



MOVIE MACHINE

THE ART AND TECHNOLOGY OF DIGITAL FILMMAKING

World Wide Gross
\$606,483,085



ISSUE 2 - JUNE 2013

MONTHLY ROUNDUP OF NEWS AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DIGITAL FILMMAKERS
THE STATE OF THE VFX INDUSTRY * RED GIANT BULLETPROOF * FELLONI LED LIGHTS



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MOVIE MACHINE ISSUE 2 - JUNE 2013

- 4 WELCOME TO MOVIE MACHINE MAGAZINE ISSUE 2
- 6 DAVINCI RESOLVE 10 DEMO: NAB SUPERMEET, APRIL 9, 2013
- 6 THE STATE OF THE VFX INDUSTRY AND WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE:
SCOTT ROSS & SCOTT SQUIRES
- 7 GRANT PETTY ON DAVINCI RESOLVE 10: NAB INTERVIEW PART 2
- 7 LIGHTING WITH FELLONI LED LIGHTS
- 8 OPINION: WHY DAVINCI RESOLVE 10 IS SUCH A BIG DEAL.
- 10 OSCAR WINNER TOM ROLF TO HEADLINE LONDON SUPERMEET JUNE 28
- 11 DOWNLOAD CANON EOS 5D MARK III FIRMWARE 1.2.1.
UNCOMPRESSED 4:2:2 RECORDING OVER HDMI
- 12 RED GIANT BULLETPROOF - THE OTHER HALF OF YOUR CAMERA
- 14 NEWS IN BRIEF...
- 16 FEATURE: THE STATE OF THE VFX INDUSTRY AND WHERE DO WE GO FROM
HERE: SCOTT ROSS AND SCOTT SQUIRES
- 24 UNTIL THE NEXT TIME...



WELCOME TO MOVIE MACHINE MAGAZINE ISSUE 2

I was at Cinegear in Los Angeles earlier this month. This is a very different show to any of the others I have been to: nothing like NAB or IBC, and distinct from BVE in London or any other tradeshows.

CINEGEAR IN LOS ANGELES

Cinegear has its own identity. The fact that the show is run in the studios of Paramount gives it a unique feel; the show is the most civilized I have attended: beginning at 2pm on the first day finishing at 9pm, and then beginning the next again at 10am and finishing at 5pm.

This is not hall upon hall, and wall to wall booths. A relaxed atmosphere, great crowd, aimed as much at the high-end movie maker as those in the video and production community, yet, jam-packed with interesting things for people at all levels.

I only got to briefly tour the Paramount lot and look at the exhibits as I was employed by a client and working for the duration of the show. Regardless, I was able to soak up the vibe and get a feel for this unique tradeshow.

The client I was working for was positioned immediately opposite the Sony booth. For 2 days I watched giant monitors with the most beautiful 2k and 4K footage running continuously. Sony is obviously keen to show off their new cameras the PMW-F5 and PMW-F55. The footage was glorious though I couldn't help but think how many times have I seen this before: glorious, drop-dead gorgeous footage which makes the draw drop and grown men and women drool as they gaze lovingly at the footage as it plays.





My problem with this glorious display is that the footage was shown on its own and not in any context. The 4K was not compared to 1920x1080, in fact most of the time I wasn't even aware as to what the footage was shot on or in what format.

So how can we know how good it is without comparing it to something else?

SONY PMW-F3

Last year I invested my money in a Sony PMW-F3. This was the hot Sony camera before the F5 and F55 were announced. I absolutely love the F3 and am now the proud owner of 3 of these. The price on used F3's is now less than half, even a third if your lucky, of the cost of the full purchase price. I'm very comfortable with my 3 Sony F3's. Beautiful pictures, workflow, interchangeable lenses, XLRs and NDs just where you need them, and switches for essential controls. Combined with Nikon glass and the images are tremendous.

The F3 operates like an EX1 or EX3 and performs like a motion picture camera. Strap on a 4:2:2 recorder and you have full broadcast, strap on a 4:4:4 recorder and enter the world of serious high-end production.



I HAVE TO WONDER DO I NEED 2K OR 4K?

Yes the F3 is a 1920 x 1080 camera and will never be anything more than this. I have to wonder do I need 2K or 4K. The answer is no, at least not at this moment. My clients aren't asking for it, most of my clients wouldn't even know what it was, and I'm convinced 1920 x 1080 has 5 years or more of life. There will be a tiered structure from HD, 2K, 4K and beyond. Choose your niche.

That doesn't mean I don't want to investigate and work in the world of 2K and 4K. I just don't want to spend £15000 or more for a rigged up PMW-F5 or £23000 or more for a PMW-F55. Too much money to invest which takes too long to earn back.

For me the world of 2K and 4K are accessible through the Blackmagic Cinema Camera which shoots 2.5K, and the Blackmagic Production Camera which shoots at 4K resolution. These are affordable and capable and will enable independents, like me, to invest modestly, and at the same time enter the world of cinema production, without a massive investment.

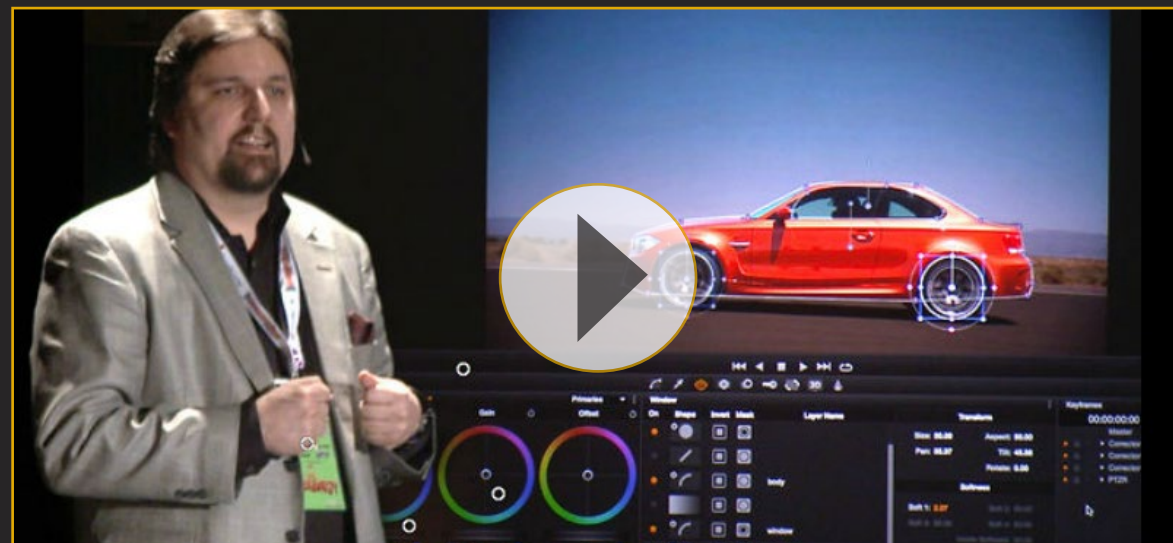
That doesn't mean I wouldn't love a Sony F5 or F55 and if circumstances come about, the right client, the right job, then I would very willingly move in that direction.

For now I am working hard shooting 1920 x 1080 images, enjoying the glorious quality which the PMW-F3 produces, with a firm eye on the future and the present, and a good foundation of knowledge to draw on from the past.





DAVINCI RESOLVE 10 DEMO: NAB SUPERMEET, APRIL 9, 2013



WATCH THE
VIDEO >>

I was seriously impressed with the DaVinci Resolve 10 demo at the NAB SuperMeet in Las Vegas. Alexis was in good form, and flew around the software demonstrating the new online editing features plus the other capabilities Resolve offers. The software performed rock solid throughout the demo, no pauses or hiccups, quick and responsive. With the beta software looking as good as this, makes me very excited about the upcoming official release.

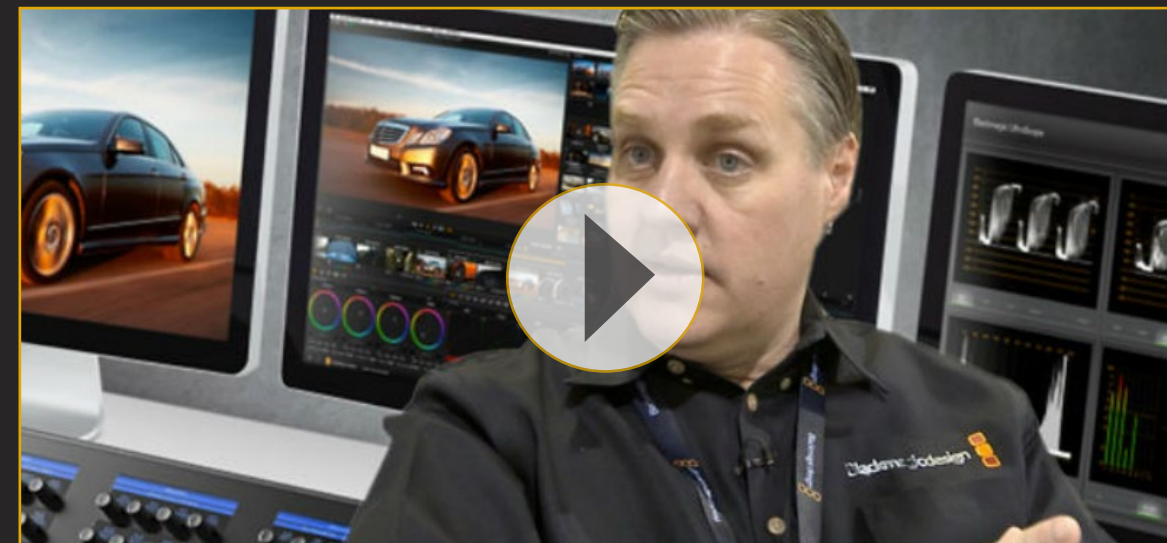
THE STATE OF THE VFX INDUSTRY AND WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE: SCOTT ROSS & SCOTT SQUIRES



WATCH THE
VIDEO >>

The VFX industry is in crisis and this presentation by two giants of the industry: Scott Ross and Scott Squires, outlines the problems, the causes, and possible fixes. This is a world problem which relates to everyone working in the production or post production. The depth of this crisis is clearly shown by the fact the VFX company behind the movie Life of Pi, which brought in a tremendous profit, is now out of business. VFX made that movie! This is an important presentation and provides deep insight into the world VFX crisis.

GRANT PETTY ON DAVINCI RESOLVE 10: NAB INTERVIEW PART 2



WATCH THE
VIDEO >>

In this interview Grant specifically talks about the online editing capabilities and how this can be used to make everything work together; from different edit systems to final output, Resolve 10 will let you produce content to the absolute highest level of quality.

LIGHTING WITH FELLONI LED LIGHTS



WATCH THE
VIDEO >>

The Felloni LED lights, distributed by Dedolight, is a remarkable lighting system. These lights offer serious advantages to those shooting on location and are available in high output tungsten or daylight, and also in a bi-colour version. The bi-colour lights enable you to set the colour temperature to daylight or tungsten or any value in-between. The lights can be battery powered and run for hours without AC power. Add attachments to make the Felloni into a softbox, add grids to focus the light. Use anywhere in places you would never traditionally have been able to bring lighting equipment.

OPINION: WHY DAVINCI RESOLVE 10 IS SUCH A BIG DEAL.



The new version will feature an online editor as part of the offering. This begs the question: can Resolve 10 be used as a full-featured editor over other choices out there? Looking at the screen grabs we can see some very familiar looking functions and ways of working.

DaVinci Resolve 10 has the potential to be huge! Having seen the software demonstrated at the NAB SuperMeet by Alexis Van Hurkman, I can truly say I am very excited by what the next version will include.

The reason I'm excited is because Resolve will now feature an editor as part of the offering. The editor within Resolve 10 has been talked about as being an Online Editor – which means to produce final pristine output, complete with titles, graded content and whatever effects you want to include.

In the demo by Alexis it was clear to me that the editing happened quickly, without pauses, and not a single crash. To put it mildly, Alexis flew around the keyboard and not once did I see the software wait and play catch-up.

Alexis boldly declared as he opened his demo, that Resolve 10 is a “big big release.”

Having watched the demo I agree with him – this is undoubtedly a major upgrade. Having used Resolve 9 the new features are clear straight away. Now I'm not a colorist, though these days we are all colorists to some extent. I don't grade for a living, though I do do grading as part of the work from which I make my living. Editing – that is what I do, along with filming. And Resolve 10 offers major functionality for editors – and a whole lot more.



The question I take away having watched the demo at the SuperMeet, is: can Resolve 10 be used as a full-featured editor over other choices out there. In other words, can you do all your editing within Resolve 10 and not use anything else.

This is a question I put to Grant Petty, CEO of Blackmagic Design...

INTERVIEW WITH GRANT PETTY, CEO, BLACKMAGIC DESIGN. APRIL 10, 2013

Question: Resolve 10, how capable is this as an editor I want to know, I know there's editing functionality in it, but could you use it as a full blown editor and not use something else?

Grant Petty, CEO Blackmagic Design

“I don't know actually, I mean I guess, I like to understate things. Our intentions were to try and get the whole online process sorted out. I think the thing that I found very frustrating is how companies bicker with each other and fight with each other and the products don't work together properly. DaVinci has always been at different places in the workflow. I mean you've got the on-set, the online side, you want to finish in it, you want to do the delivery of the digital package files, theres a lot of different things DaVinci needs to use. But if you're cutting a film, the editor is going to use Avid, a Final Cut guy is going to use Final Cut. So what we really wanted to do was keep everything working together, that was the whole intention. I'm tired of the fights and the bickering; what we want to do is just make the whole thing work and thats really been our goal. So you know we called it an Online Editor because that's what were doing, were online editing. We're taking those RAW files and onlining it and creating a beautiful, finished master.”

“Now can you use it independently You probably can, its pretty powerful, its got a lot of different trim modes and plug-ins and speed changes and theres optical flows, it's all realtime and everything, it's great, but my feeling is that there's no point in recreating everything that the great editors have in them, what we want to do is add the things that are really important. So we're very much focussed on the online side of it and you've got to do everything in some ways that the editor's do, so you can bring your project into DaVinci, but you can get it back out again. Because you can go from Final Cut into DaVinci Resolve 10, and you can go back out again, and then you get as much as you possibly can back into Final Cut without losing things. So you do have to do a lot of this stuff to be able to make sure that you can keep going on jobs. You know in DaVinci Resolve 9, if you want to do too many changes to the timeline you've got to take it back to Final Cut, re- do them and then bring it back in again, which is very frustrating. You've got different editors on big jobs now working on different editors, you might have a Final Cut guy and an Avid guy on the one job. In the old days you'd have one editor doing the entire movie, but you've got really complex CGI, very complex effects, different editors working on different scenes. You know DaVinci by default has multi-user capability, its got remote grading capability, you can grade from the other side of the planet on the system.”

The video below shows excerpts from Alexis's demo at the NAB SuperMeet.



It is worth watching Alexis's demo from the SuperMeet for a glimpse of what is on offer. We won't know for sure what the editor in Resolve 10 is like to use until the product ships later this year.

The video above shows excerpts from Alexis's demo at the NAB SuperMeet. Here we get to see the new editing functionality included with DaVinci Resolve. You can watch the complete demo by Alexis Van Hurkman from the NAB SuperMeet 2013, by clicking the link below: www.moviemachine.tv/video/davinci-resolve-10-demo-nab-supermeet,-april-9,-2013/65433105/

One thing for sure, looking at the screen grabs from the SuperMeet demo, we can see some very familiar looking functions, a source record metaphor also described as the two window display for editing; a logical Timeline with locks, layers and familiar tools in familiar places, and titling and speed controls.



There is a danger of reading too much into a demo, though my hunch is the impact of Resolve 10 could be huge. The editing scene is still reverberating from the changes of the last few years and many are not content. Another offering in the Mac and Windows editing scene will be welcomed and if it performs well as a standalone editor and online editor with the ability to move projects from NLE (of choice), into Resolve 10, and back out again, then this a needed and extremely useful tool. My hope is that the editor in Resolve 10 works great stand-alone and/or in combination with your editor of choice.

Blackmagic have strong roots in the world of post production. The fact that they have taken Resolve, described as “the worlds most advanced color correction system”, and refined to now include online editing capabilities, to me is both refreshing and forward thinking.

What I have seen so far looks tantalizingly appealing. This one I am watching!



OSCAR WINNER TOM ROLF TO HEADLINE LONDON SUPERMEET JUNE 28

The Creative Pro Group Network have announced that the London SuperMeet will return to the Great Hall at the Kensington Conference and Event Centre in London, England on Friday, 28 June, 2013. This SuperMeet follows the blinding success of the recent Las Vegas SuperMeet held in April during NAB Show. 2013 Tickets are on sale now. Oscar winning film editor Tom Rolf is set to appear.

The Creative Pro Group Network have announced that the London SuperMeet will return to the Great Hall at the Kensington Conference and Event Centre in London, England on Friday, 28 June, 2013. This SuperMeet follows the blinding success of the Las Vegas SuperMeet held this past April during NAB Show 2013. Sponsors for the London SuperMeet are currently lining up for what is expected to be another highly anticipated sold out event.

"We are excited to announce that Oscar winning film editor Tom Rolf has agreed to be our featured guest," says Michael Horton, co-producer of the SuperMeet and founder of the Los Angeles Creative Pro User Group.

Tom Rolf is perhaps best known for editing Martin Scorsese's TAXI DRIVER (for which he received a British Film Academy nomination). He was awarded an Academy Award for Best

Film Editing for Philip Kaufman's THE RIGHT STUFF. In addition to ACE Eddie nominations for THE HORSE WHISPERER and THE RIGHT STUFF, Rolf also received the ACE Eddie Award in 1984 for his work on WARGAMES and a Career Achievement Award from ACE.

"Tom is one of cinema's legendary film editors and we are very fortunate to have him on the SuperMeet stage," adds Daniel Berube. "This will be a rare opportunity for those that attend the SuperMeet to get up close and personal with Tom, as there will be plenty of time to ask questions."

The final agenda will not be announced until shortly before the event date, however there will be USER driven presentations from Blackmagic Design, Red Giant Software and Adobe. Plus much more.

Rounding out the evening will be the always crazy and wild "World Famous Raffle" where dozens of lucky people will go home with thousands of Pounds worth of valuable software and hardware.

Doors to the SuperMeet will open at about 17:00 with the SuperMeet Digital Showcase, featuring 15 software and hardware developers. Here, attendees can enjoy a few cocktails, mingle and party with industry peers, network one on one with leading manufacturers and learn about the latest trends in collaborative editing workflows for post production and broadcast markets. SuperMeet stage presentations will begin at 19:00.

"This will be our third SuperMeet in London and certainly not our last either, as we move forward to distance ourselves from trade shows and further build our global community with unique offerings," explains Berube. "We have brilliant support in the UK from the creative community and we expect another fantastic turnout."

In addition to the SuperMeet on Friday June 28, the producers have announced the American Cinema Editors, (A.C.E.) will hold the first ever EditFest London on Saturday, June 29 at the Ray Dolby Screening room in Soho. Tickets for that event are on sale now and are sure to sell out quickly. This event will feature some of UK's finest film editors including legendary film editor Anne V. Coates. <editfest.com/edit-fest-london-schedule/>;

It is expected the London SuperMeet will sell out as historically SuperMeets always sell out. Tickets are on sale now for the earlybird price, (earlybird price ends May 29) of £10.00 (GBP) each plus ticket fee. Students and Teachers with a valid student or teacher ID can purchase tickets for £10.00 (GBP) each.

For daily updates, directions to the Kensington Conference and Event Centre in London and the ever growing list of raffle prizes, visit the SuperMeet website. www.supermeet.com



DOWNLOAD CANON EOS 5D MARK III FIRMWARE 1.2.1. UNCOMPRESSED 4:2:2 RECORDING OVER HDMI

Download Canon EOS 5D Mark III Firmware 1.2.1. Uncompressed 4:2:2 recording over HDMI
The long awaited firmware for the Canon EOS 5D Mark III which offers uncompressed 4:2:2 recording over HDMI is now available and can be downloaded for Mac or Windows.

FIRMWARE VERSION 1.2.1 INCORPORATES THE FOLLOWING FUNCTIONAL IMPROVEMENTS & FIXES:

- Uncompressed HDMI output is now enabled.
- Enables the center AF point to autofocus when the camera is used with Canon EF lens/extender combinations whose combined maximum aperture is f/8.
- Improves the speed of the camera's acquisition of focus when using a Canon Speedlite's AF-assist beam.
- Fixes a phenomenon in which the LCD monitor may freeze and display Err 70 or Err 80 when a still photo is taken during Live View or in movie shooting mode.
- Fixes a phenomenon that may occur when the continuous shooting priority setting is enabled for multiple exposures, such that, after the sixth image is taken, there is a slight pause before the remainder of the sequence is completed.
- Fixes a phenomenon in which the viewfinder display shows incorrect information during AEB shooting.
- Communication with the WFT-E7 Wireless File Transmitter has been improved.
- The "HDMI output" function, "HDMI output setting" or "HDMI output frame rate setting" cannot be registered to My Menu of the camera.
- When images have been successfully transferred with the WFT-E7 Wireless File Transmitter through the FTP protocol, an "O" will be displayed. When images have not been successfully transferred with the WFT-E7 Wireless File Transmitter through the FTP protocol, an "X" will be displayed.
- Fixes a phenomenon in which the camera may not function properly when an Eye-Fi card is used.
- Fixes a phenomenon in which the focal length value listed in the Exif information is not displayed correctly for images shot with the EF 24-70mm F4L IS USM lens.
- Fixes a phenomenon in which the lens firmware cannot be updated properly.
- Corrects errors in the Arabic language menu.
- Fixes a phenomenon in which the camera changes the AF microadjustment value to -8.14. Fixes a phenomenon in which the on-screen guidance cannot be fully displayed when setting the maximum limit value for the "Setting the ISO Speed Range for Auto ISO" option.

Operating system(s): Mac OS X, Mac OS X v10.8, Mac OS X v10.7, Mac OS X v10.6, Mac OS X v10.5
Language(s): English, Français, Español, **Software:** File version: 1.2.1 File Size: 18.9 MB
Downloads www.usa.canon.com/cusa/consumer/products/cameras/slr_cameras/eos_5d_mark_iii

BulletProof

The other half of your camera

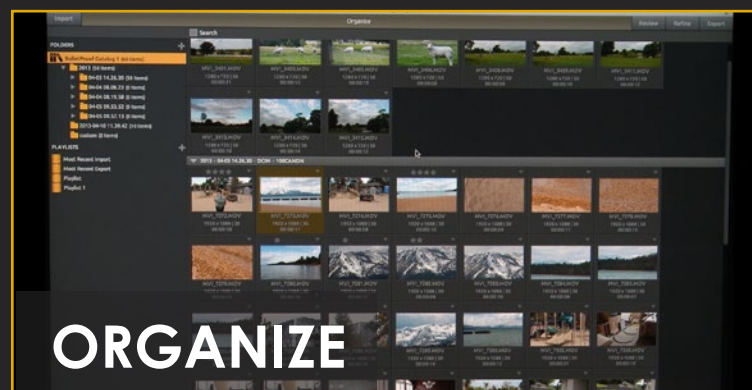
RED GIANT BULLETPROOF - THE OTHER HALF OF YOUR CAMERA

Bulletproof is a standalone application, it's the missing link between your camera and the editing process. You go out, you shoot, you have precious footage recorded onto media, and you need to back it up, you need to organise it, you need to review it, condense it down, get your 80 clips to the 30 that you're actually going to use, and transcode the footage into an edit friendly format.

THE FLOW

The flow of the program works left to right, you're going to import, organize, review, refine and then export. So the import process basically gets the media off of your card, it's going to make a clone of it, put it onto a catalogue location in your computer, so the original files are copied over. You can also set additional backup locations anywhere that your computer can write to, you can make backup copies to an external hard drive, internal hard drive, network location or whatever. The software does a checksum to make sure that bit for bit, all your files are actually backed up and secure in an archive location.

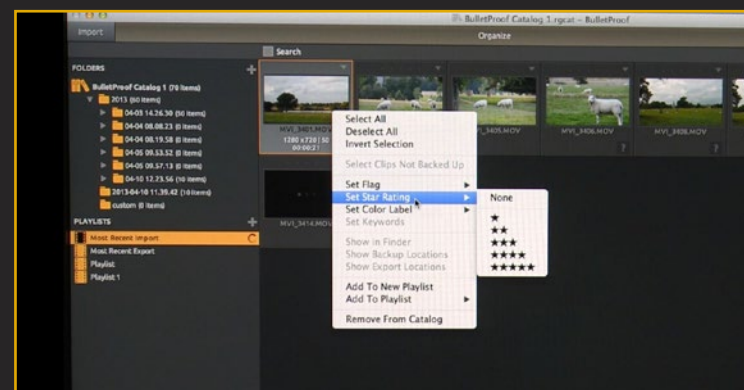
Once you've imported, or during the import process, you can start to review and organise, you can make folders obviously, very familiar style interface, where you can do star ratings or colour code ratings, things that allow you to organise and reject takes and circle takes for the good and the bad. At this point you can start to leave out the things that you're not actually going to need to ingest and import.



ORGANIZE

You can also print play lists with which you can start to do rough cut assemblies of your shots, even if you're on set. You take in the card, you can do a little quick, mark in and out of points during the playback process. The playback process is GPU accelerated, so you have very snappy playback of your original media, even while it's importing, ready to start looking at with the ability to cut things together to make sure that they work.

Then we start to go beyond the review process and we are refining. Refining is two things, it's meta data so we can tag things like director, camera, take, roll, that kind of information; additional key words can be added that



you can search through later on, exterior, interior, camera number, job number, whatever you want, things that you want to be able to search for a year down the road, when you've deleted it off of your editing station, you want to go back to your original catalogue here and to search for those shots, pertaining to that day, that location, that job, whatever you want.

So once we refine media with metadata, you can then do some rough colour correction. A three-way colour corrector is built in, curves colour corrector, all taken directly from other Red Giant Tools that you may be familiar with.



Demo of Red Giant Bulletproof

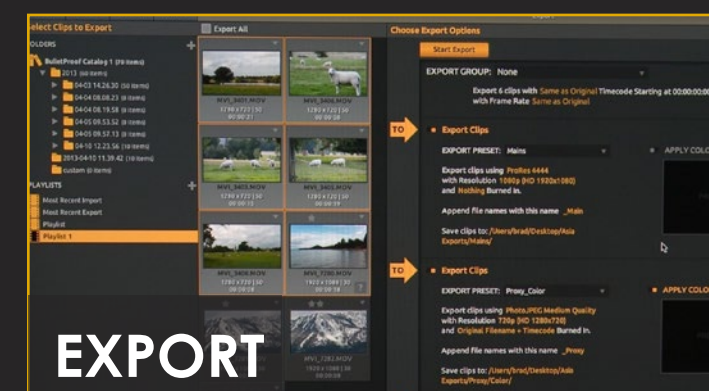
Download beta at:
<http://www.redgiant.com/products/all/bulletproof/>



REVIEW



REFINE



EXPORT

You can also apply a LUT during that process, you can apply look up tables, so you can colour correct your clips, if you wish one or five or 10 at a time, and do all that metadata tagging and colour corrections to multiple clips simultaneously. The metadata is tagged with the files, the colour correction is optional. You can choose during the export process to enable the colour correction or disable it, or you can actually do multiple passes. For example, you could choose to output to ProRes 444, at 1080P on colour corrected material, so the editor can start editing straight away. Another copy can be output for the client to review in a proxy format, perhaps a couple of hundred megabytes in size, encoded at 720P with the time code burned in, with colour correction, so they only ever see the colour corrected version. You can do basically do a one-light pass, which was always done in the film business which has a very dedicated workflow. DSLRs workflows have not been so well organised.

Some people are more organised or less organised - the idea of Bulletproof is to guide you through that organisation workflow very quickly, very easily, using the left to right workflow of the interface. You should be in and out of the app. within 5-10 minutes, you can have your stuff backed up, tagged, colour corrected, transcoded ready for your edit.

The benefit can also be seen later when you have to come back to a project after a considerable length of time. Perhaps it's archived, maybe you lost the original drive or whatever, you still always have the original media transferred so you can pull it up by that job number of whatever, re-export it and transcode it, put it back to that same location you did one year ago. It's safe and sound backed up in however many locations you want. It's still there, it's still catalogued, it's still key worded, everything is still there. The catalogue, the Bulletproof catalogue, is going to be there.

Available now as free Beta to download and test: <http://www.redgiant.com/products/all/bulletproof/>



FILMCONVERT UPDATE: NIKON SUPPORT, NEW CONTROLS, AND MORE CAMERAS

This release also introduces a new, user-requested feature to FilmConvert that gives filmmakers the ability to independently choose both the amount of film colour, and the film contrast shift that is applied in the film emulation.

[READ THE FULL STORY >>](#)



CANON DEVELOPS NEW PICTURE STYLE FOR EOS DSLRS

Canon has announced the release of a new in-camera Picture Style pre-set for its range of EOS DSLRs. Created following direct feedback from video enthusiasts, the new Picture Style, called Video Camera Xseries-look, enables users to capture EOS Movie footage with lower contrast levels, allowing for easier colour grading during post production processes.

[READ THE FULL STORY >>](#)



COMPRESSED CODECS NOW INCLUDED WITH CONVERGENT DESIGN ODYSSEY!

Compressed Codecs Now INCLUDED with Convergent Design Odyssey! Most notably, DNxHD and any future supported compressed codecs (up to 1080p60 422) will now be included at no additional cost in the base price of the Odyssey. There is no additional firmware option to purchase for DNxHD support.

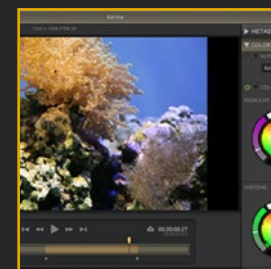
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UKFCUG TURNS 10

The UKFCUG turns 10. The UKFCUG was officially launched Friday, 23 May 2003. In the 10 years since the launch the group has had meetings throughout the UK, in London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester and Glasgow.

[READ THE FULL STORY >>](#)



RED GIANT ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF BULLETPROOF FREE PUBLIC BETA

Red Giant Announces Availability of BulletProof Free Public Beta. A Complete Media Prep and Delivery Application for Filmmakers; BulletProof Bridges the Gap Between the Camera and the Editor.

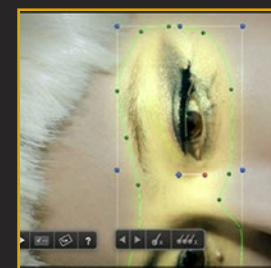
[READ THE FULL STORY >>](#)



DATAVIDEO COMPLETES ITS PROMPTER LINE UP WITH TWO NEW RIGS

Datavideo completes its prompter line up with two new rigs. Datavideo has introduced two new prompting systems to complete its line-up of teleprompters: The TP-500 is designed for use with DSLR and small handheld camcorders; the larger TP-600 is designed for news and studio environments.

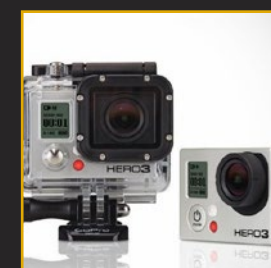
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SLICEX POWERED BY MOCHA FOR FINAL CUT PRO X NOW AVAILABLE

SliceX powered by mocha for Final Cut Pro X Now Available. SliceX powered by mocha lets you create instant shape masks to cut out layers or isolate effects directly in Final Cut Pro X without having to go into Motion or create the masks with an external program.

[READ THE FULL STORY >>](#)



HERO3 SOFTWARE UPDATE

The latest HERO3 camera software update fixes known bugs and enhances performance for all HERO3 editions making your GoPro better than ever.

[READ THE FULL STORY >>](#)



FEATURE: THE STATE OF THE VFX INDUSTRY AND WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE: SCOTT ROSS AND SCOTT SQUIRES

Many of you will know what's going on in the VFX industry. Things are in turmoil. What do we do, where do we go? Tonight two giants of the VFX world will give us a hint of what to do. So we are very, very privileged and you are very, very privileged to have on the stage tonight at the SuperMeet, Scott Ross and Scott Squires.

SR: So one of the big problems that the visual effects industry faces, and I'm sure you guys face similar kinds of issues, is we're not paid for the value that we bring to the project. This has been going on for many, many years. Scott and I worked together years ago in Industrial Light and Magic and together we probably have sixty years or so in the business, and it's been a swim to the bottom ever since. People talk about the good old days, well the good old days were just bad old days and today's days are just even worse.

SS: It's true, I came at it pre-digital so we were involved in a lot of interesting things. The business aspect to visual effects changed and we were all focussed on both the art and the creative and the technology of doing visual effects, but a lot of the business aspects got left behind so further and further we ended up where we are now, which I know a lot of you are involved in post-production, you know how the time window for post-production has closed, and there's also some very special things with visual effects and some of that probably applies to you as well.

So it's critical that those of you that are artists or those of you that are technical people, that they're supported by business people. I always said that creativity has three legs to the stool: one is creative, one is technical and one is business, and in our industry, as Scott was saying the business part has been lacking, and the stool has been tipping over. So many of you, and I've seen some of the presentations here today, are talking about products that they're selling to you that will make your jobs easier and allow you to be more creative. Unfortunately they're not giving those products away for free – they cost money. And so if there is no money flowing through the facilities and the companies that provide these tools for you, pretty soon you're going to have to cut off your ear, move to the South of France and eat cadmium yellow paint, because there is no money available to be able to buy the tools that you need. So what we like to say it really don't mean a thing if it doesn't go ker-ching.

Visual effects, all of you are very involved to some extent even at dealing with visual effects yourself so at this point we make the impossible possible. They allow Hollywood to make films that were impossible. An example of that I think we've got coming up here, Life of Pi. If you look at the tent-pole films over the last even ten years you'll notice most of those are very heavy visual effects films. The Avengers, or in this case it's Life of Pi, right? So they shoot it in that pool. So this is a whole story about a boy and a tiger. Well they could not even bring that film, that story to the big screen without the advantages and without the personnel and all the different people creating the visual effects to make that movie. Can you imagine if they showed this to the audience?

Would people pay \$10 to see that round the world?

SR: Now I wanted to interrupt for a second. You know, Claudio Miranda is a world class director of photography, wound up winning the Best DP for the Life of Pi and this is what Claudio shot. The work

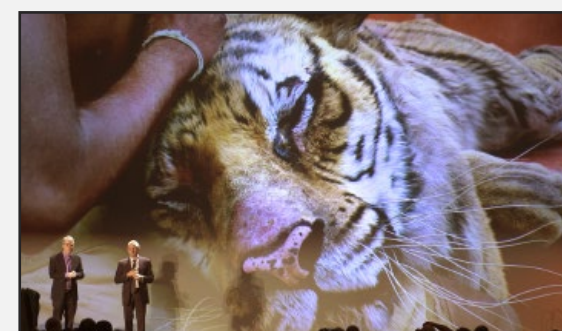
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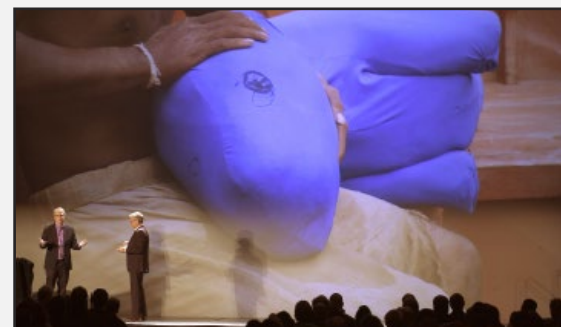
Scott Ross & Scott Squires



“WOULD PEOPLE PAY \$10 TO SEE THAT ROUND THE WORLD?”



“RHYTHM & HUES WENT BANKRUPT, SO WHERE'S THE JUSTICE IN THAT?”



“ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES”



“USING PUPPETS”



“A LIVE TIGER”



that was done afterwards was done by the men and women –

The work that was done afterwards was done by the men and women at Rhythm and Hues, a company who you've probably recently read has gone bankrupt and has been brought out of bankruptcy by an Indian company. And here's the result – this is what the people saw in the theatre and this is 95% or whatever it was the digital tiger. The sky, the water, everything's been recreated around this one actor on a boat in a pool. So it's just amazing to all of us, even those of us who work in the industry, just how much of a love of these films these days we create or we augment to the point where we're not using much of the original live action anymore.

SS: Now the academy has about 5,000 or so members. Many of them are actors. Most of them are Scott's and my age, and when they went to go see The Life of Pi they had no concept that there were men and women toiling in dark rooms for hours and hours on end to be able to really change and amplify and create this wonderful image.

SR: So the gross on Life of Pi, and this was a few weeks ago, was over \$606 million, but obviously we always hear: 'Visual effects are expensive'. Even Ang Lee had talked about that, 'Oh, they're so expensive.' Well, we made that movie possible. If it wasn't for visual effects people working away on these types of films, they would not even be made, let alone making a profit.

SS: Now this movie, as Scott said, made \$606 million worldwide gross but Rhythm and Hues went bankrupt, so where's the justice in that?

SR: So here's another example. Would the audience want to pay \$10 and sit through two hours of a guy holding a blue puppet?

And how about the emotional involvement with that puppet – how would that work? So when Hollywood says, 'Oh, it's too expensive. You guys, we're going to go to the cheapest possible people to do this work,' now you can see this is obviously high-quality work, it took a lot of time, a lot of effort and people actually worked day and night trying to get this movie done, and it's not that unusual. I mean as I say the Avengers and quite a number of visual effects films this last year. And we'll cover a few other things later.

So let's talk about the alternative methods they might have been able to save some money on this show, on Life of Pi.

So alright, raise your hand if you wanted to pay \$10 and sit through two hours of the cat and the kid.

SS: Studio people, studio people!

SR: Yeah!

So this was somebody that put this up on the internet, so I don't know exactly who so thank you.

We could have done it with puppets, that would have been another approach. When we look at any project we start thinking about all the different approaches that we could take and beyond the puppets we also have this standby ... a live tiger! Now they would have had twins – well actually they would have needed more than twins to complete the film ...

And this is in the pool. Can you imagine this out in the middle of the ocean? It would be a little bit tougher.

SS: And the clean-up was expensive!

SR: Alice in Wonderland. How many people actually went to see the story versus how many went to see the visuals that were created? Now obviously the best movies are when they have a great story and we utilise visual effects to help tell that great story, but would people have paid to see this, with these people on these green things? Probably not. I mean it's just amazing the amount of work that goes on in all of these, and Scott and I have been pounding away at the studios saying that the movie stars are visual effects.

SS: So obviously visual effects are the stars. No one goes to see a movie now because Tom Cruise is in it or Tom Hanks is in it. There have been lots of A-list actors, where we'll talk about A list actors as movie stars, movie stars that make \$20 million plus, plus back-end participation. And so for the heck of it I listed the top 20 films – I've only got 10 on here – and the top 20 films, those that are in blue are visual effects vehicles. Those that are in yellow have a movie star in and those that are green are animated CGI. So if we look at Avatar, both a live action and CGI film, blue and green, with no movie stars in it. And then you go to the second one which is Titanic, something really close and dear to my heart – caused several cases of angina – and Titanic didn't have a movie star in it. Leo was paid I think \$1 million for that film but you know, it was driven by the visual effects. Another interesting thing to look at too is the split between domestic and international box office. So right now today, when studios are making tent-pole films, most of the films that they put out as tent-pole films, wind up seeing about 60-70% of their overall box office returns on an international basis. Therefore, visual effects become even more critical, because on an international basis people don't understand necessarily the humour of Woody Allen or Owen Wilson and they don't necessarily understand the nuances of Driving Miss Daisy, but they do understand visual imagery, which has become the new international language. So studios are very, very aware of how important visual effects are. The only problem with it is they're not paying us for it.

So here you can see the next top 10 and I believe all 20 of these were visual effects vehicles. The ones that had movie star in I think were basically the same actor, who's really making some bank, which is Johnny Depp. But no other movie stars, but the studios' intent is that they have to put a movie star in the movie because if it doesn't have a movie star it won't open. And Scott and I have been pounding away at the studios saying that the movie stars are visual effects.

This shows the 2012 the box office, you've got The Avengers, Skyfall, Dark Knight Rises, The Hobbit, Ice Age. You just look at the entire list and even the top 50 list of all time films, but even last year the top 15 – imagine any of those without the visual effects. Would you go see The Avengers, how about Ted? And it just goes on and on with the number of films that require massive visual effects.

SR: Additionally worldwide box office hits, as I mentioned, have incredible visual effects and they have a brand and international appeal, but additionally something else is happening. For example, you look at the Korean movie called The Host, which was basically a re-telling of the Godzilla story and with really world-class effects, I believe done by The Orphanage which is a company which has gone bankrupt.

And The Host did box office that was extraordinary, had \$11 million budget and my understanding was that \$3 million of that \$11 million was the cost of visual effects, and it did \$89 million in box office, which is a hell of a return. Most studios would be happy with it but one of the things I think that this movie missed on was that most of the box office came from foreign, \$87 million of it, and most of it from Korea and Japan, because the movie was shot in Korean. Think if the movie had been shot in English and Korean, they probably would have done even better than that.

and Magic and Digital Domain, but people continue to do it, and while they continue to do it, people continue to go bankrupt. In fact the number of companies that have gone out of business or have been bankrupted over the last ten years is astounding and outweighs, clearly, the companies that have stayed in business.

SS: And I'm not even sure this is all the companies. This was one of the latest lists that we got, but it's a tough business. There's a lot of companies, there's a lot of competition going on and we've got a list of problems. You may already know some of these. So subsidies, subsidies happen different states, different countries, different regions, and one of the problems is that means that the work, both the live action and the visual effects work, goes somewhere else, and we're not saying that it all needs to stay in California, but it means it's very difficult for a company here that was doing the work now to compete with some place like Montreal where they're doing it for 50% off because the government is paying the movie studios. We'll get into more of that later.

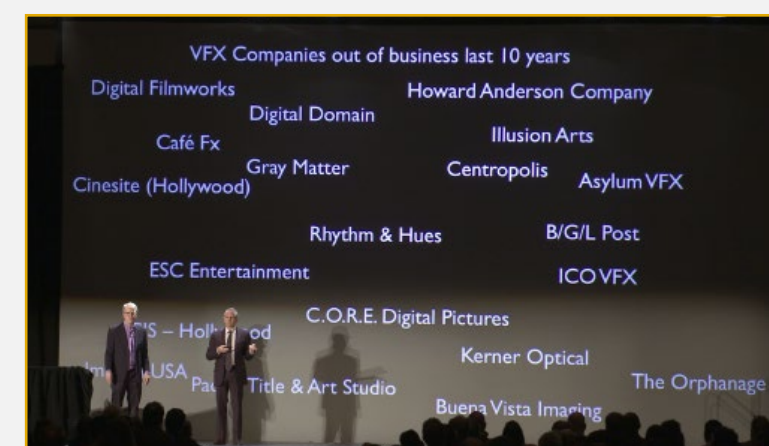
SR: And the subsidies are impactful all across the board. For example, let's take Vancouver, which offered a 35% tax subsidy, and so the motion picture studios told the visual effects facilities that if you want to get this work – the good news is you get the work, the bad news is you get the work – if you want to get the work you have to do it Vancouver. And so various large visual effects facilities opened up in Vancouver and built facilities that were high sixes and low seven figures where you're spending a million, a million-five on building a facility there. Additionally if you look at Vancouver, a wonderful city, but not a large city with bunches of visual effects artists. Maybe there were seventy visual effects artists working in Vancouver at companies like Rainmaker, but then all of a sudden now we have five, six, seven, eight, ten major visual effects and animation companies moving to Vancouver because the studios have demanded that the work be done there so they get the 35% tax rebate.

So now you have 45-year-old men and women who are uprooting their families, it's not like production, you don't go away for six weeks, you go away for a year, so you uproot your family, take your kids, move to Vancouver, find a house, live there for about nine months or a year and then ultimately wind up getting laid off. So the impact is on the digital artist and the worker, as well as the companies that are building these studios. So now for example you have the studio in Vancouver and you've spent \$1.3 million on building it, and now Ontario comes back and says, 'We'll give you a 50% tax rebate' and so

TOP 20 FILMS OF ALL-TIME				
Title	Total	Domestic	International	
11 Alice in Wonderland (BV, 2010)	\$1,024,300	\$334,200 (33 %)	\$690,100 (67 %)	
12 The Dark Knight (WB, 2008)	\$1,001,900	\$533,300 (53 %)	\$468,600 (47 %)	
13 Harry Potter Sorcerer's Stone (WB, 2001)	\$974,800	\$317,600 (33 %)	\$657,200 (67 %)	
14 Pirates At Worlds End (BV, 2007)	\$963,400	\$309,400 (32 %)	\$654,000 (68 %)	
15 Harry Potter Deathly Hallows Pt1 (WB, 2010)	\$956,400	\$296,000 (31 %)	\$660,400 (69 %)	
16 The Lion King (BV, 1994)	\$951,600	\$422,800 (44 %)	\$528,800 (56 %)	
17 Harry Potter Order of the Phoenix (WB, 2007)	\$939,900	\$292,000 (31 %)	\$647,900 (69 %)	
18 Harry Potter Half Blood Prince (WB, 2009)	\$934,400	\$302,000 (32 %)	\$632,400 (68 %)	
19 The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (DOW, 2002)	\$926,000	\$342,600 (37 %)	\$583,500 (63 %)	
20 The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (DOW, 2003)	\$919,800	\$441,200 (48 %)	\$478,600 (52 %)	

what happens? The studio, the motion picture studio, says to the visual effects facility, 'Thank you very much for Vancouver. We now need to do the work in Eastern Canada'.

SS: And the point is, even if they build the company up in Vancouver, they're still not guaranteed the show. They



have the ability now to bid on the work. They won't even bid on the work here in California these days a lot of times.

SR: So now even, as I said, the good news is they get the work – the bad news is they continue to lose money on the work that they get.

SS: So competition – with the lower price of entry for visual effects, there's a lot of companies, and because of the subsidies you can't evolve the businesses. You end up with places like Vancouver that would not have sustained visual effects themselves. You end up with places like London that have grown quite a bit because of subsidies. Subsidies applied to things like Harry Potter and so forth. So what you've ended up with is much more competition. Now earlier at NEB or one of the related activities Jon Landau had said, 'What about the visual effects problem?' And he thought one of the solutions was that there should be more competition. Now we have it listed as one of the problems and the problem is we don't need more competition because companies are already underbidding them, if they calculate it's going to take them \$10 million to do the show, they will bid it at \$9 million or at \$8 million. Now anybody with half a brain knows you can't do that very long, but they need to work to try to keep all their crews busy, so there's so much competition people are actually underbidding the work.



“HOW MANY PEOPLE ACTUALLY WENT TO SEE THE STORY VERSUS HOW MANY WENT TO SEE THE VISUALS THAT WERE CREATED?”

SS: OK, so the other point is visual effects are everywhere. You as editors, motion graphics people, post people, you understand they're all over. And here's a quote from a producer. 'I hate CGI in production design. That's why I voted for Lincoln.' So every movie coming out of Hollywood these days, even a buddy film, anything else, has some visual effects of some sort. This is from The Proposal. There's

blue screen, they make the East Coast look like it's Alaska. And here's Love Actually, so they're replacing things. Even on television shows such as Ugly Betty and quite a few others, they were adding a lot of green screen and replacing things.

SR:

TOP 20 FILMS OF ALL-TIME			
Title	Total	Domestic	International
1 Avatar (Fox, 2009)	\$2,782,300	\$760,500 (27.3 %)	\$2,021,800 (72.7 %)
2 Titanic (Par, 1997)	\$2,185,400	\$658,700 (30 %)	\$1,526,700 (70 %)
3 The Avengers (BV, 2012)	\$1,422,200	\$589,100,00 (41 %)	\$833,100 (59 %)
4 Harry Potter Deathly Hallows (WB, 2011)	\$1,328,100	\$381,000 (29 %)	\$947,100 (71 %)
5 Transformers Dark Side of the Moon (P, 2011)	\$1,123,700	\$352,400 (31 %)	\$771,400 (67 %)
6 LOTR Return of the King (NL, 2003)	\$1,119,900	\$377,800 (34 %)	\$742,100 (66 %)
7 The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (DOW, 2002)	\$1,066,200	\$423,300 (40 %)	\$642,900 (60 %)
8 The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (DOW, 2003)	\$1,063,200	\$415,000 (39 %)	\$648,200 (61 %)
9 The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (DOW, 2002)	\$1,043,900	\$241,100 (23 %)	\$802,800 (77 %)
10 The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (DOW, 2001)	\$1,041,100	\$241,100 (23 %)	\$800,000 (77 %)

SR: Now one of the legacies in the visual effects business, and I came out of video postproduction in the late seventies, I ran a company called One Pass in San Francisco, and when I got to ILM I didn't quite understand from the point of view of bidding that you bid a project based upon blueprints that were storyboards at best and conversations at worst, and that once you came up with our bid, that was your price. And there were things called change orders but in fact, since you only had six clients, it was very difficult to go to a client and say to them, 'Listen, this is a change order. And the studio's response always is, 'Work with me on this one.' And we knew, it was sort of understood that if you came forward on a change order and every time a director made a change, and lord knows, directors make changes every second, the problem that we would have is we would be looked down upon by the six major clients. So the fixed bid business model just doesn't work 'cause ultimately now we have movies that are 1,000 to 1,500 shots and we have budgets on visual effects that are \$50-100 million. And so at this point we're actually financing the films for the studios. I had one of the senior Vice Presidents of a studio post production say to me a couple of weeks ago, 'The only time a studio ever gives back-end participation is if a) they are part of the creative team that make things really different and b) if they wind up putting hard dollars in.' And I just said, 'Rhythm and Hues, Life of Pi, they wound up putting hard dollars in. So much so that they, over the years, have lost enough money not to be able to make payroll and go bankrupt. And then secondly we've seen images of Life of Pi. Had it not been for Rhythm and Hues, you would have that tiger being slaughtered, you know?'

Want to talk about massive amounts of overtime?

SS: Yeah, and once again you guys in post-prod will fully understand this, but with visual effects we typically start with a 50 or 60 hour week and go up from there. We'll go on up to 90 or 100 hours a week or even more, and it's not unusual to be working seven days a week because they start with, by the time the visual effects people start and certainly when they edit, they make changes, our deadline stays the same. So now we've got even more compressed schedule and then at the last moment they decided to add another 400 or 500 shots. So now everybody's working massive amounts of overtime to try to get these projects, because the visual effects company cannot predict exactly what the director's going to do or what the studio's going to do, and they have a set number of people and trying to get more people is difficult, so they just work them more and more hours. So overtime is a big problem in terms of just your physical and mental wellbeing, certainly the latest health research has shown, but we continue to do that. Now realise most countries in the world have a cap of 60 hours a week for people to work. That's all you can work. Technically that's all you're supposed to work and there's a Fair Labour Association in China, you're not supposed to work over 60. We typically start at 60 and go on up from there.

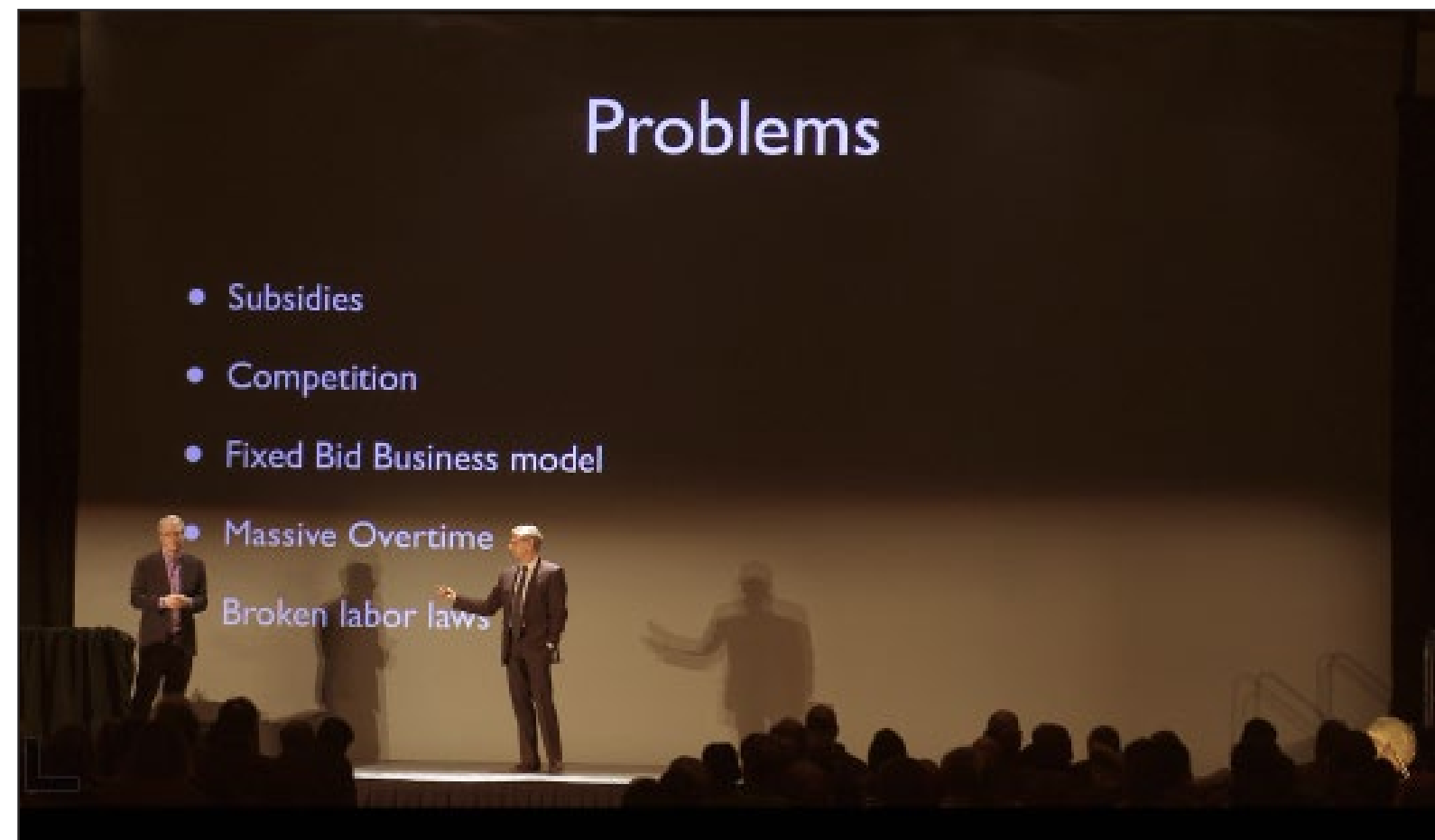
And of course broken labour laws, a lot of those people working overtime are not paid overtime or they're not covered for certain things, and the visual effects companies tend to try to put people on as independent contractors or as some type of manager, or you get Joe

to cover and Joe covers you so you're both managers, so you're on salary, so you don't get paid overtime. So there's all this stuff going on. In the UK they have a 48-hour limit, cap, but everybody has to sign a note that says, 'No, no, it's OK, it doesn't apply to me' when they start working in the UK on visual effects, but there is no overtime. There's no time-and-a-half, no double time, in the UK, so most of them just get in lieu payment, which means that they get paid a regular day for the overtime day that they work, and a lot of times they're not paid for the extra hours that they put in.

SR: One of the other things that we didn't mention here but I thought of in sharing the stage with Scott, the fact is that most of the visual effects, not most, all of the visual effects companies have no authority over the work, so the model is like if you're from New York, somebody gets in a taxi cab and you go to reach for the meter, 'cause you're the driver, and the guy in the back seat says, 'No, no, no. No meter. \$10 flat.' And you say, 'OK' and then he says, 'I need to go to JFK' and you say, 'Alright' and you tell him the way you're going to go and he says, 'No, you're not going to go that way. I want you to go to Connecticut first, then I'd like you to go to Maryland and eventually we'll get to Kennedy and don't touch that meter.'

And the reason I bring it up with Scott was that Scott and I worked on a project, Scott was a visual effects supervisor on a project way back in the day called Hunt for Red October, and when we were working on that film I got a phone call from the studio, who said, 'You need to tell the director that we, the studio, are going to make the decisions from now on' and my response was, 'Well wait a second. Scott's really, really creative and wonderful but he's not the director of the film. The director, John McTiernan, needs to make those decisions. The studio said, 'Well I'll tell you what.' We were using this division back then. 'Well I'll tell you what, ship us a copy of our dailies and ship McTiernan a copy of his dailies,' so sort of like double the work, 'and at some point we'll tell him.' Well this went on for a while until John realised what the heck was going on and lost it and came screaming to me, but the studio wasn't willing to take the responsibility of guiding the director. I've had studios say to me, 'Well, he's a billion dollar director. I'm not going to tell him what to do.' Well that's easy for them to say because he's in my taxicab and we're burning my gas, so continues to be a problem.

SS: Yes. So subsidies. Great graphic here that we've created. The slate there represents the film companies. The orange building on the right represents the government of some place and then obviously we have people working away at their workstations. So of course the government says, 'OK, we're going to get a bunch of money and we're going to take it from our tax payers, we won't use that money for something like education or other things worthwhile, and we will go ahead and give that to the movie studios.' So that then causes a group of people, migrant workers ... if somebody 20 years ago said, 'OK, you guys are going to be migrant workers, you're going to move around the world. You're going to be working in same offices, same cubicles, but you'll be required to go somewhere else to do it,' people would have said, 'You're nuts'. So of course what happens is another country or region, state, says, 'Oh, well that's a good idea. We'll do that. We'll take our money and we'll take it from our tax



payers and we'll give that to the movies.' And then of course all those people now go to this other place, because what the states and the countries don't realise is every movie, they take a look at what's the cheapest place? Now they don't always choose the cheapest place, but that's part of their equation. So they're not truly building up an infrastructure or a business or an industry in those locations. All they're doing is causing jobs to move to that location for the duration that the government is paying out, and in some cases, such as Louisiana, they're finding out they're paying \$1 and getting back less than 16c. The fact is they would be much better off just paying those people directly. They're paying more than those people's salaries, or they could put in something actually practical and useful.

SR: Or in addition, the Canadian incentives that are being paid, why aren't they being paid to Canadian producers and Canadian directors? Why do they continue to flow money to the mega-billion-dollar corporations that are the studios? So that they can put The Hobbit on the aeroplane? I don't get it.

SS: So some of the solutions – ending subsidies would be a big boon to all of us. Now obviously that's a big political thing. Some of you may have read Visual Effects Soldier, so he is has gone ahead and started with a legal firm to see what the WTO, the World Trade Organization, because technically if you look at the regulations and so forth, these types of subsidies are against their regulation, so he has a legal counsel reviewing that to see if that is indeed the case and what can be done about it. Otherwise there's not really a lot we can do as people, just trying to get the politicians because you've got the motion picture studios lobbying these different countries and different states and everybody else, telling them, 'No, you've got to pay us more and more

money each year so that we can keep coming back.'

SR: Hopefully one of the things that we'd be able to address on that is a trade association. I personally have been trying to put a trade association together for a quarter of a century and for various reasons the visual effects facilities and the managers of those facilities have shied away from it. We're getting closer. We actually have a meeting set on May 2nd in Los Angeles, and my hope is to get at least fifteen of the major companies around the table to investigate the possibility of a trade association. And one of the things that a trade association could do is lobby governments and countries.

SS: So of course sharing the profits would be another possible scenario for the different visual effects companies to try to earn back some of that money.

SR: And I think the studios think giving profits away is a bad thing, but in fact if we look at it from the point of view that we're in this game together and I will do everything I can as a visual effects facility to be able to mitigate cost and come up with concepts and pipelines and techniques that would allow the studio to save money, and if in fact the studio and the director brought the visual effects supervisor in right at the very beginning and started to design the film from the get-go as opposed to chasing our tails and saying we can fix it in post, I think ultimately things would be a lot less expensive and then companies would wind up also sharing in some of that back-end profit participation.

SS: Obviously one of the things that has been talked about, making their own content, because we've got a lot of visual effects people, animators and so forth, making their own films and so forth, but the downside is that's a different business model and it takes obviously ... going ahead and getting an investment of tens of millions of dollars in order to be able to do that. And if you were successful at that, and there's no guarantee that you would be, would you bother even doing visual effects for anybody else at that point?

SR: So one of the things that our industry has lacked, actually several of the things, is a common voice. Scott's been a proponent of moving forward with a union organisation to be able to have a voice for the artists, and I've been moving forward with a trade association, trying to have a voice for the visual effects facilities. Today, no one has a voice. The only voice that's heard is the voice of the motion picture studio, and they're doing pretty well, thank you very much.

SS: So as Scott mentioned, the union is another thing. The rest of the film business is unionised. So the directors, the writers, the actors, the camera people, the grips, everybody down the stream and typically the editors as well, they're all union people. The visual effects is one of the very few groups of people not actually covered by any form of union, but before digital we were actually covered by the union. I'm in the cameraman's union because I operated an optical printer, I operated a camera to shoot miniatures and so forth, so I was in the camera union.

SR: So the trade association, as I said, we've been trying to put that together. Imagine if you will ten or fifteen of the top visual effects companies who normally do 1500-2000 shots, saying, 'There's a new way in which we work,' and setting standards and being able to say cancellation policies are such. Right now today, if a studio cancels on a company and you've been holding that crew in a bay for that studio, oftentimes there is no penalty to the cancellation of that.

Digital Domain, for example, after I sold it, wound up taking a \$3 million hit on Paradise Lost because the studio put the picture in turnaround.

Obviously we want to change the business model from a fixed-price business model to a time and materials plus a fixed fee, and also negotiate some back-end participation for us to have an incentive to make it even less costly. I talked about standardisation and making demands with the goal of profits not only for us but also for the studios. I really think it's a win-win situation 'cause the studios wind up treating us like third-class citizens even though we're the largest component of the budget, and nowadays the movie star in the movie, we're still relegated to the back of the bus.

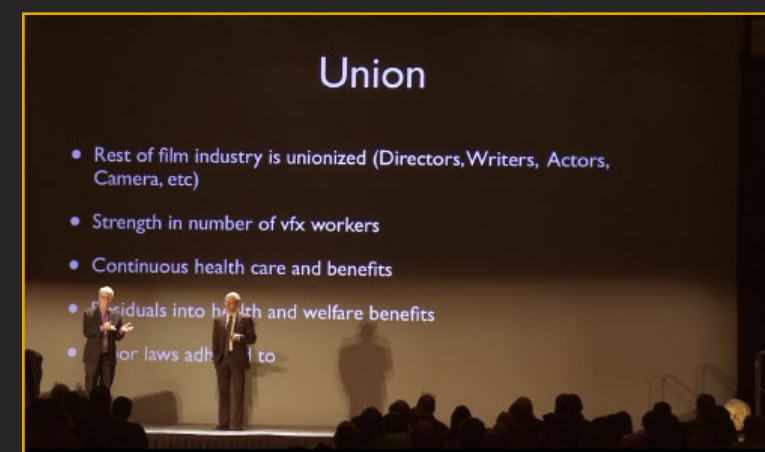
SS: OK, so the union, as I mentioned, the rest of the industry is all unionised. Strength in number of visual effects workers, each person works at a different company and right now we're working as a separate entity, so what we're trying to do is gain strength by working as numbers. The other thing is we're freelance as well. We end up working on a project with a company and then that project finishes and most of those people go to work somewhere else. Well, now you've got to reapply for healthcare and so forth, and wait your 90 days till you get approved there, etc. etc. And that's why the rest of the film crew is under a union set-up because you can be an assistant cameraman on a commercial working for two days, then be off for a week and then go and work on a television show, and you're still covered during that whole time. The union also typically on the film, the unions supply residuals, some royalties or residuals, into their health and benefits plan, and the union would also make sure that labour laws were actually adhered to.



SR: So really what's the future of visual effects? Well it looks like to me that what's happening unless there is a voice, and unless the trade association is formed, and from Scott's perspective unless there's a union in place, we'll continue to see the erosion of visual effects, and what will happen, in my opinion, is that a lot of the work which is manufacturing-based, will go offshore and wind up in countries that have the lowest cost of living – and that would be, at this point right now, India and China. And India and China have been putting money into the visual effects industry, but let's take India for example. Some of the most entrepreneurial people I've ever met in my life. I can imagine very, very quickly three or four men or women that are working for a major visual effects company in India, pretty soon saying, 'Well I don't really want to go work for this guy anymore. I'd like to start my own business.' And so when he does that or she does that, what will happen? She'll have to compete with that already existing established visual effects company, and so the only way that she's going to probably be able to compete is to lower her price, and so eventually the circle continues to happen. Prices continue to get lower, continue to get lower, and the only ones that are making any hay are the motion picture studios.

SS: So that's it. It's not a very happy picture.

SR: One thing, most importantly, there is power in numbers and the internet, as we all know, is an amazing tool. We've seen the digital spring happen. We turn to you and your brothers and sisters and say please continue to support this fight, because I believe that it will change and we have the ability to make that change happen.



“SO REALLY WHAT’S THE FUTURE OF VISUAL EFFECTS?”



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UNTIL THE NEXT TIME...

YOU GOTTA TOUGH IT OUT...

I did a lot of overnight edits when I was younger. Crazy hours. These days I try not to do so many, stay up until 2 or 3am no problem. To work all night & then some; that's too much for me these days. However, sometimes you have to do it, or you choose to do it to keep the clients happy

The jobs come along, the clients need looking after and they throw money at you and before you know it you're dragged back into the net wondering why on earth you allowed yourself to become ensnared.

This week was one of those weeks.

I'd agreed to do an edit overnight - the client had specifically asked for me, as I'd done the job the previous year and, the production company, the equivalent of the middle man in the whole deal, gave me a shout to see if I would do the work.

I was approached and we agreed I would edit at my place in London, media to be delivered to me for midnight, I would encode and deliver via the web for 10am.

I already happened to be on another job that day - though there was nothing going on in the night, other than sleeping of course. The other job just so happened to be some 120 miles away. Not impossible, I reasoned to be back from the first job for around 8 or 9pm. Get some rest, get some sleep if possible, then set an alarm for 2am and edit until the morning - maybe with a break for some more sleep if needed. At least that was the plan.

A day before the job is due to take place and there's emails, schedules, briefs, all sorts of information entering my in box. I barely pay attention as I'm working on other things.

Then the phone rings, the production company has called to update me on the overnight edit. I'm needed to be in central London in a hotel, edit overnight, meet the client for 9.30am, sit with the client and make final changes, then finish somewhere around midday.

I reply that's not what I was told - the agreement was I would edit at my own studio, media was to be delivered to me, I would edit overnight and send through an encode for 9.30 in the morning. Well things have changed. I'm not happy but I agree, sort of!

Then I come back them. This has added a 1/2 day to my schedule, I wasn't bargaining for this, staying in a hotel, meeting and implementing changes to the clients wishes, none of that was discussed or mentioned. The production company agrees to pay me more money. I accept.



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I wake up at 5am the next morning. I calculate I'll be awake for 30 hours or more, have to perform, meet the client, drive back to my London base. This is madness. I know, I've been here many times before. Whatever the repercussions I decide No Way - strictly on health and safety grounds. To drive out of central London on no sleep after more that 30 hours, that's dangerous, more than likely illegal, and aside from those 2 very good reasons, why do it all? The money doesn't count, as they said in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory "they print more of it every day."

I dig my heels in. For once this freelancer stands tall and lays down the law.

Not prepared to do the crazy hours. Will edit at my London studio as agreed. Will talk to the client by phone in the morning, the encode will have already been sent through, any changes will then be discussed.

Not good enough, I'm told.

I make one final offer: I'll do what they want, meaning edit overnight in the hotel, meet the client in the morning, but only if they book 2 nights in the hotel, so once I'm done I can crash and sleep and not be a menace to myself or anyone else on the roads.

The client agrees.... Now I'm snared in the net.

03:49

Finish my first job and drive 120 miles, unload an entire van full of gear, get back into the van and drive into central London. I'm parked, and that took some doing. Ever tried to park a large van in the middle of London. You need a certain height, which not all car parks have. I find a suitable carpark and then taxi it to the hotel. I'm in just before 11pm. Guess what, I haven't eaten a thing all day.

Cards are with me by 1am, by the time I'm ready to look at the footage it is 2am.

I can toil in my mind about what I'm doing, and why I'm doing it, yet all that is irrelevant now.

"GOTTA TOUGH IT OUT THROUGH THE NIGHT"

So the way I'm thinking now is it makes absolutely no sense to do overnight edits. It costs you 2 days because you can't work the day after as you are so knackered, so really you have to charge double time. The clients will wince, but then it isn't them staying up all night, so leave them to wince as much as they like. And the other factor is why do it in the first place? To keep the clients happy - if you so choose, no-one should be working nights all night long. You read on the internet how much this contributes to early death.

Should you do it for the money - no, not worth it, even if they do pay double.

Is there any reason to do - no, not really, unless you really need the work.

I did the job, got through, met the client in the morning. Changes done - all over by midday. By the time I get back to the hotel I have been awake more than 30 hours. I feel great to have got through, though the story isn't over.

I sleep.

I wake up at 9pm that night, not feeling good. Drive the 200 miles from London to my home in the North. The next 2 weeks of my life are horrendous. It starts with me feeling sick and then I get sicker and sicker. Eventually I get tests, doctors appointments, hospital appointments, I'm sick as I've ever been.

Of course I can't 100% blame the condition on the one very long night, however I do believe that night tipped me over the edge. It isn't worth working one night to the have a 2 week or more recovery.

We are all different, some can tolerate nights, some can't. In my 30's I did endless nights in television, live directing and outputting programs from midnight through to morning. That changed when I entered the world of production, in that I didn't do so many nights, just when I had to. So now in my mid-40's I need to treat nights differently. I can work 6 hours through the night, but 12 hours that a killer, a health risk, and not the path I wish to tread.

Take this piece of writing as a warning to all you enthusiastic, young, eager, passionate and money hungry workers. You can do it - though you may well pay a very high price. I'm not trying to preach at you, more to say: **"know your limits!"**

So next time, I'll think twice. Now that doesn't mean I won't become ensnared again, but it does mean I'll look both ways and perhaps dodge their strike when they first come at me. And if I do choose to work through the night it will be because I do so on my terms. No shifting goal posts. 5 or 6 hours is manageable. 10 or 12 hours, all night long, and you're into the danger zone. This doesn't mean I won't be looking after the clients, it just means I need to look after myself first.

Until the next time.

Rick

