



Creative journey

Independent filmmaker sheds light on Kosovo in feature film documentary produced using Adobe® Production Studio software



Until a few years ago, editing a feature-length documentary film using desktop software on a laptop computer would have been unheard of; that's no longer the case. Documentary filmmaker Isaac Anderson of Vision FilmWorks can attest that his two laptop computers running Adobe Production Studio software—including Adobe Premiere® Pro, After Effects®, Adobe Audition®, Illustrator® CS2, and Photoshop® CS2—excel at the task. He is using Adobe Production Studio to edit *Kosovo*, a documentary detailing life in a country torn by decades of strife.

“Adobe Production Studio is greatly simplifying my workflow because it is so well integrated and powerful,” says Anderson. “Adobe software gives me professional-quality tools for everything from general video editing to advanced color grading.”

“The quality and potential of HDV far exceeds DV. Better yet, the seamless support and speed of HDV editing using Adobe Premiere Pro makes working in HDV just as easy as working in DV.”

Isaac Anderson, documentary filmmaker, founder, Vision FilmWorks

Adobe Production Studio running on two Dell Precision M70 mobile workstations proved ideal for the unique demands of making *Kosovo*. Due to constant power outages in the country, the need for ultra mobility, and a tight shooting schedule, Anderson needed a solution that would enable him to shoot and edit hours of high-definition video (HDV) footage in the field. By shooting in HDV, Anderson was able to maintain both the highest possible quality and his creative freedom while using the smallest possible camera. And he was able to operate on batteries—all without compromising quality. “With Dell workstations, portable LaCie hard drives, CineForm’s ultra-efficient Aspect HD codec software, and Adobe Production Studio, my feature-length film was truly a mobile project,” he says.

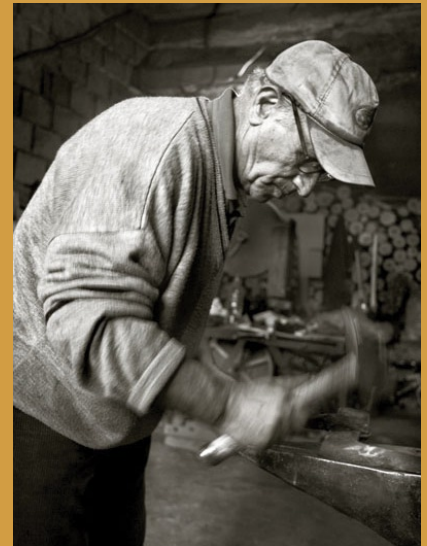
A study in contrasts

Anderson has been shooting footage in Kosovo since 1999; during this time, he has gained a deep understanding of the country and its culture, and empathy for the people. His film offers insights into life after the war. Although the film touches on history to set the context, the main focus is on life in the country today, where consistent electricity, running water, and job security are casualties of war and life is a study in contrasts. For instance, Kosovo is home to one of the richest mines in the world, Trepca. Although gold and an array of other valuable metals rest several feet below the streets, many people in the Trepca area live as refugees. The local theater, library, and school remain vacant, standing as silent reminders of a war where the value of gold outweighed the value of life.

Attempting to accurately convey life in Kosovo, Anderson’s hidden and ultracompact cameras allowed him to discreetly enter into a foreign war-torn world where the average family lives on less than \$200 per month. Despite its economic collapse and political instability, Anderson reports that Kosovo remains a land full of life, where everyone has a story and every story has come at a great price. Vision FilmWorks is attempting to remain faithful to these stories, and to the people who have endured incomprehensible odds to tell them.

Anderson plans to use some of his older footage, shot on DV in the documentary, but the bulk of the documentary will be HDV footage shot with a Sony HVR-Z1U. “I’m amazed at the film-like results I’m able to capture, especially when using Century Optics’ line of lenses and filters,” says Anderson. “Century Optic’s tools give me the creative freedom to take HDV to the limit.”

Filmmaker Isaac Anderson used hidden and ultracompact cameras to discreetly capture life in Kosovo. To maintain the highest possible quality, he shot in HDV using the smallest possible cameras. He used Adobe Production Studio running on laptop computers for preliminary editing in the field.





Anderson has been filming in Kosovo since 1999. In 2005, he joined up with local filmmaker Luli Hoti, who helped Anderson gain access to people and insights into some of the area's most sensitive issues.

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Isaac Anderson, founder, Vision FilmWorks

During his last shoot, in winter 2005, Anderson teamed up with a local filmmaker Luli Hoti, whose experiences and insights guided Anderson. As a native, Hoti was able to open doors for Anderson that enabled him to deal with issues that would otherwise not be accessible to a foreign journalist.

Post-production polishing

After years filming in the Balkans, Anderson had more than 130 hours of footage and a compelling story. In January 2006, after rough editing in the field, Anderson started post-production on *Kosovo*, cutting, color correcting, and fine-tuning his film. In the field, Anderson used CineForm Aspect HD software to convert his HDV footage to high-definition (HD) files. Once the files were converted, Anderson could edit his HD footage in real-time using Adobe Premiere Pro. “It’s amazing to be working with true 1920x1080 frame sizes in real-time using Adobe Premiere Pro on a laptop,” says Anderson.

Anderson began by seamlessly integrating his footage with PAL and NTSC standard definition video, as well as with 4K high-resolution stills cleaned up and retouched using Adobe Photoshop CS2 software. Anderson raves about how Adobe Premiere Pro software handles HDV: “The quality and potential of HDV far exceeds DV,” says Anderson. “Better yet, the seamless support and speed of HDV editing using Adobe Premiere Pro makes working in HDV just as easy as working in DV.”

As the project progresses, Anderson is keeping his footage organized using subclips in Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0, which allows him to split his master clips into smaller individual subclips that reference the designated portion of the master clip. Using subclips keeps the file size manageable and system performance more responsive, and allows for better organization of the project. Anderson can trim, apply effects, and rename subclips just as he would a master clip.

Anderson passes edited portions of the video to Adobe After Effects for color correction, effects, and animating the film’s title sequences, which were created using Photoshop CS2. The Dynamic Link feature lets him make updates to the titles quickly and easily as he works on refining them.

The ability to copy and paste an Adobe Premiere Pro timeline into After Effects without re-rendering sequences saves Anderson countless time as he moves between the two programs. He is also using the advanced Adobe Bridge file browser to organize video and still assets and use them in various software applications. And with Adobe Encore® DVD software, Anderson can quickly export files from the Adobe Premiere Pro timeline to create standard-definition DVDs for review and distribution.



The Kosovo countryside and cities provide a stunning backdrop to Anderson's film, *Kosovo*. He used Adobe Production Studio for everything from basic editing to advanced color grading.

For Anderson, Adobe software is key to realizing his creative vision as an independent filmmaker affordably and efficiently. Adobe Premiere Pro has been his mainstay nonlinear editing software for years; and after using the full Adobe Production Studio, Anderson attests that he's sold on Adobe software today more than ever. "I've tried countless other professional editing software and hardware packages," says Anderson. "I prefer Adobe Premiere Pro hands down because of its stability and integration with other Adobe tools."

For more information on Vision FilmWorks and *Kosovo*, please visit www.adobe.com/motion/VisionFilmKosovo.html. For more stories like this, please visit www.adobe.com/motion/customerstories.html.

Company

Vision FilmWorks

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Challenges

- Edit in the field, often during electrical outages
- Digitize, organize, and track 130 hours of source footage
- Create a professional-quality project on a low budget
- Create a high-quality audio track based on originals made in noisy and difficult conditions
- Moved edited segments among applications without re-rendering

Solution

Use Adobe Production Studio software on laptop computers for preliminary editing in the field and for post-production.

Benefits

- Cut video in the field using battery-powered laptop computers
- Tracked source footage using subclips in Adobe Premiere Pro, and organized files using Adobe Bridge
- Achieved professional-quality results on a shoestring budget
- Dramatically improved audio quality by using Adobe Audition
- Saved hours of production time using Dynamic Link

Toolkit

- Adobe Production Studio. Components used include:
 - Adobe After Effects
 - Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0
 - Adobe Photoshop CS2
 - Adobe Audition
 - Adobe Encore DVD
 - Adobe Illustrator CS2
 - Adobe Dynamic Link
 - Adobe Bridge
- Two Dell Precision M70 mobile workstations
- Sony HVR-Z1U camera
- Century Optics filters, lenses, and matte box
- CineForm Aspect HD software
- LaCie hard drives

"Adobe Production Studio is amazing, especially because with Dynamic Link, I don't need to render After Effects comps when I bring them into Adobe Premiere Pro. I can't imagine editing this documentary using any other software," says Anderson. "All of the Adobe tools work together smoothly, giving me the freedom to quickly and easily work through post-production without sacrificing quality."

Exceptional audio made easy

To edit and sweeten the audio for the film, Anderson is using Adobe Audition. The Edit in Adobe Audition feature—a menu item in Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0 and After Effects 7.0—allows Anderson to open an audio track directly in Adobe Audition 2.0 for editing. This feature eliminates the need to export a file, import it into Adobe Audition, and then do the reverse to get the edited audio file back. Anderson is using the noise reduction capabilities in Adobe Audition to improve audio quality. "Adobe Audition is the perfect tool for dramatically improving the quality of production audio—a necessity for documentaries shot in difficult and noisy conditions," says Anderson.

