Moving the video cleaning script to a serverless, event-driven architecture using AWS Lambda and S3 is a common and powerful pattern.

However, there's a **major challenge** we need to address upfront: **FFmpeg**. Standard Lambda runtimes do not include the FFmpeg binary. Your Python script relies heavily on calling the ffmpeg executable via subprocess.

To make this work in Lambda, we need to package FFmpeg along with your function. The most common way is using **Lambda Layers** or **Lambda Container Images**. For this lab, we'll focus on using a **Lambda Layer**, as it's often simpler for adding binaries.

This lab guide will be detailed, assuming you have basic familiarity with AWS concepts but providing specific steps.

Serverless Video Cleaning Lab: S3 -> Lambda (with FFmpeg) -> S3

Goal: Automatically clean MP4 videos uploaded to an S3 bucket using the Python script (adapted for Lambda) and store the cleaned result in another S3 bucket.

Architecture:

- 1. **Source S3 Bucket:** User uploads .mp4 files here.
- 2. **S3 Event Notification:** Detects .mp4 uploads and triggers the Lambda function.
- 3. AWS Lambda Function:
 - Runs the Python code (with OpenCV, NumPy).
 - Uses an FFmpeg Lambda Layer to access the FFmpeg binary.
 - Downloads the source video from S3 to its temporary storage (/tmp).
 - Executes the cleaning logic (motion detection, segment identification, FFmpeg calls).
 - Uploads the cleaned video to the destination S3 bucket.
- 4. **Destination S3 Bucket:** Stores the processed, cleaned .mp4 files.
- 5. **IAM Role:** Grants the Lambda function necessary permissions (S3 access, CloudWatch Logs).
- 6. **CloudWatch Logs:** Captures logs from the Lambda function for monitoring and debugging.

Prerequisites:

- AWS Account with permissions to create S3 buckets, Lambda functions, IAM roles, and CloudWatch Logs.
- AWS CLI installed and configured (aws configure).
- Python 3.8+ installed locally.
- pip for installing Python packages.
- A sample .mp4 video file for testing.
- **Crucially:** Access to a static FFmpeg binary compatible with Amazon Linux 2 (the standard Lambda runtime environment). See Episode 2.

Module 1: Setting up S3 Buckets

Goal: Create two S3 buckets: one for source videos and one for cleaned output videos.

Steps:

- 1. Navigate to S3: Open the AWS Management Console and go to the S3 service.
- 2. Create Source Bucket:
 - Click "Create bucket".
 - Enter a globally unique bucket name (e.g., my-video-cleaning-source-YOUR_INITIALS-DATE).
 - Choose an AWS Region (e.g., us-east-1). Remember this region for all other resources.
 - Keep default settings for Block Public Access (should be ON).
 - o Disable Bucket Versioning for simplicity in this lab (optional).
 - Click "Create bucket".
- 3. Create Destination Bucket:
 - Click "Create bucket".
 - Enter a globally unique bucket name (e.g., my-video-cleaning-destination-YOUR_INITIALS-DATE).
 - o **Important:** Use the *same AWS Region* as the source bucket.
 - Keep default settings (Block Public Access ON, Versioning disabled).
 - Click "Create bucket".
- 4. **Record Bucket Names:** Note down the exact names of your source and destination buckets. You'll need them later.

Module 2: Preparing the FFmpeg Lambda Layer

Goal: Create a Lambda Layer containing the FFmpeg static binary so our function can execute it.

Challenge: Getting a compatible FFmpeg binary.

- Option A (Recommended for Linux/macOS users): Use a pre-built static binary:
 - Go to a trusted source for Linux static builds, like John Van Sickle's FFmpeg Builds (https://johnvansickle.com/ffmpeg/) or BtbN's builds (https://github.com/BtbN/FFmpeg-Builds/releases).
 - Download a static build (not shared) for amd64 architecture. Look for builds compatible with older GLIBC versions if possible, for maximum compatibility with Amazon Linux 2.
 - o Extract the downloaded archive. You only need the ffmpeg executable file itself.
- Option B (More complex): Build FFmpeg on an Amazon Linux 2 environment: Use an EC2 instance running Amazon Linux 2 or a Docker container with an Amazon Linux 2 image to compile FFmpeg statically. This ensures perfect compatibility but is more advanced.
- Option C (Check Community Layers): Search the AWS Serverless Application
 Repository or public layer repositories for existing FFmpeg layers, but use with caution,
 verifying their source and contents.

Steps (Assuming you have the ffmpeg binary using Option A):

1. Create Layer Directory Structure: On your local machine, create the following directory structure:

```
ffmpeg_layer/
L— bin/
L—ffmpeg # Place the downloaded static ffmpeg binary here
```

- The bin/ directory is crucial. Lambda automatically adds /opt/bin from layers to the execution environment's PATH.
- **2. Set Execute Permissions (Linux/macOS):** Navigate into the bin directory in your terminal and make the binary executable:Bash

```
chmod +x ffmpeg
```

3. Zip the Layer Contents: Navigate back to the *outside* of the ffmpeg_layer directory (so ffmpeg_layer is inside your current directory). **Zip the contents of the** ffmpeg_layer directory:Bash

```
cd ffmpeg_layer
zip -r ../ffmpeg_layer.zip .
cd ..
```

(Ensure the bin directory is at the root level inside ffmpeg_layer.zip)

4. Publish the Lambda Layer: Use the AWS CLI (replace ffmpeg_layer.zip, region, and add a description):

```
aws lambda publish-layer-version \
    --layer-name ffmpeg-static \
    --description "Static FFmpeg binary for Lambda" \
    --zip-file fileb://ffmpeg_layer.zip \
    --compatible-runtimes python3.8 python3.9 python3.10 python3.11
python3.12 \
    --region YOUR_AWS_REGION
    # Example: --region us-east-1
```

5. Record Layer ARN: Note the LayerVersionArn output from the command. It will look something like arn:aws:lambda:us-east-1:123456789012:layer:ffmpeg-static:1.

Module 3: Preparing the Lambda Function Code

Goal: Adapt the Python script for Lambda, handle S3 events, and package it with dependencies.

Steps:

- 1. Create Project Directory: Create a new directory for your Lambda function code locally (e.g., lambda_video_cleaner).
- 2. Save Lambda Handler Code: Inside lambda_video_cleaner, create a file named lambda_function.py with the following code:

import boto3

```
import cv2
import numpy as np
import os
import subprocess
import traceback
import urllib.parse

# Initialize S3 client (best practice outside handler for potential reuse)
s3_client = boto3.client('s3')

# --- Configuration (Consider using Environment Variables in Lambda) ---
```

```
DESTINATION BUCKET = os.environ.get('DESTINATION BUCKET',
FFMPEG PATH = "/opt/bin/ffmpeg" # Path provided by the Lambda Layer
ACTIVITY THRESHOLD = 5.0
MIN SEGMENT DURATION SEC = 1.0
SMOOTHING WINDOW SEC = 0.5
BUFFER SEC = 1.0 \# Example buffer
def calculate motion score(frame1 gray, frame2 gray):
  diff = cv2.absdiff(frame1 gray, frame2 gray)
  score = np.mean(diff)
def clean video logic(input path, output path, activity threshold,
min segment duration sec, smoothing window sec, buffer sec=0.0):
/tmp).
  print(f"Starting video analysis for: {input path}")
  print(f"Parameters: Threshold={activity threshold}, Min
Duration={min segment duration sec}s, Smoothing={smoothing window sec}s,
Buffer={buffer sec}s")
   print("Phase 1: Analyzing video for motion...")
```

```
cap = cv2.VideoCapture(input path)
  if not cap.isOpened():
input path}")
   fps = cap.get(cv2.CAP PROP FPS)
  frame count = int(cap.get(cv2.CAP PROP FRAME COUNT))
  width = int(cap.get(cv2.CAP PROP FRAME WIDTH))
  height = int(cap.get(cv2.CAP PROP FRAME HEIGHT))
  if fps <= 0 or frame count <= 0:</pre>
       cap.release()
       raise ValueError(f"Invalid video properties (FPS: {fps}, Frames:
frame count } ) . " )
  print(f"Video Info: {width}x{height}, {fps:.2f} FPS, {frame count}
frames (Duration: {frame count / fps:.2f}s)")
  motion scores = []
  prev frame gray = None
  while True:
       ret, frame = cap.read()
       if not ret:
       current frame gray = cv2.cvtColor(frame, cv2.COLOR BGR2GRAY)
       current frame gray = cv2. GaussianBlur(current frame gray, (21, 21),
       if prev frame gray is not None:
           score = calculate motion score(prev frame gray,
current frame gray)
           motion scores.append(score)
```

```
motion scores.append(0)
      prev_frame_gray = current_frame_gray
       frame num += 1
          progress = (frame num / frame count) * 100
          print(f" Analyzed frame {frame num}/{frame count}
({progress:.1f}%)")
  cap.release()
  print(f"\nAnalysis complete. Calculated {len(motion scores)} motion
  if not motion scores:
       raise ValueError("No motion scores calculated.")
  print("Phase 2: Identifying active segments...")
  smoothed scores = None
  smoothing window frames = max(1, int(smoothing window sec * fps))
  if len(motion scores) >= smoothing window frames and
smoothing window frames > 1:
      motion scores np = np.array(motion scores, dtype=float)
       kernel = np.ones(smoothing window frames) / smoothing window frames
       smoothed scores conv = np.convolve(motion scores np, kernel,
mode='valid')
      if len(smoothed scores conv) > 0:
          pad start len = smoothing window frames // 2
          pad end len = len(motion scores) - len(smoothed scores conv) -
pad start len
          padding start = np.full(pad start len, smoothed scores conv[0])
```

```
padding end = np.full(pad end len, smoothed scores conv[-1])
           smoothed scores = np.concatenate((padding start,
smoothed scores conv, padding end))
           smoothed scores = np.array(motion scores, dtype=float)
       smoothed scores = np.array(motion scores, dtype=float)
  if smoothed scores is None:
       raise ValueError("Smoothed scores were not calculated.")
  if len(smoothed scores) != len(motion scores):
  active frames = smoothed scores >= activity threshold
  raw segments to keep = []
  in active segment = False
  min segment frames = int(min segment duration sec * fps)
      if is active and not in active segment:
           start frame = i; in active segment = True
      elif not is active and in active segment:
           if (end frame - start frame) >= min segment frames:
               raw segments to keep.append((start frame, end frame))
           in active segment = False
  if in_active_segment:
      end frame = len(active frames)
       if (end frame - start frame) >= min segment frames:
            raw segments to keep.append((start frame, end frame))
  if not raw segments to keep:
      print("No active segments found meeting criteria.")
       return [], fps # Return empty list if no segments
```

```
segments to keep = raw segments to keep # Default if no buffer
   if buffer sec > 0:
      buffer frames = int(buffer sec * fps); final segments = []
       raw segments to keep.sort(key=lambda x: x[0])
       current start, current end = raw segments to keep[0]
       current start = max(0, current start - buffer frames)
       current end = min(len(active frames), current end + buffer frames)
       for i in range(1, len(raw segments to keep)):
           next start, next end = raw segments to keep[i]
           adj next start = max(0, next start - buffer frames)
buffer frames)
max(current end, adj next end)
           else: final segments.append((current start, current end));
current start = adj next start; current end = adj next end
       final segments.append((current start, current end))
       segments_to_keep = final_segments
  print(f"Identified {len(segments to keep)} final segments to keep.")
   return segments to keep, fps # Return segments and fps
def run ffmpeg command(command list):
   try:
      print(f"Running FFmpeg command: {' '.join(command_list)}")
       result = subprocess.run(command list, capture output=True,
text=True, check=True, timeout=600)
       print("FFmpeg command stdout:")
       print(result.stdout)
       print("FFmpeg command stderr:")
       print(result.stderr)
```

```
print(f"Error executing FFmpeg command: {e}")
      print(f"Command: {' '.join(command list)}")
      print(f"Return code: {e.returncode}")
      print(f"Output (stdout): {e.stdout}")
      print(f"Output (stderr): {e.stderr}")
      print(f"FFmpeg command timed out: {' '.join(command list)}")
      print(f"Timeout: {e.timeout}s")
      print(f"Output (stdout): {e.stdout}")
      print(f"Output (stderr): {e.stderr}")
      print(f"Unexpected error running FFmpeg: {e}")
       traceback.print exc()
def lambda handler(event, context):
  print("Received S3 event.")
       print("Error: DESTINATION BUCKET environment variable not set.")
```

```
download path = os.path.join(tmp dir, 'input video.mp4')
  output path = os.path.join(tmp dir, 'cleaned video.mp4')
  file list path = os.path.join(tmp dir, "mylist.txt")
   temp segment prefix = os.path.join(tmp dir, "temp segment ")
       record = event['Records'][0]
       source bucket = record['s3']['bucket']['name']
       source key =
urllib.parse.unquote plus(record['s3']['object']['key'])
       print(f"Processing s3://{source bucket}/{source key}")
       if not source key.lower().endswith(('.mp4', '.mov', '.avi')): # Add
          print(f"Skipping non-video file: {source key}")
file type'}
      destination key = f"cleaned/{os.path.basename(source key)}"
      print(f"Downloading s3://{source bucket}/{source key} to
[download path]")
       s3 client.download file(source bucket, source key, download path)
      print("Download complete.")
       segments to keep, fps = clean video logic(
           download path,
          output path, # Not used directly by logic, but good to pass if
```

```
BUFFER SEC
       if not segments to keep:
          print("No active segments found to keep. Skipping FFmpeg
processing.")
found'}
      print("Phase 3: Extracting and concatenating segments using
FFmpeg...")
       temp files = []
       success = True
      with open(file list path, "w") as f:
           for i, (start f, end f) in enumerate(segments to keep):
               start time = start f / fps
              duration = (end f - start f) / fps
               temp output path = f"{temp segment prefix}{i}.mp4"
               temp files.append(temp output path)
               ffmpeg_extract_cmd = [ FFMPEG_PATH, '-ss', str(start_time),
'-i', download path, '-t', str(duration), '-c', 'copy',
'-avoid negative ts', 'make zero', '-y', temp output path ]
               if not run ffmpeg command(ffmpeg extract cmd):
                              Warning: FFmpeg extraction (copy) failed
                    print(f"
for segment {i + 1}. Retrying with re-encoding.")
                    ffmpeg extract cmd reencode = [ FFMPEG PATH, '-ss',
str(start time), '-i', download path, '-t', str(duration), '-y',
temp output path ]
run ffmpeg command(ffmpeg extract cmd reencode):
```

```
print(f" Error: FFmpeg extraction failed even
with re-encoding for segment {i + 1}. Aborting.")
              f.write(f"file '{os.path.basename(temp output path)}'\n") #
Use relative path for concat demuxer
      if not success or not temp files or not
os.path.exists(file list path) or os.path.getsize(file list path) == 0:
valid segments.")
      ffmpeg_concat_cmd = [ FFMPEG_PATH, '-f', 'concat', '-safe', '0',
'-i', file list path, '-c', 'copy', '-y', output path ]
      if not run ffmpeg command(ffmpeg concat cmd):
            print(" Warning: FFmpeg concatenation (copy) failed. Retrying
with re-encoding.")
            ffmpeg concat cmd reencode = [ FFMPEG PATH, '-f', 'concat',
'-safe', '0', '-i', file list path, '-y', output path ]
            if not run ffmpeg command(ffmpeg concat cmd reencode):
                raise RuntimeError("FFmpeg concatenation failed even with
      print(f"Successfully created cleaned video locally: {output path}")
      print(f"Uploading {output path} to
s3://{DESTINATION BUCKET}/{destination key}")
      s3 client.upload file(output path, DESTINATION BUCKET,
destination key)
      print("Upload complete.")
```

3. Create requirements.txt: In the same lambda_video_cleaner directory, create requirements.txt:

```
4. numpy5. opencv-python-headless6. # boto3 is included in the Lambda runtime environment
```

 We use opency-python-headless because Lambda doesn't have a graphical interface. **4. Install Dependencies Locally:** Navigate into the lambda_video_cleaner directory in your terminal and install the packages *into this directory*:

```
pip install -r requirements.txt -t .
```

- o The -t . flag tells pip to install packages here, not globally.
- **5. Create Deployment Package:** Create a ZIP file containing lambda_function.py, requirements.txt, and all the installed packages/folders from the previous step. Make sure lambda_function.py is at the root of the ZIP file.

```
zip -r ../lambda_deployment_package.zip .
```

(Run this command from inside the lambda_video_cleaner directory)

Module 4: Creating the Lambda Execution Role

Goal: Create an IAM role that grants the Lambda function permission to interact with S3 and CloudWatch Logs.

Steps:

- 1. **Navigate to IAM:** Go to the IAM service in the AWS Console.
- 2. Create Role:
 - Go to "Roles" and click "Create role".
 - Trusted entity type: Select "AWS service".
 - Use case: Select "Lambda". Click "Next".
- 3. Add Permissions:
 - Search for and select the AWSLambdaBasicExecutionRole policy (allows writing logs to CloudWatch).
 - Click "Create policy".
 - Select the "JSON" tab.

Paste the following policy JSON, **replacing** YOUR_SOURCE_BUCKET_NAME and YOUR_DESTINATION_BUCKET_NAME with the actual names you created in Episode 1. JSON

- Click "Next: Tags", then "Next: Review".
- Give the policy a name (e.g., LambdaS3VideoCleaningPolicy).
- Click "Create policy".
- Go back to the "Create role" browser tab/window. Refresh the policy list if needed, then search for and select the policy you just created (LambdaS3VideoCleaningPolicy).
- Click "Next".

4. Name Role:

- Enter a role name (e.g., LambdaVideoCleaningRole).
- o Review the trusted entities and policies.
- Click "Create role".
- 5. **Record Role ARN:** Find the role you just created and note its ARN.

Module 5: Creating the Lambda Function

Goal: Create the Lambda function, configure it, and attach the code, layer, and role.

Steps:

- 1. Navigate to Lambda: Go to the Lambda service in the AWS Console.
- 2. Create Function:
 - Click "Create function".
 - Select "Author from scratch".
 - Function name: Enter a name (e.g., VideoCleaningFunction).

- Runtime: Select "Python 3.12" (or 3.11, 3.10, 3.9, 3.8 must match layer compatibility).
- Architecture: Keep x86_64.
- Permissions: Expand "Change default execution role". Select "Use an existing role" and choose the LambdaVideoCleaningRole you created in Episode 4.
- Click "Create function".

3. Upload Code:

- o In the function's overview page, go to the "Code" tab.
- Click "Upload from" and select ".zip file".
- Upload the lambda_deployment_package.zip file you created in Episode 3.
- Click "Save". (This might take a moment).

4. Add FFmpeg Layer:

- o Scroll down to the "Layers" section. Click "Add a layer".
- Select "Specify an ARN".
- o Paste the LayerVersionArn for your FFmpeg layer (recorded in Episode 2).
- Click "Verify" (optional but good practice), then click "Add".

5. Configure Settings:

- Go to the "Configuration" tab, then "General configuration". Click "Edit".
- Memory: Increase significantly. Start with 1024 MB or 2048 MB. Video processing needs memory.
- Timeout: Increase significantly. Video processing takes time. Set it to 10 minutes (or the maximum 15 minutes: 15 min 0 sec).
- Click "Save".

6. Add Environment Variables:

- Go to the "Configuration" tab, then "Environment variables". Click "Edit".
- Click "Add environment variable".
- Key: DESTINATION_BUCKET
- Value: Enter the exact name of your destination S3 bucket.
- Click "Save".

Module 6: Configuring the S3 Trigger

Goal: Set up the Source S3 bucket to automatically trigger the Lambda function when MP4 files are uploaded.

Steps:

1. **Navigate to Source S3 Bucket:** Go back to the S3 service and open your *source* bucket.

2. Create Event Notification:

- Go to the "Properties" tab.
- Scroll down to "Event notifications". Click "Create event notification".

- Event name: Enter a name (e.g., LambdaVideoTrigger).
- Prefix (Optional): If you only want uploads to a specific folder to trigger the Lambda, enter the folder name here (e.g., uploads/). Leave blank to trigger on uploads anywhere in the bucket.
- Suffix: Enter .mp4 (or .mov etc., depending on supported input types). This
 ensures only video uploads trigger the function.
- Event types: Select s3:ObjectCreated:Put. You might also select s3:ObjectCreated:CompleteMultipartUpload for larger uploads.
- Destination: Select "Lambda function".
- Lambda function: Choose the VideoCleaningFunction you created.
- Click "Save changes". (You might be asked to confirm Lambda permissions this should be okay as the role grants S3 access).

Module 7: Testing the Setup

Goal: Upload a video and verify the entire process works.

Steps:

- 1. **Upload Video:** Go to your *source* S3 bucket in the AWS Console. Upload your sample .mp4 video file (respecting any prefix you set in the trigger).
- 2. Monitor Lambda Execution:
 - Navigate to the Lambda service and find your VideoCleaningFunction.
 - o Go to the "Monitor" tab. Click "View CloudWatch logs".
 - Look at the latest log stream. You should see log output from your function starting shortly after the upload completes. Look for messages about download, analysis, segment identification, FFmpeg execution, and upload.
- 3. **Check Destination Bucket:** After a short while (depending on video length, Lambda config), navigate to your *destination* S3 bucket. You should see the cleaned video file appear (e.g., inside a cleaned/prefix if you used the example destination_key).
- 4. **Download and Verify:** Download the cleaned video from the destination bucket and play it to ensure the inactive segments were removed as expected.

Module 8: Review and Cleanup

Goal: Understand potential issues and how to remove the created AWS resources.

Discussion / Troubleshooting:

- Timeouts: If the Lambda function times out (check CloudWatch Logs), you may need to increase the timeout setting further (max 15 mins) or optimize the script. For very long videos (>15 mins processing time), Lambda might not be the best fit; consider AWS Batch or Fargate.
- **Memory Errors:** If you see memory errors (OutOfMemoryError), increase the Lambda function's memory allocation.
- **FFmpeg Errors:** Check the CloudWatch logs for detailed errors from FFmpeg's stderr output (captured by the run_ffmpeg_command function). This might indicate issues with the video file, incompatible codecs, or problems with the FFmpeg binary/layer.
- Permissions Errors: Access Denied errors usually point to missing permissions in the Lambda Execution Role (IAM Policy). Double-check the policy against required \$3/CloudWatch actions.
- Large Files: Lambda's /tmp directory is limited (default 512MB, can be configured up to 10GB but costs more). Processing very large videos that exceed this space (for the downloaded input + temporary segments + final output) will fail. For huge files, Lambda with EFS integration or other services like AWS Batch are necessary.
- Costs: Lambda (compute time, requests), S3 (storage, requests, data transfer),
 CloudWatch (logs), Data Transfer costs apply. Delete resources when done to avoid charges.

Cleanup Steps:

- 1. **Empty S3 Buckets:** Delete all objects from both the source and destination buckets.
- 2. **Delete S3 Buckets:** Delete the source and destination buckets.
- 3. **Delete Lambda Function:** Delete the VideoCleaningFunction.
- 4. **Delete Lambda Layer Version:** Go to Layers, select ffmpeg-static, and delete the version you created.
- 5. **Delete CloudWatch Log Group:** Go to CloudWatch -> Log groups, find the log group for your function (/aws/lambda/VideoCleaningFunction), and delete it.
- 6. **Delete IAM Role:** Go to IAM -> Roles, find LambdaVideoCleaningRole, detach the policies (AWSLambdaBasicExecutionRole, LambdaS3VideoCleaningPolicy), and then delete the role.
- 7. **Delete IAM Policy:** Go to IAM -> Policies, find and delete LambdaS3VideoCleaningPolicy.