



How to Make an AI Feature Film

for Under \$100 a Month

The Process

- ◆ **Budget for the entire film, but create in sections** (pre-production, production, post-production) so money not used during a low-expense month goes toward a high-expense month.
- ◆ **Tag shots to redo.** During high-expense/high-credit-usage months, tag some shots to redo the next month when credits renew.
- ◆ **No annual subscriptions.** New tools become available and platforms change their rules. Focus on and track sales, especially 50%/60% off monthly sales across platforms.
- ◆ **Open multiple accounts on the same platform** to take advantage of deals, and pay attention to *their* offers (e.g. Dzine offers a discount the first time you attempt to cancel before your subscription is up).
- ◆ **No sale? Switch activities.** Move to less-costly work like sound editing or making trailer/marketing materials until one pops up. If there *is* a surprise sale, be willing to pivot from those activities and take advantage of the sale price for that month.
- ◆ **Use free and unlimited options,** e.g. Midjourney on Meta, LMArena/Arena (which lets you compare tools), and unlimited image and video generators on platforms.
- ◆ **Cut costs by doing the work yourself.** Instead of using native sound, use FreeSound.org or other sound libraries, or MMAudio for sound effects.

3 Benefits to This Process

- ◆ **Constraints create creativity.**
- ◆ **Breaks refresh your eyes.** Taking a break from one aspect of the project lets you return to it with fresh eyes.
- ◆ **Peace of mind.** There's comfort in a financial cap. You can't try everything in the book, so there's no choice overload. "Complexity is the enemy of execution," and limitations help you produce.

Costs Breakdown for G.O.A.T. (114 minutes)

August 2025 to October 2026 (production and post-production), plus one month of pre-production in July 2025.

Platform	Cost
Midjourney	\$144
Artlist	\$75
Wavespeed	\$225
ElevenLabs	\$38
Dzine	\$801
Higgsfield	\$84
One-month platforms	\$44
Free tools	\$0
Canva	\$30
TOTAL	\$1,441

$$\begin{aligned} & \$1,441 \div 15 \text{ months} \\ & = \mathbf{\$96 / month} \end{aligned}$$

Note: Costs include lots of experimentation with tools and an abundance of reshoots.

Detailed Line Items

Midjourney \$144

- \$24/yr, 8/25 – 1/26 (5 mos) = \$120
- \$8/mo, 1/26 – 3/26 (2 mos) = \$16
- Fast Hours \$8 (2/3/26)

Artlist \$75

- \$15/mo × 5 mos

Wavespeed (75% of \$300 used on film) \$225

- \$40
- Nov: \$70
- Dec: \$100 (20% off \$120)
- Jan: \$50
- June: \$40

\$38

ElevenLabs

- 1st account: \$11/mo, 8/25 (1 mo)
- 2nd account: \$11/mo (8/19/25), then \$5/mo 9/20/25, canceled 10/2/25
- \$5/mo (1 mo, canceled 1/24/26)
- \$6 (7/6/26), canceled same day

Dzine

\$801

- \$54/mo (3/4/26), 1 mo special
- \$60 sale, 1st account (3/28/26), canceled 4/27/26
- \$60 sale, 2nd account (3/28/26), canceled 4/9/26
- \$75 sale, 3rd account (4/10/26), canceled 5/7/26
- \$30 top-off credit, 3rd account (5/5/26)
- \$45 top-off credit, 3rd account (5/7/26)
- \$135 (5/11/26)
- \$54 (6/11/26)
- \$135 (8/24/26), canceled 9/5/26
- \$135 (9/4/26), canceled 9/29/26
- \$18 top-off (9/27/26)

Higgsfield

\$84

- \$35/mo (1/24), canceled same day
- \$49/mo (2/24/26), canceled 3/4

One-Month Platforms

\$44

- Google Veo: \$10/mo (8/27), canceled 9/14/25
- Dreamina: \$15/mo (9/3/25), canceled 9/17/25
- Kling: \$7/mo (8/30/25), canceled 9/29/25
- Leonardo: \$12/mo, canceled 1/24/26

Free Tools

\$0

- Midjourney on Meta
- FreeSound.org
- MMAudio (\$2 equivalent on Wavespeed)
- Adobe Podcast
- LMArena/Arena
- DaVinci Resolve (independently owned)
- Gigapixel (independently owned)
- Topaz Video AI (independently owned)

Canva (3 mos)

\$30