are used to seeing on past releases. This length of leader is commonly referred to as an “abort leader” since it gives you time to get the system up to full speed and “abort” before film damage occurs on the first reel from a misthread or a malfunction. The extra length of leader also protects the beginning of the film from handling wear at the beginning of the first reel, which is typical when using short leaders.

Abort leaders follow ideal archival film practice in that there will be enough leader for you to thread the system and then be able to turn the projector motor on full speed for a solid 30 seconds. This will give you ample time to literally walk around the platter and check that the film is properly seated on all rollers, no brain wrap is happening, there is no takeup arm failure, the film is properly seated on all rollers, the film loops are not slapping against anything now that they are in motion, and everything checks out 100% with the film running at normal projection speed.

The leader is comprised of a long stretch of red/green “Christmas” framelines, followed by a stretch of clear. After the clear will come the standard Fotokem lab leader with the reel 1 countdown. It has all been verified to be in-frame. The stretch of clear is there as it makes it very easy to see when you need to get ready to stop the projector motor as the lab countdown starts to feed out from the platter.

IMPORTANT – The movie studio has paid for and is expecting you to use these abort leaders properly. Please respect that by not removing or shortening ANY of this abort leader.

Always thread on the earliest possible point of the red/green section of the leader, meaning do not attempt to bypass any of it such as spinning the takeup platter to get to the very end of the red/green section of the leader before threading the projector.

Under no circumstances should you thread on the Fotokem reel 1 lab countdown (black image with clear framelines).

The tail end of the print also has extra leader added to protect the end of the movie from damage. This also must not be shortened or removed.

The above practices are proven to save film from unnecessary damage and should help to ensure that your print does not have added wear or dirt at the start and end.

= = = DCP PLAYLIST TIPS FOR PRESENTING WITH A DIGITAL BACKUP = = =

For theaters which will be "chasing" the film presentation with a digital backup, we recommend the following practice. Please discuss this page with the management of the theater, as they will be the ones creating the digital playlist.

The playlists should be scheduled in the theater's TMS just like the theater always does, however the 70MM playlist will be specific to this one auditorium during the 70MM film run.

The following is a sample recommended playlist for the theater. There will be various differences from theater to theater and chain to chain, but the important differences and items are in red below.

= = = START OF PLAYLIST = = =

BLACK CLIP with starting cues

PRESHOW PAID ADS AND CLIPS (if applicable)

BLACK CLIP with trailer cues

MOVIE TRAILERS (multiple)

BLACK CLIP with feature cues > and specifically an AUDITORIUM LIGHTS DOWN command

THEATER POLICY TRAILER/SILENCE CELL PHONES/ETC

BLACK CLIP RUNNING 5 MINUTES IN LENGTH (a LAMP OFF command for the DLP projector must be at the start of this. It is ok to combine multiple black clips to total 5 minutes in total length. If for any reason the theater does not normally place their LIGHTS DOWN command before their theater policy trailer, it must be placed in the first few seconds of the start of this clip, along with a LAMP OFF command for their DLP projector.)

FEATURE DCP FILE with absolutely NO CUES WHATSOEVER ON IT

No further BLACK CLIPS or any other cues.

= = = END OF PLAYLIST = = =

With this playlist, when the THEATER POLICY TRAILER/SILENCE CELL PHONES/ETC clips have finished playing you will only need to start the 70mm projector, switch audio to DTS (if not automatic) and open the 70mm douser. The playlist above will automatically dim the house lights for you and turn off the DLP projector's bulb once the changeover to film occurs.

If for any reason there is an issue with the 70mm and you need to stop it, as long as you can get things corrected and the film back up and running in LESS than 5 minutes, you won't need to do anything but raise the house lights while you work on things and lower them back down once the film is back up and running.

If you should have an issue during a show and cannot fix things within 5 minutes, if the management has shown you how to restrike the bulb on the DLP projector in advance, all you will need to do is to turn the DLP projector bulb on and switch sound inputs over to DCP audio. This way the show can at least finish on the DLP projector. That is the purpose of this specifically designed playlist above.

The reason it is so important to not have any cues from the 5 minutes black clip until the end of the playlist is because if your theater should have to hold the movie for any reason (facilities issue, audience problem or perhaps one of the actors or the filmmaker is in attendance and wants to make a speech before the movie), you don't want the lights to come up during the final reel due to a command on the digital playlist just because you started the film more than 5 minutes behind schedule.

= = = BREAKING DOWN A PRINT ONTO SHIPPING REELS = = =

Breaking down a print is easier than loading a print, as the loader has bi-directional control of the two motors. During the breakdown process, the MOTOR WEDGE is not used, but otherwise follow the previous instructions for installing the Loader onto the Christie platter's takeup slidebar.

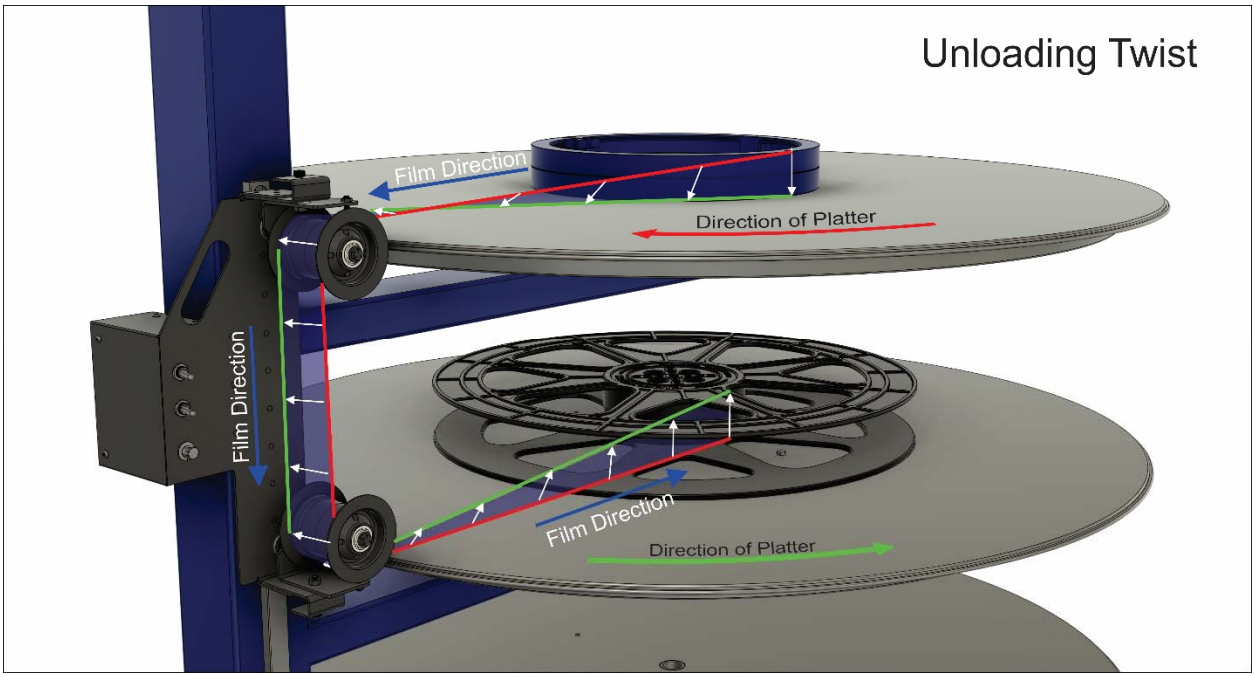
As with the original example of loading a film from the middle deck to the top deck, we will assume the film is resting on the top deck and ready for breakdown back to the middle deck for this explanation.

RECOMMENDATION – Should your film end up on the middle platter deck after the final show, we strongly recommend you install the platter loader for use on the bottom two decks for breakdown. The reason for this is because it is significantly easier to remove a heavy reel from the middle or bottom deck as opposed to the top deck. (If the film ends up on the bottom deck after the final show, simply break it down onto the middle deck with the DIRECTION switch in the UP position.)

To breakdown onto shipping reels:
Loader's POWER switch set to OFF
Loader's DIRECTION set to DOWN
Loader's SPEED control set to MINIMUM
Empty reel on middle deck, with drive pin bolt in between reel flanges.

Pull the tail end of the film through the rollers and onto the empty shipping reel. There will be some backtension resistance, this is normal and intentional.

IMPORTANT - Breaking down a print requires the twist of the film to be reversed as it enters and exits the loader for smooth operation. The print on the top platter to be broken down should have the "soundtrack/red edge" UP. As you thread the Loader, the film should be twisted so the soundtrack/red edge is facing AWAY from the platter tree and winds onto the shipping reel with the soundtrack/red edge facing DOWN. Please pay particular attention to the drawing on the following page.



Once the tail is attached to the empty reel, ensure there is no slack in the film and then turn the SPEED control up to about the 10 o'clock position. With the loader running slowly, verify you have the twists correct and everything is running smoothly. After several turns once you are certain all is good, turn the SPEED control up to maximum.

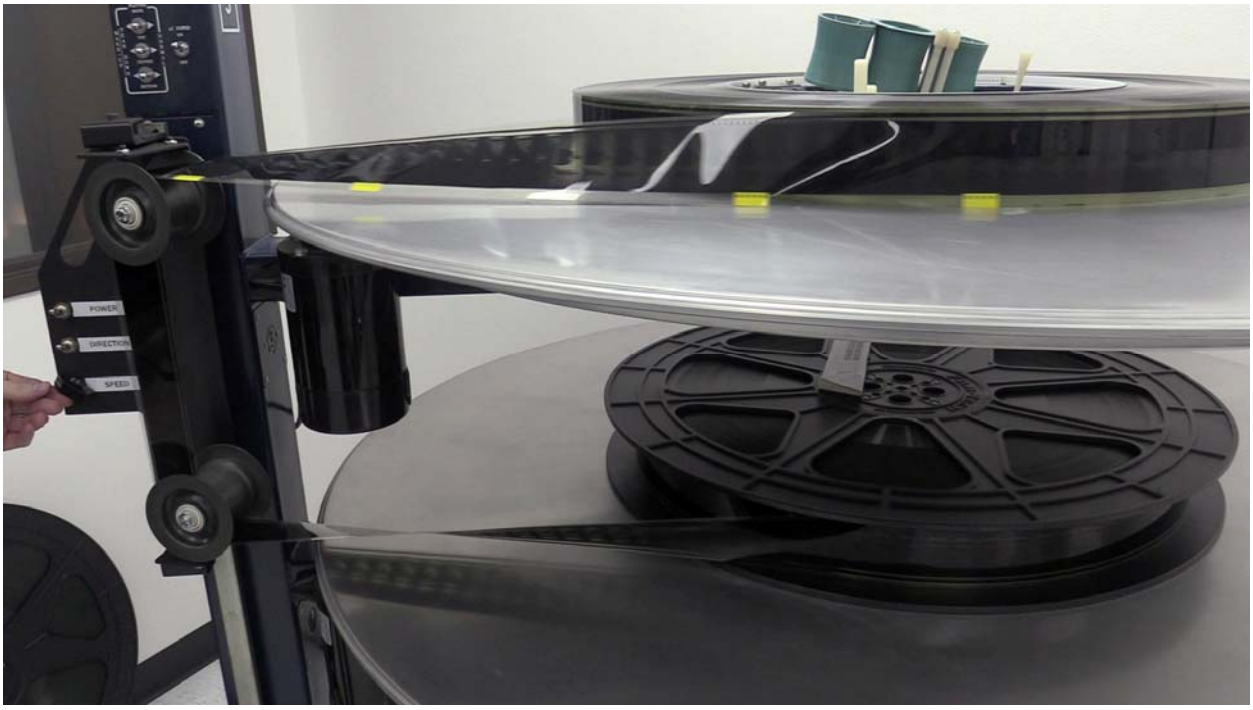
Regardless of the type of platter motors you have installed on your platter, breakdown will go slower than makeup did. This is because the hub of the shipping reels are 8 inches in diameter vs. a center ring which is much larger. A one hour reel of film on a typical AW3R platter will take about 20-25 minutes to wind back onto the shipping reel.

When the splice is starting to get close to coming off of the top platter, SLOWLY ease the SPEED control down so the platter loader is spinning at a much slower speed. It is recommended to slowly ease the speed down to around 10-11 o'clock for this. Once you get to the last couple of wraps, adjust the SPEED control so the film is moving slowly and will be easy to stop.

WARNING - Please be aware toward the end of the reel when the splice is starting to approach that you should turn the SPEED control down very slowly so that the Loader can maintain tension between the two platter decks. If you feel you MUST add a little bit of extra tension to the top platter (where the print is unloading off of) to assist with the stop, use ONLY one finger of pressure on the platter that the film is exiting from to add just a light amount of drag. (See photo below)

The reason for this warning is because the loader is controlling both motors, and if you attempt to apply too much braking by hand you could cause erratic tension between the two decks, lose control and cause film damage.

Remember also that the two splices you made will have the yellow flags on the inboard edge of the film (down on the platter). These will become apparent on the last several wraps during breakdown.

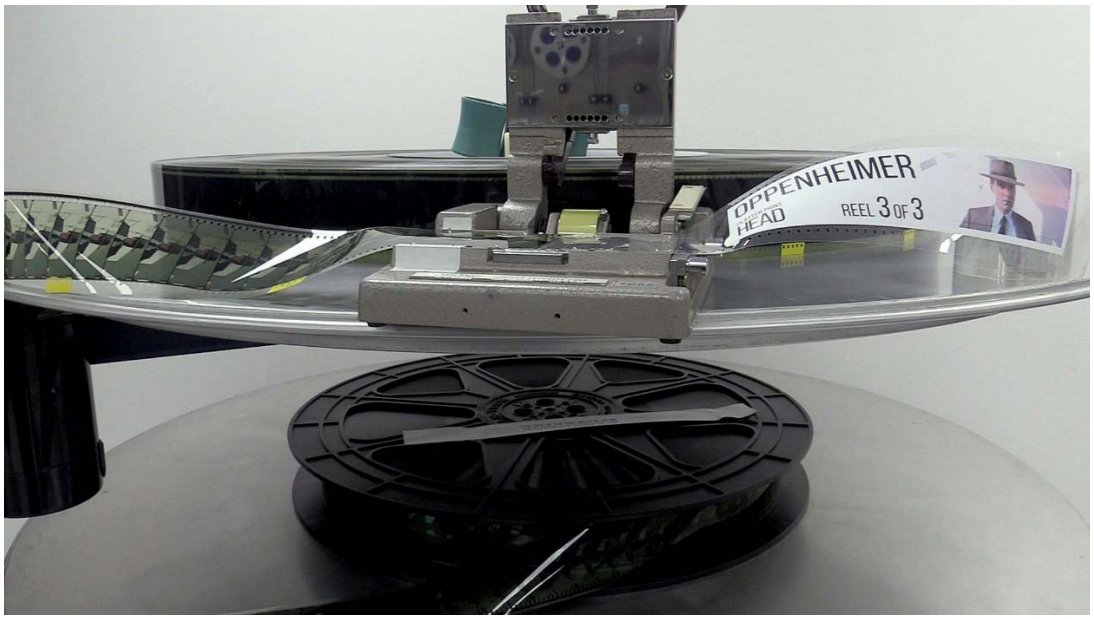


If the splice passes by do NOT grab the decks and try to stop them quickly. Just keep easing the SPEED control down until you get to a smooth stop. Once both platters have come to a complete stop, flip the DIRECTION switch to UP and slowly load the film back onto the upper deck.

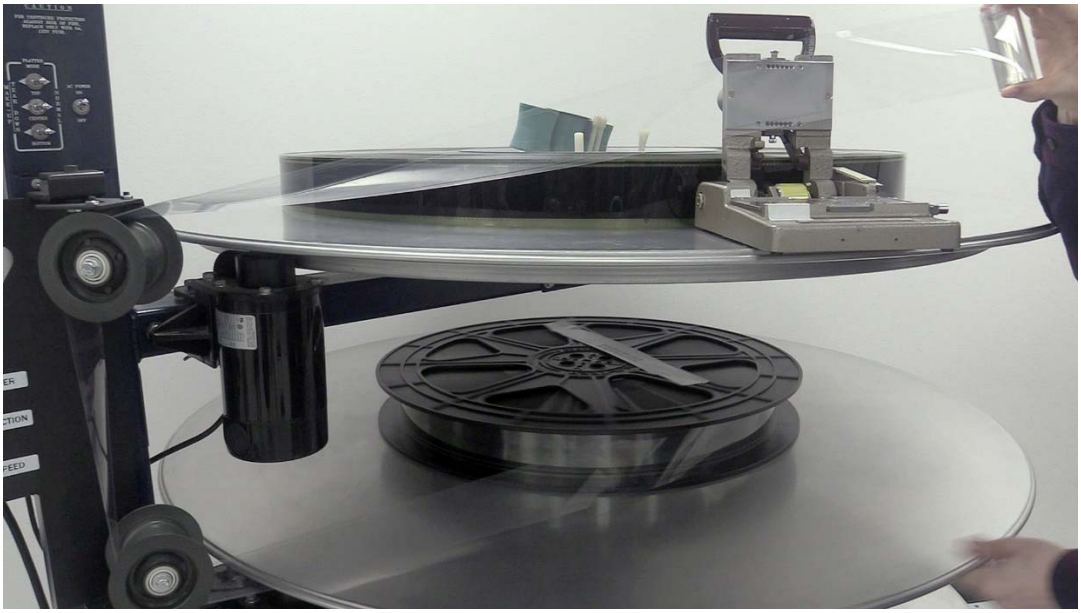
Once you have the platter stopped and the splice positioned between the outer edge of the film on the top platter and the roller on the loader, turn the Loader POWER switch OFF.

Retrieve the head protection leader from the reel you just broke down and verify the ID frame printed onto the leader matches the first image on the end of the film. If it doesn't, you have the wrong reel's head leader. Note that ALL splices within the print as shipped to you are ultrasonic welds, so there should only be the ONE (2-reel feature) or TWO (3-reel feature) tape splices that you made when initially loading the print.

Place the splicer in the same position as before on this upper deck and peel the splicing tape off. DO NOT CUT A FRAME UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. Set the tail end of the film on the top platter aside and place the head end of the reel that is on the middle deck onto the splicer. Make a SINGLE-SIDED splice to re-attach the head leader. (See below photo)



While holding tension on the roll of leader with your hand, spin the middle deck a couple of turns to pull the leader THROUGH the 2 rollers on the loader. Do not remove the film from the 2 rollers, and do not use the platter loader to power the middle deck's motor for this. Just hand spin the middle deck. This practice ensures there is no operational mistake which could launch the splicer off of the platter and break it. (See below photo)



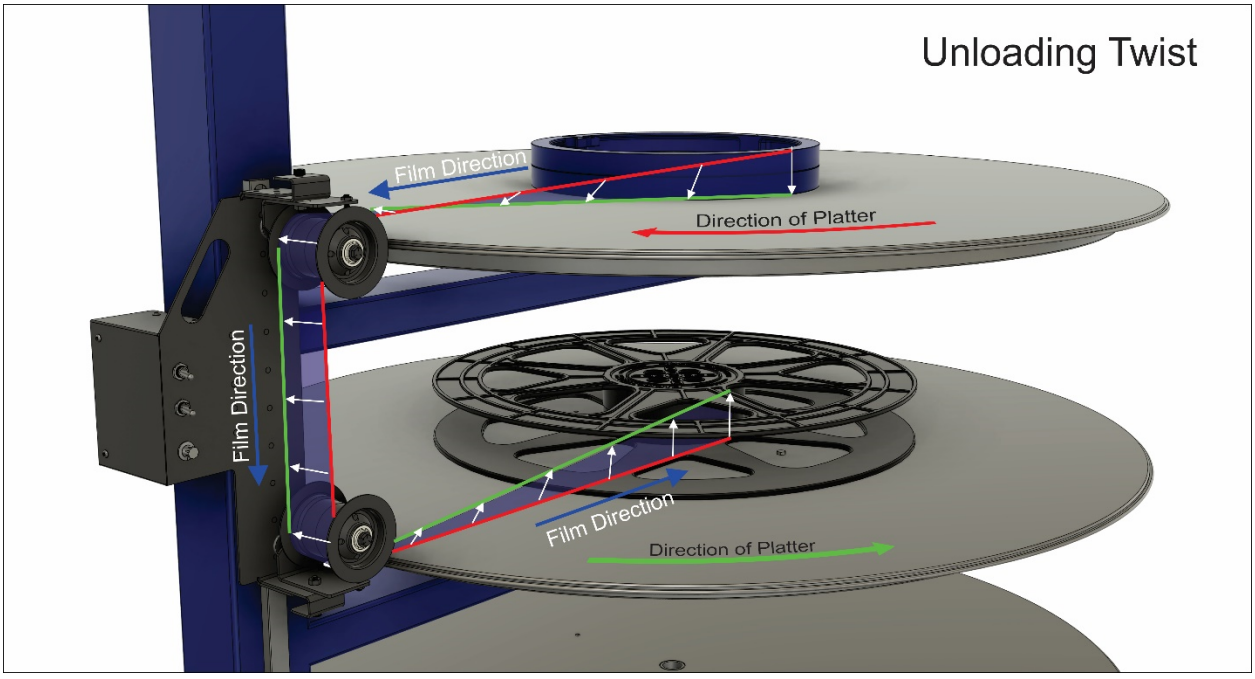
Using a generous piece of tape to secure the leader, tape the leader down to itself on the reel for return shipping.

Using the lifting tool, place the bottom of the tool flat against the platter deck and very gently wiggle it under the edge of the reel. Again, make sure you are holding the lifting tool flat against the platter deck and NOT at an angle downward into the platter deck. Once you have enough to stick a finger underneath the reel, set the lifting tool aside as you can then get your hands under the reel to remove it. (See below 2 photos)

Removal of the reel by yourself is easiest done in reverse order of the way you set it down initially. Simply lift one edge of the film upward a few inches, then spin the platter deck by hand half of a revolution. At that point the reel will be overhanging and easy to grab and set onto the floor. An easier method is if you have someone nearby who can help you remove the reel.

Now grab the next reel to break down (which would be reel 2 for a 3-reel movie or reel 1 for a 2-reel movie), place it on the platter as before, then pull the tail leader from the reel and thread it through the 2 rollers on the Loader like you just did with the tail of the last reel. Remember to pay attention to the twist! The top/soundtrack/red edge of the print should be away from the platter tree, ending up downward on the shipping reel.

The drawing is here again for quick reference:



Compare the ID frame printed on this tail leader with the image on the end of the film to ensure they are the same. If they aren't, you grabbed the wrong reel. Peel the splicing tape off from the splice you made when originally assembling the print. Make a SINGLE-SIDED splice to re-attach the tail leader to the film and then remove the splicer entirely from the platter deck.

At this point ensure all slack is out of the film, the loader's SPEED control is all the way to minimum, the DIRECTION is set to DOWN and then turn the loader's POWER switch on.

As always, start the Loader by running the SPEED at about 10 o'clock, then increase to maximum speed once you are certain everything is threaded and functioning properly.

If there is another reel to break down after this one, repeat these procedures. However if this is the final reel, do not slow the loader down. Instead let it tail out from the center ring.

= = = FINAL STEPS = = =

Make sure you put the proper reels back into the proper cases. Each reel leader is clearly labeled and each box is clearly labeled on the outside corner. This is important because when the boxes are returned, there are different weights for each box, so they must be returned in their correct boxes.

When placing the reels back into their cases for breakdown make sure you have not forgotten to tape the head leader down. Also be sure to wrap the protective foam spacer around the reel and secure it together with a suitable piece of tape before loading back into the shipping boxes.

Please don't forget to return the USB stick and DTS CDs with reel 1. Inside the pouch that was included with reel 1 are the pre-paid return shipping labels as well as a cable tie to secure the USB stick. If the USB stick cannot be cable tied, then please tape it to the outer wrap of leader on reel 1.

Using packing tape, seal the first box closed and then apply the return label designated for reel 1. Then seal the second box closed and apply the return label designated for reel 2. Do the same if there is a third reel. Pay attention to the notes printed on the return label to ensure you are putting the correct label on the correct box due to the different weights between them. You will find the return label note will read something along the lines of "GADGET 50 R1" (indicating print 50, Reel 1 of Gadget).

Before leaving, make sure you communicate with the theater's General Manager regarding the 2 or 3 boxes of film that must be returned. The theater manager will need to determine where you should leave these shipping boxes so the next time a FedEx driver is making a delivery they can hand the boxes over for return.

We recommend the Loader be left installed onto the platter's slidebar so it does not get lost or damaged. The accessories however must be all accounted for and locked up in the BLS supply kit for future use. (You wouldn't want to be the next projectionist to need to load a film and get to the theater only to find out the center spindle pin or some other accessory is missing.)

For easy reference, this is the list of accessories to make sure you have accounted for: