

Create an On-Set Direct-to-Disk Shoot/Capture/Edit Setup with AJA Io HD and Final Cut Pro for a Greenscreen Shoot

STEP 1

FIND A WELL-LIT GREENSCREEN STUDIO

Additional lighting is always necessary to set up good key/fill/rim lighting for the talent (see step 6).



STEP 2

TAP THE SIGNAL

Set the Sony V1U HD camera to capture 24fps/1080p, then route the signal out of the camera by tapping the HDMI output, a true 1920 x 1080 HD signal, BEFORE it hits the camera's HDV compression circuitry, and send it to the AJA Io HD interface.



STEP 3

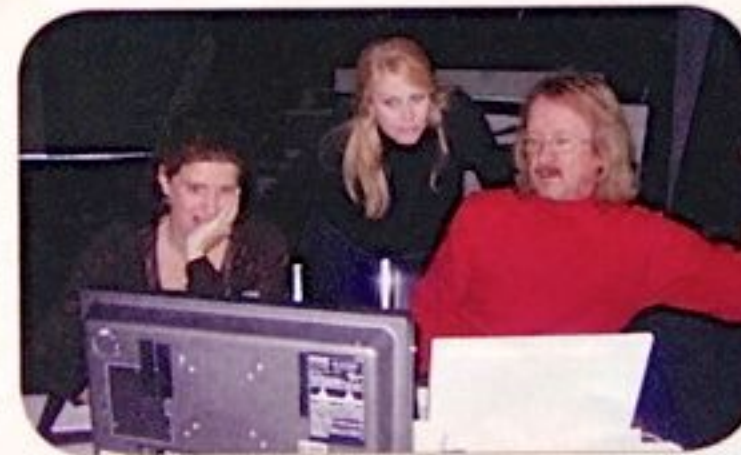
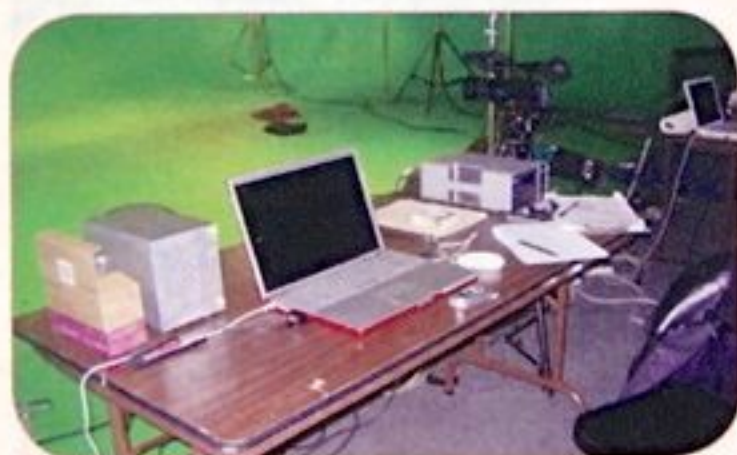
FEED THE TAPPED SIGNAL INTO THE AJA IO HD BOX FOR CONVERSION

The tapped HD signal is fed directly into the AJA Io HD box, which transcodes the signal to Apple ProRes HQ for recording direct to a custom RAID. We've found that Apple ProRes HQ works very well in this situation.

STEP 4

RECORD DIRECT TO FINAL CUT PRO

Take the converted Apple ProRes HQ out of the AJA Io HD box and record it into Final Cut Pro through a FireWire cable. Use Final Cut Pro's internal keyer to test the key in real time on the set. By using a 17-inch Panasonic BTLH1700 HD LCD monitor, which features a waveform overlay, you can make instant judgments about: 1) how evenly the greenscreen is illuminated (edge-to-edge luminance values are quite obvious on the waveform); 2) extremely fine focus issues; and 3) the quality of each take during real-time playback at full HD resolution.



Tools Used: Sony HVR-V1U HD Camera, AJA Io HD Box, 17-inch Panasonic BTLH1700 LCD Monitor, Apple Final Cut Pro 2, 17-inch Macbook Pro, Adobe After Effects



YOUR GUIDES

Robert W. Walker and Mo Fitzgibbon
Directors/Founders
Walker|Fitzgibbon TV and Film

Walker|Fitzgibbon Television and Film Productions is an in-demand production company based in Hollywood, California, with more than 20 years experience writing producing and directing television shows, specials, documentaries, music videos and commercials. The facility's client list includes Gloria Estefan, Shakira, Juanes, Jon Secada, and Andy Garcia, as well as NBC Universal, Telemundo, Lifetime, HBO, MTV/VH1, CMT, DirecTV, Sony Music, Epic Records and EMI.

ROBERT AND MO SAY KEEP IN MIND...

We were hired to shoot three television commercials in one day on greenscreen. Due to the time constraints, we wanted to be able to do live greenscreen with the modeled set built in After Effects and capture all the footage seamlessly during the shoot. To do this, we assembled an on-set, direct-to-disk, shoot-capture-edit configuration that let us check a greenscreen actor's action relative to the virtual background on location. After using the AJA Io HD box on the commercials, we moved confidently to our next two projects: a music video (scheduled for worldwide release this fall on MTV BASE) and reality/talk show pilot for well-known Nigerian actress/singer Dakore Egbuson. We used our greenscreen setup again and got the same great results. This job was a multi-camera, multi-scene, music video, and we were ready for it with the AJA box. (Tutorial written by Robert W. Walker and Deb Snyder.)



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STEP 5 DROP IT ON A TIMELINE

For Playback: Feed the monitor a component signal from the AJA Io HD box. When Final Cut Pro is in **Capture** mode, the signal is passed through to the Panasonic monitor. To check playback, simply drop a take onto a timeline and hit **Play**.

STEP 6 SHOOT THE PERFORMANCE FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES

In order to simulate a "live/switched" feel in the final spots, each performance is shot from different angles—never moving the camera. Direct the talent to perform to camera, then shoot each performance wide, medium and tight. Next, "rotate" the talent—have him face fixed targets that are placed camera-left and -right as he repeats his performances. An important step here is to adjust the lighting so that the different angles will edit together convincingly. Again, simply selecting a frame from a known "Master" take, and displaying it on the monitor will allow you to adjust the lighting by eye. Once the lighting is



roughed in, it's a simple matter of switching back and forth from the still frame to the live input to fine-tune light positions and levels.

This attention to detail and the dancer's ability to precisely repeat his moves ensures that the final edit will go smoothly. You can create rough cuts on the set, most of which are used as templates to create the final edit for compositing.

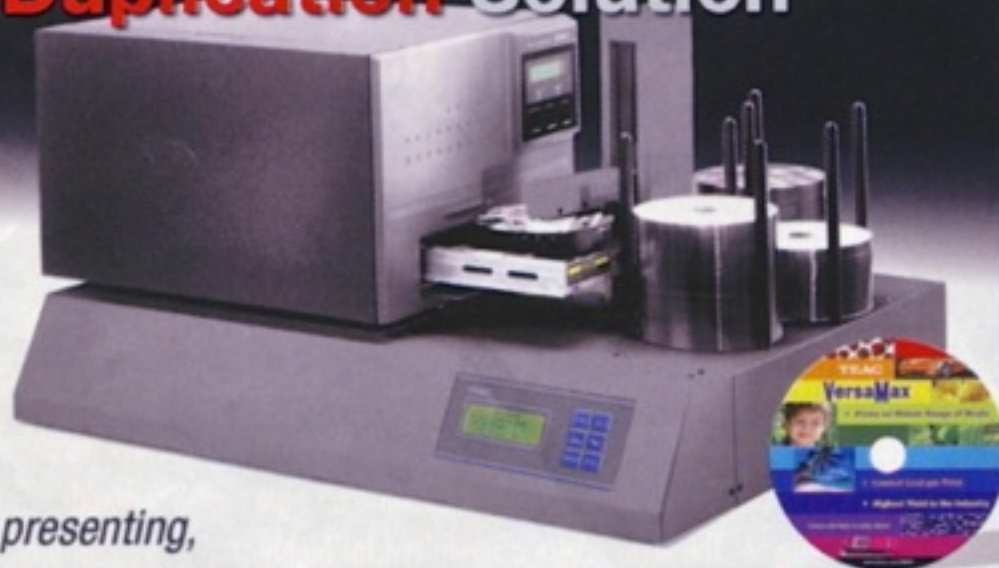
STEP 7 GENERATE YOUR COMPOSITE ON SET

Set up the background elements in 3D space within After Effects, to match the POV of each camera angle that was shot. Whenever the shot cuts from one angle to another simply switch the "camera" in After Effects to match. Your lighting efforts on the set mean there will be almost zero need to correct anything in post.

Finally, establish and apply one overall color-correction look to the dancer in each scene. The 3D elements (client logo, as if it were a huge sign hung in limbo in the background, and 3D "speakers" on each side of the dancer) are "lit" in After Effects to match the dancer's environment. The final bit of tweaking to sell each shot is the judicious use of virtual depth of field, adjusted for each camera angle and framing.



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