Big Screen Entertainment Group
Next-generation filmmaking

Big Screen Entertainment Group
Hollywood, California
http://bigscreenent.com

Big Screen Entertainment Group switches to Adobe® Premiere® Pro CS5 from Final Cut Pro to produce *Sucker*, filmed on the RED Digital Cinema camera

When Julien and Benoit Decaillon approached Stephen Eckelberry at the Big Screen Entertainment booth at the Cannes Film Festival to preview the trailer for their latest film, *Sodium Babies*, Eckelberry was somewhat skeptical. He is president of production for Big Screen Entertainment Group (BSEG), and in his 25 years in the business he has seen it all. But when he previewed the trailer by the talented duo now known as the Deka Bros, he was immediately impressed with its high production value and visual effects. He brought the film to the attention of BSEG CEO Kimberley Kates, who promptly picked up the film for distribution as well as inked a deal with the brothers to act as directors of photography and visual effects supervisors for a new BSEG feature-film project, *Sucker*.

After intensive workflow discussions with Eckelberry, Kates, and director Michael Manasseri, the Deka Bros recommended using the RED Digital Cinema camera and Adobe Creative Suite® 5 Production Premium, including Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 software, to produce the film. The next-generation filmmakers pride themselves on keeping pace with the latest technologies, and they were convinced that the combination of the RED camera and Adobe tools would enable delivery of exceptional cinematic quality, a streamlined production process, and reduced costs. Eckelberry and the BSEG team took the advice to heart and switched to Adobe tools from Final Cut Pro and Avid to produce *Sucker*, slated for release in 2011.
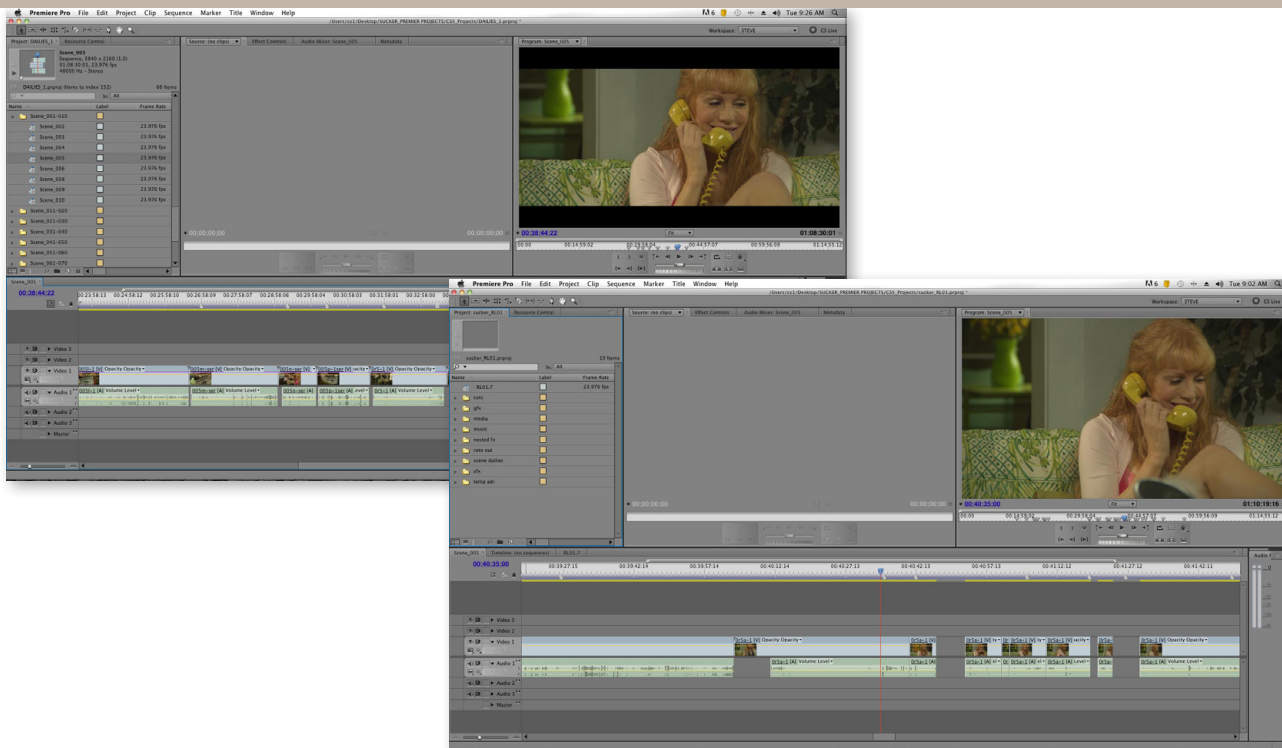
Challenge

· Support native RED workflow
· Integrate more than 600 effects shots
· Support more cost-effective, in-house workflow
· Deliver exceptional cinematic quality at lower costs

Solution

· Switch to Adobe Creative Suite 5 Production Premium from Final Cut Pro and Avid
· Take advantage of native support for RED camera format
· Leverage integration between Final Cut Pro and Adobe Premiere Pro CS5
· Use Dynamic Link to link VFX compositions and color-corrected footage to timeline

Benefits

· Keeping *Sucker* on schedule within budget with exceptional quality
· Editing 4K files in real time
· Taking advantage of open workflows to streamline switch to Adobe Premiere Pro CS5
· Eliminating intermediate rendering to save time in integrating effects shots

"We wanted to preserve all the glorious quality and color fidelity the RED camera delivers. We also knew that the film would require about 600 visual effects shots," says Eckelberry. "Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 is the only video-editing software that provides full support for a tapeless, streamlined RED workflow—and it truly works hand-in-hand with Adobe After Effects® to more easily and automatically integrate hundreds of effects sequences—without time-consuming intermediate rendering."

Move over, *Mansquito*

Sucker is a sci-fi comic-book-esque film, directed and co-written by BSEG's Michael Manasseri and produced by Kates and Eckelberry, as well as a new team of filmmakers at newly formed Big Screen Michigan. As part of the story, Jim Crawley, a nuclear plant employee gets fired from his job and is abducted by a mad scientist who exposes him to a deadly mosquito-borne virus. Instead of dying, Jim becomes a half-man/half-mosquito who sets out for revenge. The film incorporates aspects from *The Fly*, *Darkman*, and *Spider-Man*, but with more of a *Sin City* look and dark style.
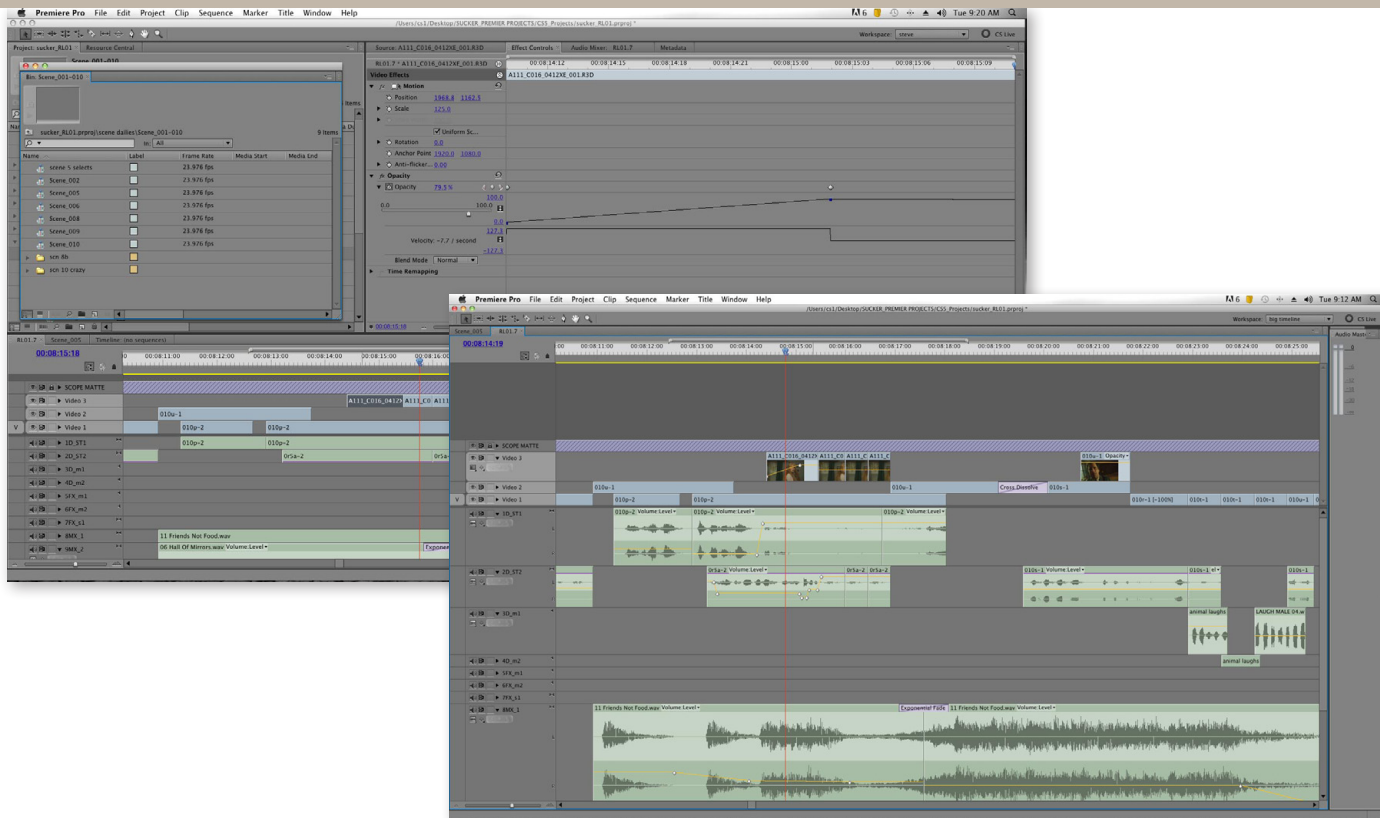
The new film is just one in a long line of eclectic and interesting projects for BSEG, a micro cap publicly traded media company (OTC:BSEG) with divisions in film, television, music, and video games. BSEG's film development and distribution projects include *Babysitter Wanted*, *Dirty Love*, *Nina and the Mystery of the Secret Room*, *Sodium Babies*, *Rule of Three*, *Target Practice*, *City Rats*, and *William Shatner's Gonzo Ballet*. The company has its own distribution label through Warner Music Group/WEA/ADA.

Video editing, reinvented

Five weeks of filming for *Sucker* took place in Pontiac, Michigan, with select scenes shot in Troy and on the campus of Oakland University. According to Eckelberry, Michigan is a hotbed for filmmaking due to favorable tax breaks and a burgeoning filmmaking community fueled by up-and-coming talent from Oakland University's Cinema Studies program. Once the filming was complete, Eckelberry and the team started editing.

As a long-time Final Cut Pro and Avid user, Eckelberry notes that he was duly impressed when he started editing the RED files using Adobe Premiere Pro CS5. He previously used Final Cut Pro on a horror project shot on a RED camera, but with the Final Cut Pro workflow he had to constantly down-convert footage to QuickTime ProRes with less than stellar results.

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Stephen Eckelberry
President of production,
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Group

"On the horror film, the Final Cut Pro and RED workflow was clunky and ate up a tremendous amount of disk space," says Eckelberry. "Due to budget limitations, we could only go back to the RED footage for VFX shots, so the quality of the film suffered. Why shoot on RED if you're going to have to down-res the files and compromise them? With Adobe Premiere Pro CS5, we started editing 4K files natively, preserving all their beautiful quality and color richness. With Adobe Premiere Pro CS5, Adobe has achieved an unmatched workflow for high-quality images such as RED and DSLR formats."

Open, integrated workflows

While editing *Sucker*, Eckelberry has grown to appreciate the streamlined integration between Adobe Premiere Pro and Final Cut. He was able to seamlessly import timelines from Final Cut Pro into Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 and immediately begin working with them.

"Adobe's openness and integration with other programs such as Avid and Final Cut is refreshing—and infinitely useful when you are making the transition to a new video-editing program," he says. "We see Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 as the future, but we need to easily make the transition in the meantime."

Eckelberry also values the integration between Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 and Adobe After Effects. The team is using After Effects CS5 and Adobe Photoshop® CS5 Extended for more than 600 effects shots as well as for cost-effective color correction. "After Effects is a great way to color-correct a project," says Eckelberry. "We don't even have to send out the film to a color house or use special coloring workstations, so we save costs without compromising quality. It's incredibly easy to bring color-corrected footage or effects into the Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 timeline using Adobe Dynamic Link."

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In-house for improved quality and control

Adobe Dynamic Link, which eliminates intermediate rendering between After Effects and Adobe Premiere Pro, lets the BSEG team integrate effects shots and see how they look within the film, directly from the Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 timeline. Updates are immediately reflected within Adobe Premiere Pro, without time-consuming rendering.

"With Adobe Premiere Pro CS5, I don't have to limit myself when it comes to image quality," says Eckelberry. "I can edit and output high-quality imagery and be as close as possible to the original without any compromise—and without having to engage a huge post-production workflow and a big raft of personnel and outsourced services. With Adobe tools, we can handle everything in-house with a small team, with exceptional-quality results."

Toolkit
Adobe Creative Suite 5 Production Premium. Components used include:
• Adobe After Effects CS5
• Adobe Photoshop CS5 Extended
• Adobe Premiere Pro CS5

For more information
www.adobe.com/products/
creativesuite/production