

HD-Post's 'Easy Life' with SCRATCH

HD-Post in Helsinki, Finland, used SCRATCH to conform, grade and deliver the DPX 10-bit masters for Mosquito Television's *The Easy Life*, a 13x45-minute crime drama, directed by Veikko Aaltonen. The crime drama, Finland's first episodic TV production shot using the RED ONE™ 4K Camera, has won the prestigious Golden TV Award for Best Series from the SATU Association.

The accolade, bestowed on professionals by professionals, is all the more pleasing as the technical and creative abilities of HD-Post's team shines when using ASSIMILATE's SCRATCH® 4K Finishing Workflow. Colorist Jussi Myllyniemi, who is now working on the second series, extols the virtues of SCRATCH.

Why SCRATCH?: Two years ago we investigated different DI systems that offered RED 4K workflows. SCRATCH was, and still is, pretty much the best system for handling RED r3d 4K. Also, there's nothing else on the DI market that can touch SCRATCH's features at this price point.

Learning to expose: The efficient workflow and comprehensive real-time control SCRATCH gives for RED RAW material helps DPs get great insight into how to optimize exposures during the shoot. They often bring in RED RAW test footage or rushes, and quickly see how SCRATCH can transform the material, either with an overall grade or the application of a LUT. They get a clear understanding of where the limits are - say on black detail or highlights - and how to adjust the lighting on-set accordingly. It's a simple learning curve for everyone, and brings production and post together in a collaborative approach.

First for RED: Our workflow is designed for HD and upwards. *The Easy Life* was our first major job in SCRATCH. But SCRATCH's conform and organization tools - different

CONstructs for grouping RED RAW dailies, various ProRez QT off-lines graphics and VFX shots - were excellent in helping me deal with the large amounts of data for this production. Being well organized meant that late night workers could continue working when the early birds ended.

Awesome conform: SCRATCH has an amazing conform tool. It took just a few minutes to ingest the RED RAW materials and do a proper EDL conform for each episode.

Saturation: We viewed the footage in SCRATCH through a Rec 709 LUT, and I did a primary grade, using the color tools to adjust the saturation. I found I could apply a lot of saturation before the image started to bleed. The final look has a nice bright look, and I added more cyan in the highlights to create a colder feel to the images.

Grading with Scaffolds: I love the fact that you can work on RED RAW data files, and can build on top of the primary color grade in SCRATCH. Grading with Scaffolds is fast and powerful. I could easily isolate an area of the image, like eyes or faces;



Scene from 'Easy Life'
Image courtesy of
Mosquito Television

then animate and track multiple shapes through a shot and grade, using vectors to adjust the tones as DP Jari Mutikainen wanted. It's also easy to map SCRATCH functions to the Tangent panel, such as transparency, double windowing or overlays for shot comparisons, crops and dynamic zooms.

Episodic grading: Applying a consistent look across the 13 different episodes could be hard to achieve with other software, but the Trays facility helped a lot. I copied a completed episode into a Tray, and could quickly go back to it for references, or copy grades between scenes and episodes. I actually put all 13 episodes in Trays, all as RED files. Overall, it only took two to

three days to conform, grade and output the linear 10-bit DPX files for each 45-minute episode.

“SCRATCH is a wonderful tool for colorists”

Perfect DPX: The support I've had from ASSIMILATE® has helped to optimize grading and exporting RED material in SCRATCH. Yes, other software supports RED, but the quality of the export to DPX can be dubious. SCRATCH retains all the dynamics of the image quality, and you know the exports will be top quality.

Just my imagination: SCRATCH is a wonderful tool for colorists, and learning the UI software is very easy. Making beautiful pictures is the hard part, but SCRATCH makes that easy too. There's really no limit to what you can do. Which means it's all about your skills with color and your imagination.

I want Rocket Fuel: The use of the RED camera is growing, so we're going to invest in ASSIMILATE's Rocket Fuel bundle so we can take on more work, and handle 4K even more efficiently.



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Image courtesy of Mosquito Television