

User Manual

Version 0.8 · macOS

Shot planning for cinematographers and directors.

1 Overview

CINESide is a Mac application for planning narrative film productions. It keeps your screenplay, shot list, visual references, and department notes in one place — completely offline, with no cloud connection required.

The interface is built around the screenplay. Your script stays on the right; shots and notes go on the left. Everything is anchored to the scene it belongs to.

1.1 Working Modes

CINESide adapts its interface to your role on the project. Switch modes at any time in Preferences — your data is never deleted, only shown or hidden.

Cinematographer	Default mode. Shows lighting plans, sun position diagrams, crew and equipment notes, and department discussions addressed to Director, Gaffer, Camera Department, Key Grip, and Dolly Grip.
Director	Replaces lighting and equipment fields with discussion notes addressed to Screenwriter, Casting, Actor, Editor, and Composer. Location, visual references, and shot planning remain fully available.

1.2 Demo Mode and License





CINESide starts in Demo Mode. All features are available except saving projects as .cnsd files and exporting to CONNECT. PDF exports work but are watermarked.

To unlock the full version, click Activate License in the toolbar and enter your license key. The app switches immediately — no restart required. One license is for your personal use — install it on your own Macs. Updates are free.

1.3 Interface Layout

Toolbar (top)	Project controls, import, export, schedule, and preferences.
Scene navigation bar	Arrow buttons to move between scenes; dropdown to jump directly to any scene; search field for script text and page numbers.
Scene list	All scenes in script order. Each scene has a header and an expandable body with two columns: shots and notes on the left, script on the right.
Attach bar (bottom)	Appears when text is selected in the script. Use it to create new shots or annotations anchored to the selected passage.
Next Note button (bottom right)	Floating button for navigating through unreviewed CONNECT notes. Appears only when notes are pending.

1.4 File Formats

.cnsd		Your CINESide project. A folder on your Mac containing the project file, a photos/ subfolder with all reference images, and a .backups/ subfolder.
.cnct		CONNECT package for collaboration. Read-only — your collaborator can annotate but not edit. Created via CONNECT → Export ↗.
.cnsn		Notes file returned by a collaborator from CINESide CONNECT. Contains only their annotations. Import by double-clicking.
.cnsf		Share package for handing off a fully editable project. See section 10 and 15 for details.

All four file types are registered on macOS — double-clicking any of them opens the correct application automatically.

2 Screenplay

2.1 Importing a Screenplay

Click Import PDF in the toolbar. CINEside accepts PDFs exported from Final Draft, Movie Magic Screenwriter, or any other screenwriting application that produces standard PDF output.

After import, CINEside automatically detects all scene headings (INT./EXT.) and creates a scene for each one. The script text appears in the right column of each scene.

Manual Scene Marking

If CINEside cannot reliably detect scene boundaries — for example with non-standard formats — a Mark scenes manually button appears. Click any line to mark it as a scene heading; click again to unmark it.

2.2 Importing a Revised Screenplay

When a new draft arrives, click Import PDF again. CINEside offers two modes:

Full Script

Use for a complete new draft. CINEside updates all script text while keeping your shots, notes, anchors, and references intact.

Revisions Only

Use for partial updates when only specific pages have changed.


CINEside matches new scenes against existing ones by scene number, slug line, and text content. Confident matches keep all attached shots, notes, photos, and anchors. Less certain matches appear in a Review modal for manual confirmation.

Orphaned Anchors

If a shot's anchor can no longer be matched — because the passage no longer exists in the new draft — the shot receives a red "orphaned anchor" badge. Its Edit anchor button switches to Re-anchor. Click it, select new text in the script, and the link is restored.

You have 60 seconds to Undo the entire import after it completes.

2.3 Editing Script Text

Click  Edit in the script column of any scene to correct OCR errors or typos. This does not affect the original PDF.

2.4 Script Version

Enter the current draft version in the Version field in the toolbar (e.g. "v3 / 2025-04-01"). This appears on the title page of all exported PDFs.

2.5 Script Search

Type in the search field in the navigation bar to find any line of dialogue or action text. Use p42 to jump directly to script page 42. Press Enter to step through results, Shift+Enter to go back.

3 Scenes

3.1 Scene Header Fields

Scene Number	Assigned automatically during import. Displayed as SC.1, SC.2 etc. throughout the app and in all exports.
INT / EXT	Interior or Exterior. Detected automatically from the screenplay heading.
Slug / Title	The scene heading text from the screenplay (e.g. KITCHEN — MAIN FLOOR). Detected automatically; editable.
Day / Night	Time of day. Detected automatically; editable.
Pages	Script page range for this scene (e.g. 12–13½). Detected automatically from the imported screenplay; editable.
Location / Motif	The actual shooting location or set. Pre-filled in grey with the scene slug as a suggestion — confirm or overwrite with the real location name. Scenes with identical location names share the same location notes, photos, and floorplans.
Sub-location	Optional refinement within a location (e.g. "Stairwell", "Roof").

3.2 Scene Flags

Day for Night	Marks the scene as a day-for-night shoot. Color flag with optional notes.
Atmosphere	Haze, fog, rain, or other atmospheric conditions. Color flag with notes.
Mood / Season	Thematic or seasonal context. Color flag with notes.

3.3 Location Panel

Once a Location / Motif name is confirmed, a blue Location panel appears below the scene header. This panel is shared across all scenes at the same location.

Location Notes	Free-text notes about the location relevant to the shoot — for example: "ND all windows", "remove all benches before shoot", "no parked cars in front of windows".
Location Photos	Reference images of the location. Shared across all scenes here. Add via the + button or drag from Finder.
Floorplan	Floor plan images for this location. Shared across all scenes here. Also shown in the Scene Board.
Dossier ↗	Jumps directly to the Location Dossier export for this location.

Scenes are grouped by location name exactly as entered. Use consistent spelling across all scenes at the same location.

3.4 Scene Tags

Scene Tags group scenes by storyline, time period, dream sequence, or any recurring theme. Tags are project-wide — create a tag once, assign it to any number of scenes.

Click Add / Edit next to Tags. A modal lets you create a new tag with a custom color, assign an existing tag, or edit a tag you've already made. Renaming a tag or changing its color updates it everywhere it's used — across every scene, in CINESide CONNECT, and in PDF exports. You can also delete a tag, which removes it from all scenes at once. Tags appear as colored stripes along the left edge of each scene — in CINESide, in CINESide CONNECT, and in exported PDFs (enable the Tags toggle in the export panel).

Typical uses

- Storylines in parallel narratives ("Anne", "Peter", "Both")
- Time periods ("1890s", "Present Day")
- Dream sequences, flashbacks, fantasy sequences
- Shoot day groups or unit assignments

3.5 Additional Crew (Cinematographer mode)

Add crew members specific to this scene. Each entry has a role, a name, and a quantity. Appears in the Discuss With Sheet export and in the Schedule PDF.

3.6 Additional Equipment (Cinematographer mode)

Add equipment requirements specific to this scene. Each entry has a description, a quantity, and a category: Camera, Cam Support / Dolly, Lighting, or Grip. Can be exported as a separate reference sheet filtered by category.

3.7 My Notes

Every scene has a private My Notes field (labeled "Private · not exported by default"). Excluded from all exports unless the My Notes toggle is explicitly enabled.


3.8 Scene Actions (top right of each scene)

Mark as Deleted	The scene remains in the project but is excluded from all exports and the Schedule. Can be undone at any time by clicking Mark as Active.
Remove	Permanently removes the scene from the project after confirmation. This cannot be undone (except immediately via the Undo button).

3.9 Scene Manager

Click Scene Manager in the toolbar to open a full-screen overview of all scenes. From here you can reorder scenes by dragging, and remove scene boundaries — merging two adjacent scenes into one. This is useful when a scene was incorrectly split during PDF import.

3.10 Part Divide

Split a long scene into parts without creating separate scenes. Select text in the script at the point where you want the split, then click  Divide in the attach bar. The new part begins above the selected line.

Parts appear as separate units in the Schedule and can be assigned to different shooting days independently. In the PDF export, each part opens on its own spread.

4 Shots

4.1 Creating a Shot

Click + Add shot in the shots column of any scene, or select text in the script and click + Shot in the attach bar. The second method creates the shot already anchored to the selected passage.

4.2 Shot Fields

Size	ECU · CU · MCU · MEDIUM · TWO SHOT · GROUP · M WIDE · WIDE · Other (free text)
mm (focal length)	Numeric field for the lens focal length in millimeters.
Zoom	Toggle. When active, a free-text range field appears (e.g. "24–70mm").
Angle	Eye level · High angle · Low angle · Dutch · Bird's eye · Other (free text)
Cam Support	Tripod · Dolly · Handheld · Steadicam · Gimbal · Camera Car · Crane · Drone · Other (free text)
Cam Move	Free-text field for camera movement (e.g. "Push in", "Arc right").
POV	Toggle. Marks the shot as a point-of-view shot.
O/S	Toggle. Marks the shot as an over-the-shoulder shot.
Camera	Multi-camera assignment: A · B · C · D (any combination).
Unit	Main Unit · 2nd Unit · Splinter Unit · Pre-Shoot
Cam Specials	Free-text field for special camera equipment or techniques (e.g. "Underwater housing", "Macro lens").
VFX	Toggle. Flags this shot for the VFX sheet export.
SFX	Toggle. Flags this shot for the SFX sheet export.
Description	Free-text description of the shot content.
Notes	Free-text notes for this shot.
Photos	Reference images attached to this shot. Add via the + button. Drag and drop from Finder works from the second image onward.

4.3 Shot Variants

A shot can have multiple variants — alternative framings, lenses, or approaches for the otherwise same shot. Click + Variant on any shot to add a variant labeled A, B, C in sequence.

Variants inherit the parent shot's anchor. Each variant has its own Size, mm, Angle, Cam Support, Cam Move, and Cam Specials fields. Fields that differ from the parent are visually highlighted.

4.4 Shot Labels

In Preferences, choose whether shots within a scene are labeled numerically (1, 2, 3 ...) or alphabetically (A, B, C ...). This affects the editor, all exports, and the Schedule.

4.5 Anchoring Shots to the Script

Select any text in the script on the right — a toolbar appears above the selection. Click Edit anchor on an existing shot, or + Shot to create a new shot anchored to that passage.

Anchored shots are highlighted in the script with a colored stripe and badge, showing at a glance which part of the scene each shot covers.

You can also work from the script side: click any script block and assign it to an existing shot using the dropdown in the attach bar.

4.6 Shot Navigation

Use the ↑ ↓ arrow buttons in each scene header to move between shots. Press ↑ on the first shot to jump to the top of the scene.

4.7 Undo

The ↶ Undo button in the toolbar undoes the last change. Up to 40 undo steps are available within a session.

5 Visual References

Visual references can be attached at two levels: to individual shots, or to scenes. Scene-level references are shared across the scene and appear in the Scene Board.

5.1 Shot Photos

Attach reference images directly to a shot. Add via the + button below the shot fields, or drag an image file from Finder onto the shot photo area. Drag and drop from Finder works from the second image onward.

Each photo can have a caption. Photos appear in the PDF export when the Shot Photos toggle is enabled.

5.2 Scene-Level References

Reference Photos	Mood images, color references, location details. Each photo can have a caption.
Sun Position	Screenshots from Helios, PhotoPills, or similar apps.
Lighting Plan	Lighting diagrams or sketches. Click any image to open the lightbox and rotate. Exported when the Lighting toggle is enabled.
Sketch	Storyboard frames or hand-drawn visual notes. Click to open lightbox and rotate. Exported when the Sketches toggle is enabled.
Floorplan	Set or location floor plans. Shared with the Location panel when a location is assigned.

5.3 Scene Board

The Scene Board is a dedicated second window showing all visual references for the currently selected scene. Open it via Scene Board in the toolbar.

The board updates automatically as you navigate between scenes. Move it to a second monitor or use it on an iPad via macOS Sidecar.

Floorplan tab	Location floorplans for this scene's location.
Location tab	Location photos for this scene's location.
Lighting tab	Lighting plan images for this scene.
Sketch tab	Sketches for this scene.
Reference tab	Reference photos for this scene.

Only tabs with content are shown. When a tab has multiple images, a thumbnail strip appears at the bottom — click a thumbnail to display it full-size.

The Scene Board opens in landscape orientation and can be freely resized. It opens on demand — its state is not saved between sessions.

6 Notes & Annotations

6.1 Discuss With

Add structured notes to any scene using the + Add button next to Notes. Each note has a color and a recipient department.

Cinematographer mode

- Discuss w/ Director
- Discuss w/ 1st AD
- Discuss w/ Production
- Discuss w/ Gaffer
- Discuss w/ Camera Dept.
- Discuss w/ Key Grip
- Discuss w/ Dolly Grip
- Discuss w/ Costume
- Discuss w/ Make Up / Hair
- Discuss w/ Art Dept.



Director mode

- Discuss w/ Cinematographer
- Discuss w/ 1st AD
- Discuss w/ Production
- Discuss w/ Screenwriter
- Discuss w/ Casting
- Discuss w/ Actor (with optional actor name field)
- Discuss w/ Editor
- Discuss w/ Composer
- Discuss w/ Costume
- Discuss w/ Make Up / Hair
- Discuss w/ Art Dept.

These notes appear in the Discuss With Sheet export, grouped by scene and recipient.

6.2 Script Annotations

Select text in the script and click one of the annotation buttons in the attach bar:

+ Note	A general note linked to the selected passage. Grey stripe in the script. Exported when the Script Notes toggle is enabled.
 Lighting	A lighting note linked to the selected passage. Amber stripe. Exported when the Lighting toggle is enabled.
 Cam Move	A camera movement note linked to the selected passage. Red stripe. Always included in exports.

Annotations appear at the bottom of the script column in the editor for reference, and inline in the script in the PDF export. Click the text of any annotation to edit it; click X to remove it.

6.3 My Notes

Every scene has a private My Notes field (labeled "Private · not exported by default"). Excluded from all exports unless the My Notes toggle is explicitly enabled.

6.4 CONNECT Notes

When you import a .cnsn file from a collaborator, their annotations appear highlighted in your project — on shots, script passages, and images. A floating Next Note button (bottom right) lets you navigate through all unreviewed notes using the keyboard shortcut N (next) and P (previous).

Mark notes as done individually using the ✓ button, copy them to a scene note using → Note, or delete them using X. The "All notes reviewed" confirmation appears once you have worked through all pending notes in a session.

CONNECT Notes are not included in any export unless you copy them to a scene note using the → Note button.

7 Schedule

The Schedule in CINESide is a tool to work out the shooting order for each day — in conversation with your AD and director. It is not a replacement for dedicated production scheduling software such as Movie Magic, Yamdu, or Fuzzlecheck.

Click Schedule in the toolbar to open the Schedule. The workflow has two phases.

7.1 Phase 1 — Assigning Scenes to Days

+ Day	Add a new shooting day box.
Day label	Enter a name for each day — date, location, or any reference that helps orientation.
Day type	Regular, Pre-Shoot, Splinter Unit, 2nd Unit, or Post-Shoot.
Assign via dropdown	Use the day selector on each scene card to assign it to a day.
Assign via drag	Drag a scene card from the pool into a day box.
Pool behavior	Scenes not yet assigned appear bold. Scenes already assigned turn grey with an orange bar on the left.
Split scenes	A scene can be assigned to multiple days. Scenes with parts can have each part assigned to a different day independently.
Reorder days	Drag a day box header to reorder. Use the ← → arrows to swap adjacent days.

7.2 Phase 2 — Ordering Shots

Click Continue to Schedule to enter Phase 2. Each shooting day has its own tab. Arrange shots into your planned production sequence.

Drag to reorder	Drag shots within a day to set the production order.
Move between days	Drag a shot to a different day tab, or use the day selector on the shot card.
Estimated time	Enter an estimated time in minutes per shot. The running total for that day updates live in the tab header.

7.3 Schedule Export

PDF — This Day	Exports the shooting order for the currently selected day. Header shows label, shot count, and estimated total time.
PDF — All Days	Exports all shooting days as a single PDF. Each day starts on a new page with its header.
CSV	All days as a spreadsheet — one row per shot. For import into Excel, Numbers, or scheduling software.

Use the export toggles to control which elements are included: Scene Photos, Sketches, Location, Lighting, Flags, Crew & Equipment, Shot Photos, Notes, Anchor, Tags, and Links.

The schedule is saved with the project and restored when you reopen the Schedule modal.

8 Export

Click Export ↗ in the toolbar to open the export panel. The panel has four tabs.

8.1 Shots & Script (Facing Pages)

A PDF with shots on the left and the screenplay on the right — one scene per spread. Anchored shots are connected to their script passages with colored stripes. Script annotations appear inline in the script.

8.2 Shot List Only

A PDF containing only the shot list, without script pages. Use the Include toggles to control which elements are included. Also available: CSV export — the complete shot list as a spreadsheet.

8.3 iPad / Tablet

The same facing-pages layout with larger text and a wider margin on script pages for Apple Pencil annotations. Open the PDF in landscape view in any PDF app on your tablet.

8.4 Reference Sheets

Discuss With Sheet	All scene notes sorted by scene and recipient department.
VFX Sheet	All shots flagged as VFX, with their description and scene information.
SFX Sheet	All shots flagged as SFX, with their description and scene information.
Add'l Equipment	All additional equipment entries across all scenes. Filter by category to send category-specific lists to departments.
Location Dossier	A PDF for one or more shooting locations. Select which locations to include and which elements to show via toggles.

8.5 Include Toggles

Under Include, select which elements are added to the main PDF export. All are off by default.

Scene Photos	Reference photos attached at scene level.
Shot Photos	Reference images attached to individual shots.
Sketches	Scene-level sketches and storyboard images.
Location	Location notes, location photos, and location floorplan per scene.
Lighting	Lighting plan images and lighting annotations from the script.
Script Notes	Script annotations of type "Note" (grey), shown inline in the script.
My Notes	Private scene notes (excluded by default for sharing).
Tags	Scene tag stripes and labels.
Links	Reference links attached to scenes.

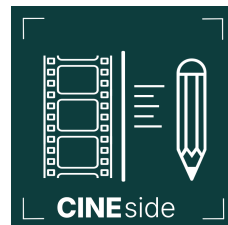
8.6 Scene Selection

Under Scenes, select which scenes to include. All are selected by default. Deselect individual scenes for a partial export.

8.7 Export Note

An optional note that appears on the title page. Useful for version information or a message to collaborators.

9 CINEside CONNECT



CINEside CONNECT is a free companion app for directors, cinematographers, and collaborators. It opens .cnct files in read-only mode — the recipient can annotate but not edit the project.

9.1 Exporting to CONNECT

Click CONNECT → Export ↗ in the toolbar. CINEside creates a single .cnct file containing the shot list, script, and all reference images. Send this file by email or file transfer.

The .cnct file is self-contained — all images are embedded. The recipient does not need access to your project folder.

9.2 Collaborator's Workflow (in CINEside CONNECT)

The recipient opens the .cnct file in CINEside CONNECT and can add notes to shots, script passages, and reference images. When finished, they export a .cnsn file and send it back. CINEside CONNECT can also export a PDF of the shooting script for printing or distribution.

9.3 Importing Notes

Double-click the .cnsn file, or use CONNECT → Import Notes in the toolbar. Their annotations appear highlighted in your project. Use the Next Note button (shortcut N) to step through all unreviewed notes. Mark notes as done, copy them to a scene note using → Note, or delete them using X.

9.4 CONNECT Works in Both Directions

The director can send you a .cnct file to annotate, and you return it as a .cnsn. Or you send the director a .cnct and they annotate it. CONNECT is role-neutral — any collaborator can use it regardless of their role in the project.

10 Sharing a Project

The Share button creates a .cnsf package — a fully editable project the recipient opens in CINEside. Unlike CONNECT, the recipient can add shots, edit scenes, and continue working on the project.

Although technically possible, it is not recommended for two people to both work in CINEside individually and send .cnsf packages back and forth — this would quickly become chaotic as each export is a full project snapshot with no merge capability. The app works best if one person is the author of the file and the other collaborates via CONNECT.

10.1 Share → Director

Creates a .cnsf package with the full project and all reference photos, stripped of your private DP notes (lighting plans, sun position, crew, equipment notes).


10.2 Share → Cinematographer

Creates a .cnsf package stripped of your private director notes (screenwriter, casting, actor, editor, composer discussions). All shots and visual references are included.

10.3 Receiving a Share Package

Double-click the .cnsf file. A dialog asks for a project name and save location. After confirmation it becomes a normal CINEside project on the recipient's machine — all reference photos are included and work immediately.

11 Preferences

Click  in the top right of the toolbar to open Preferences.

Working Mode	Switch between Cinematographer and Director mode. Your data is never deleted when switching.
Shot Labels	Choose whether shots are labeled numerically (1, 2, 3) or alphabetically (A, B, C). Affects the editor, all exports, and the Schedule.
Default Projects Folder	Change where CINEside saves new projects. Default is ~/Movies/CINEside Projects.

11.1 Automatic Updates

CINEside checks for new versions in the background when you launch. If an update is available, a dialog asks whether to install it. You can also check for updates manually via the CINEside menu → Check for Updates at any time. Only updates signed by the official CINEside signing key are accepted.

11.2 Automatic Backups

Saving is atomic — a crash or power loss mid-save can never leave a half-written project file. After you have saved your project for the first time, CINEside creates automatic backups at regular intervals. The three most recent backups are kept in the .backups/ folder inside your project folder. If a project file is ever unreadable, CINEside opens the most recent backup automatically. To view the backups in Finder, press `Cmd+Shift+.` to show hidden files.

12 Saving & Project Management

12.1 Saving

Press Cmd+S or click Save to save your project. The first time, CINEside asks for a project name and creates a self-contained folder:

MyFilm/

MyFilm.cnsd — your project file

photos/ — all reference images

.backups/ — automatic backups (hidden)

Always keep the entire project folder together. The photos/ folder is required — the .cnsd file alone is not sufficient.

12.2 Recent Projects

CINEside keeps a list of recently opened projects. Double-clicking a .cnsd file in Finder also opens the project directly.

12.3 Closing a Project

Click Close in the toolbar. If there are unsaved changes, CINEside asks whether to save before closing.

13 Keyboard Shortcuts

Shortcut	Action
Cmd+S	Save project
Cmd+Z	Undo last change
Cmd+O	Open project
Cmd+N	New project
Cmd+F	Focus script search field
← → (Arrow keys)	Navigate to previous / next scene (when not typing in a field)
N	Next unreviewed CONNECT note (when note navigation is active)
P	Previous unreviewed CONNECT note
Enter	Next script search result
Shift+Enter	Previous script search result
← → (in lightbox)	Rotate image left / right
Esc	Close lightbox
Cmd+Q	Quit CINEside

14 CINESide CONNECT — Full Reference

CINESide CONNECT is a separate free application. It opens .cnct packages in read-only mode, adds annotations, and exports a .cnsn notes file or a PDF.

14.1 Opening a Package

Double-click a .cnct file to open it in CINESide CONNECT, or launch CONNECT and use the Open button. The package is self-contained — no connection to the original project folder is required.

14.2 Navigating

Use the scene navigation at the top to move between scenes. The layout mirrors CINESide: shots on the left, script on the right.

14.3 Adding Notes

Shot notes	Click the note field below any shot and type your annotation.
Script passage notes	Select text in the script. A toolbar appears — click + Note to add an annotation linked to that passage.
Image notes	Click the note field below any reference image (scene photo, sketch, lighting plan, floorplan).

14.4 Exporting





CINESide CONNECT offers two exports:

Export Notes	Creates a .cnsn file containing only your annotations. Send this back to the CINESide user for import.
Export PDF	Creates a PDF of the shooting script — useful for printing or distributing the script without sending the full project file.

14.5 Limitations

CINESide CONNECT is read-only. You cannot add shots, edit scene information, or modify the project. CINESide CONNECT works completely offline — nothing is uploaded or transmitted.

15 File Format Reference

.cnsd		Your CINEside project. A folder containing the project file, a photos/ subfolder, and a .backups/ subfolder. Always keep all three together when moving or archiving. Double-click the .cnsd file inside the folder to open the project.
.cnct		CONNECT package. A single self-contained file with the complete shooting script and all reference images. Read-only — the recipient can annotate but not edit the project.
.cnsn		Notes file from CINEside CONNECT. Contains only annotations — no project data, no images. Import by double-clicking.
.cnsf		Share package. A single self-contained file containing the full project and all reference photos — the easiest way to hand off a fully editable project to a collaborator. Sending the .cnsd project folder directly would require manually zipping it including the photos/ subfolder; .cnsf handles that automatically, and strips private notes before sending depending on the direction (→ Director or → Cinematographer). The recipient opens it in CINEside, chooses a name and save location, and it becomes a normal editable project on their machine.

16 Support

Questions, feedback, and bug reports: info@cineside.app

Every message is read personally.

Website: cineside.app

Getting Started guide: cineside.app/getting-started.html

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