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Larry Jordan's Monthly Newsletter

Editor: Larry Jordan
Issue #73 - Nov/Dec. 2010

Here's the latest edition of my FREE monthly **Final Cut Studio Newsletter** for November/December, 2010. This is my FIRST issue for December. You can [read the second issue here](#).

The goal of this newsletter is to provide information helpful to the interested user of Final Cut Studio. This newsletter publishes each month, past issues are [available in my store](#). All software references are to Final Cut Studio (3) unless otherwise noted.

Please invite your friends to visit my website -- www.larryjordan.biz. There you'll find daily tips, the latest industry news, and over [500 articles](#) and tutorials to help you get the most out of Final Cut Studio!

If you haven't done so already, please subscribe to this FREE newsletter -- [subscribe here](#). Then, follow us online -- including our **NEW YouTube channel!**

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WRAP-UP

WELCOME

Wow! Where did the time go?

I looked up and, suddenly, the end of the year is barreling down on me. Seems like I totally missed November. Hope you had a great Thanksgiving?!

So, I'm hoping to do TWO newsletters between now and the end of the year to catch up. It sounds good in theory, but we shall see...

Things are busy around here. Our [on-line webinars](#) are continuing to grow; though I'm discovering it takes a lot of research to come up with new material each week. Our podcast, the [Digital Production Buzz](#), is now heard in 100 countries around the world! We've expanded significantly into social media -- our [YouTube Channel](#) is taking off with over 10,000 views and growing at about 10% a week -- as well as [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

In fact, later in this issue, I'm starting a new feature called "[Facebook Conversations](#)," which presents a recent conversation with our readers on that site.

This month's issue features a variety of tutorials that I discovered while researching material for my webinars. There are some very cool tricks here that I'm looking forward to sharing with you.

Finally, this is the holiday season. A time to reconnect with friends and family. On behalf of all of us here, **I wish you the very best of the season.** I love what I do, but what makes it truly worthwhile is your feedback and support.

As Charles Dickens wrote in the *Christmas Carol*: "God bless us, everyone."

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ADD YOUR COMMENTS TO OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Our YouTube Channel is up and cruising with over 50 training videos posted. We'd love to hear from you.

Take a minute to [visit our channel](#) and add your comments.

I always enjoy hearing from you.

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TECHNIQUE: NAILING DOWN FINAL CUT PRO'S ANCHOR POINT

It's hidden in plain sight, near the top of the Motion tab in Final Cut Pro: Anchor Point. But, what does it do?



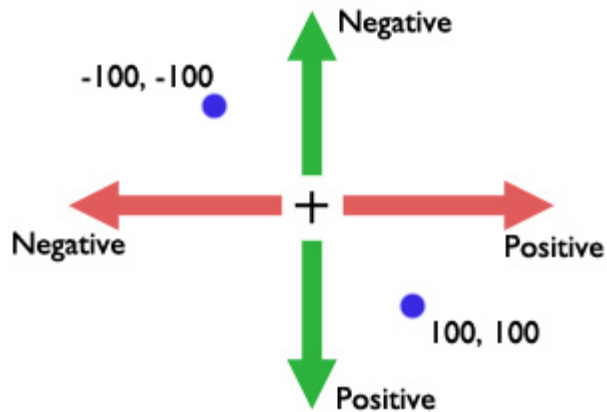
FINDING YOUR CENTER

Before we jump into this, we need an essential bit of background. By default, Final Cut calculates all its effects, moves, and positioning relative to the dead center of the Canvas or Viewer. This is illustrated by the Center parameter (above) consisting of two boxes, each containing "0".

The left "0" refers to the horizontal position of something, while the right "0" refers to the vertical position of something. By default, Final Cut places the center of an image in the center of the Canvas (or Viewer). **This position is called the zero point; or, sometimes, the 0,0 point.**

NOTE: Photoshop puts its 0,0 point in the top left corner of an image. FCP uses dead center. It always needs to be somewhere, but it isn't necessarily the same between applications.

The **Center** parameter determines where the center of an image is placed, relative to the center of the window. When it is set to 0,0 the image is placed in the center of the Canvas (or Viewer). Keep in mind that just because an object is at the center of the frame (0,0) does not mean it is full size. **Scale** controls size, **Center** controls position.



We use Center to move an image away from the zero point. In the illustration above, to move an image to the left, you enter a **negative** number in the left-hand box of the Center parameter. To move the image right, you enter a **positive** number in the left-hand box. To move an image up, enter a **negative** number in the right-hand box, and to move it down, enter a **positive** number in the right-hand box.

Thus, negative numbers move an image up and left, while positive numbers move down and right.

The blue dot in the upper left has a coordinate position of **-100, -100**. The blue dot in the lower right has a coordinate position of **100, 100**. Using this coordinate system for the Center parameter, you can position an image anywhere in the Canvas (or Viewer).

NOTE: Because the zero point is in the center, you can place two objects equally on either side of the zero point by simply changing the sign of a number. This makes it very easy to create symmetrical layouts.

THROWING DOWN AN ANCHOR

What the Anchor Point setting allows us to do is to change where Final Cut places this zero point for two other Motion tab parameters: Scale and Rotation.



For example, setting the Anchor Point to -100, -100 doesn't change how the image is displayed. That's because the Anchor Point works in tandem with two other settings: Center and Rotation. (Image courtesy of Pond5.com.)



Here's an example. Both the Center and Anchor Points are set to **0,0**. I rotated the image **45°**. As you would expect, it rotates around the center of the image.



Now, I've moved the anchor point to **-960,0** (this is a 1920 x 1080 HD clip), and see that the image now rotates on its **left** edge. The anchor point determines the point around which rotation occurs.



Here, I've changed the anchor point to **0,-540** and the image rotates on its **top** edge.

While the Anchor Point determines the point around which an image rotates, less obvious, but still powerful, is that the Anchor Point also controls the point from which an image zooms.

Let me illustrate.



Here, I've scaled an image to **50%**. As you would expect, it scales from the center of the image.



Now, I've moved the Anchor Point to **960, 540** (the lower right corner) and notice where the image scales from! (Correct, the lower right corner.)

Changing the anchor point is a great way to simplify animating zooms, because you can put the anchor point on the spot you want to zoom into, or from, without having to keyframe the Center parameter during the zoom.

Cool.

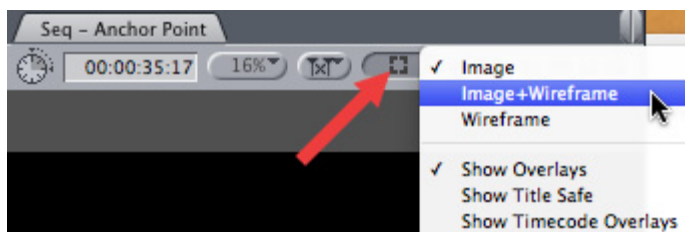
ANCHORING YOUR, UM, ANCHOR

Except, how do you move the anchor point? Entering the right numbers into the Anchor Point setting can be overwhelming for the numerically challenged.

Is there no option? Can no one come to our rescue? Where's a superhero when we need one??

Fortunately, we have one. Masquerading as a mild-mannered icon that absolutely nobody understands, is the **Distort** tool. This tool has the power to move Anchor Points. Wow.

Here's how it works.

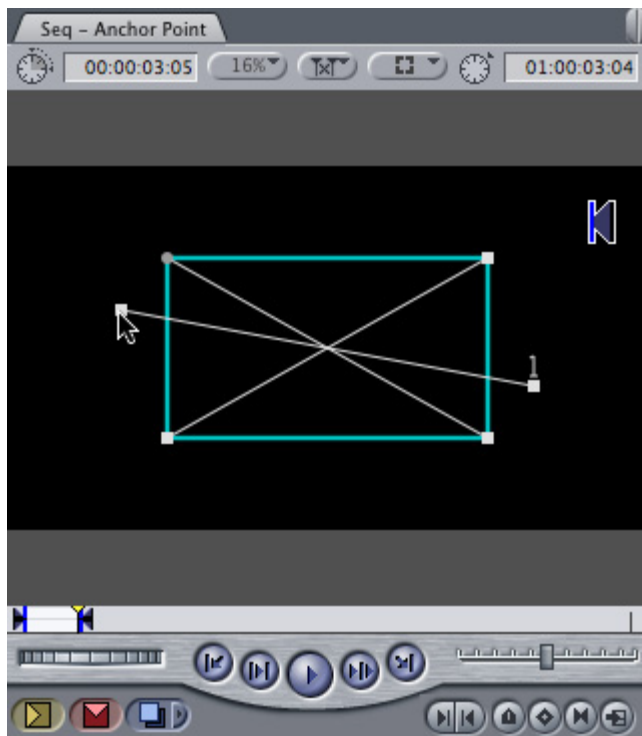


Select your clip in the Timeline.

From the top-right pop-up menu, change the setting to **Image+Wireframe**. The white **X** highlights the selected clip. (Those with REALLY good eyesight will notice a small number just above the center of the X. This is the number of the track the selected clip is located on.)



From the Tool palette, select the Distort tool. (Second from bottom, keyboard shortcut: **D**.)



Using the Distort tool, grab the small square in the center of the X and drag it. This is the Anchor Point. Drag the Anchor Point where ever you want it. (In the example above, I turned off the image to make the Anchor Point easier to see.)

Simple - and very fast. And who knew the Distort tool had such power lurking under the surface?

Equally cool.

Webinar Note: Have you ever wondered if you knew as much as you should about the Motion tab in Final Cut? Well, here's your chance to learn more. I've created a webinar titled: [Secrets of the Motion Tab: Making Things Move in Final Cut Pro](#). This one-hour tutorial walks you through everything you need to know to make the Motion tab create magic for you.

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SPECIAL OFFER:

BUY ONE WEBINAR, GET "GROW YOUR BUSINESS" FREE

Thinking of my on-line training, reminds me that we have a special offer from now 'til Christmas.

Buy any of my webinars and **get "Grow Your Business" FREE.**

This year has been a hard one for many of us. Clients have disappeared, jobs have vanished, and budgets are in the tank. I wanted to do something to help. So, I created a webinar devoted to helping us find and keep clients.

This is also the reason I created the Buzz Shout-out! A chance for you to showcase your best work and attract clients to your site. More on this in a bit.

As a thank you for your support during this last year, I'm **offering this title free** when you buy any other title. This is a \$35 value.

Here's a list of all our webinars. Purchase the ones that interest you. And, by separate email, we will send you the download link for your FREE copy of Grow Your Business.

Happy Holidays from Us!

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TECHNIQUE: CREATE A REFLECTION IN MOTION

OK, I confess. Motion has intimidated the heck out of me for a long time. I avoided using it as much as possible. I read the books, took the tests, but never liked the program.

However, recently, I reluctantly acknowledged that LiveType is not coming back. It was time to make my peace with Motion.

Over the years, I've discovered that the best way to learn something is to teach it. So I spent several weeks putting together my three Motion webinars, so that I could explain the software in ways that both you and I could understand.

NOTE: If you need help learning the Motion interface, I strongly recommend you view my webinar "Master Motion" which walks you through everything you need to know.

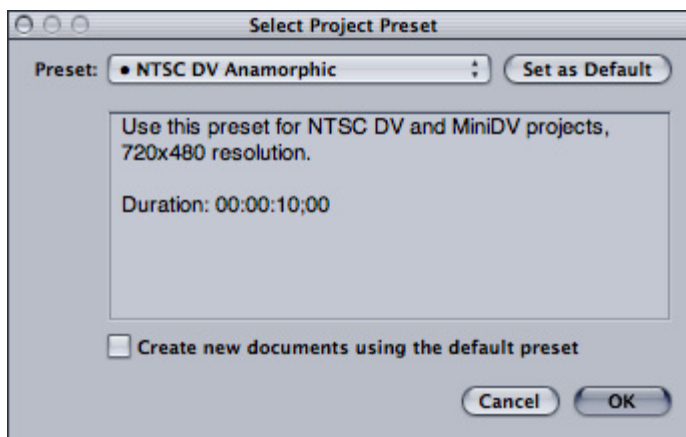


One of the effects I wanted to create for my training was a reflection of a moving clip of video. This is what we are going to create in this technique.

NOTE: Thanks to a quick note from **Adam Sumner**, I realized that this effect is in Motion 4 only.

THE PROCESS

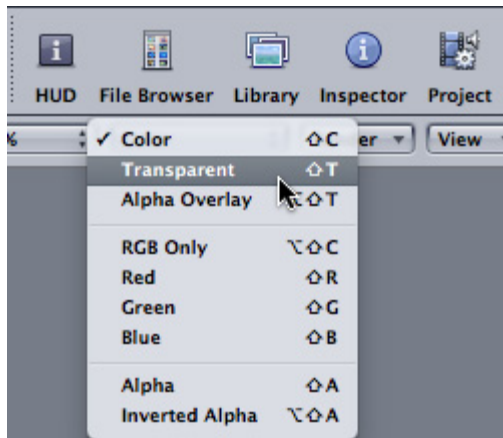
Create a new Motion project (**File > New**).



In this example, I'm using **NTSC DV Anamorphic** as my project preset. Just as you need to tell FCP what video format you are using, you need to do the same thing for Motion. However, the techniques in this article will work for any video format you select.

Reflections require two things:

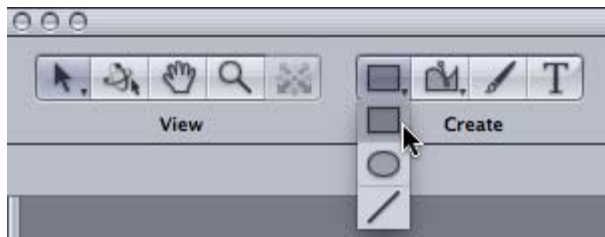
- A source object
- An object for the source to reflect upon.



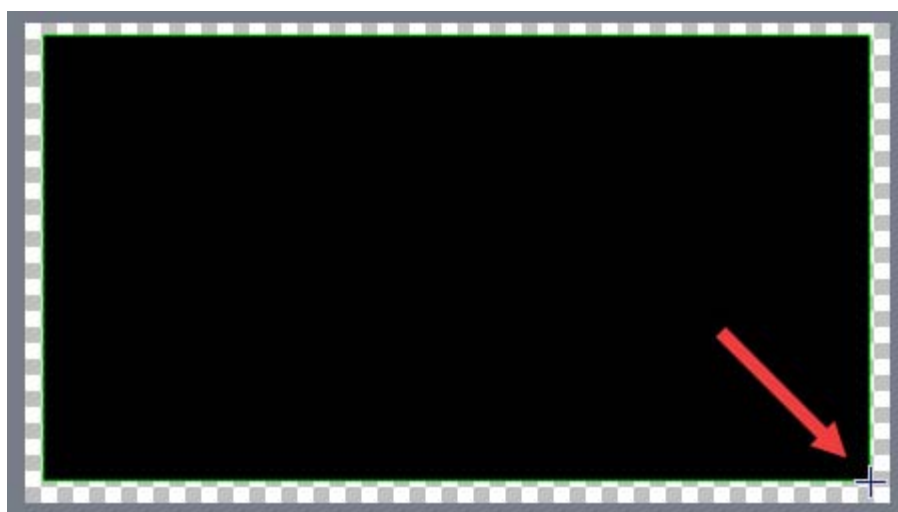
Since we generally use black surfaces for reflections, we need to change the background color of Motion from **Black** to **Transparent** so we can see what we are doing. You change this using the **Color** pop-up menu in the top-right corner of the Motion Canvas window.

To keep this technique simple, I'm just going to create two objects: a source and a surface. The source is a colorful video clip. The reflecting surface is what we are going to create now.

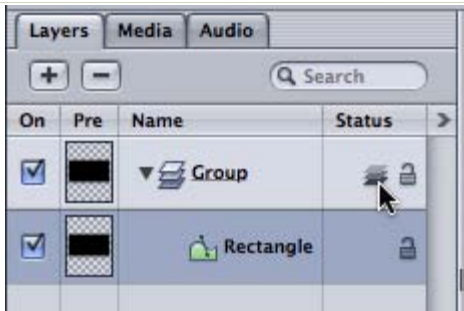
1. If you are playing your project, stop playback.
2. Position your playhead at the beginning of this project (press **Home**).



3. In the Motion toolbar in the top left corner of the Canvas, click the **Rectangle** tool located in the Create group. (I've found that creating reflections is easier if you create the background first, then add the source objects.)



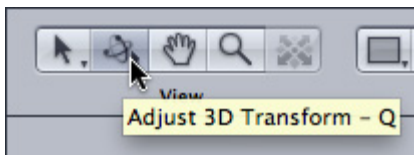
4. Draw a rectangle so that it fills most of the Canvas. The exact size is not important.



5. Reflections can only be added in 3D space. Which means we need to switch Motion from 2D to 3D. To do this, press **F5** to display the Layers pane.

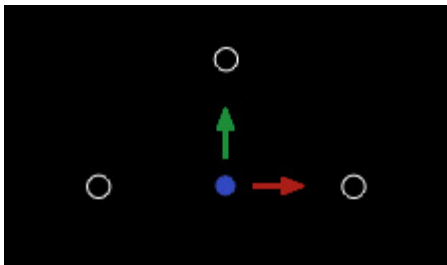
6. Then, on the right side of Group bin are three gray shapes, laid side-by-side. Click them so they are stacked on top of each other. This converts the Group bin from 2D to 3D space.

If you look very, very carefully at the Canvas you'll see that absolutely nothing has changed. This is because Motion does all its calculating in 3D space, even if you are working in 2D. This means that changing this setting won't change any of your objects in the Canvas.



7. Go back to the Toolbar, at the top, and click the **Adjust 3D Transform** tool (shortcut: **Q**).

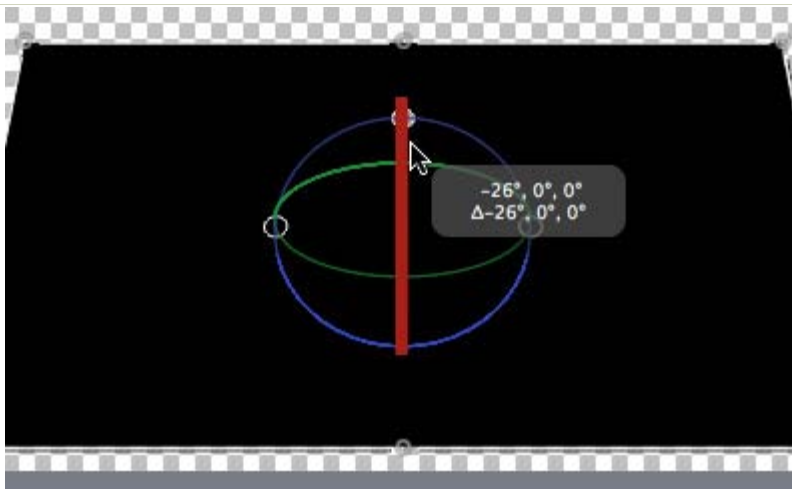
8. If the rectangle is not selected in the Layers pane, please select it.



Inside the image of the rectangle, in the Canvas, three white circles, a green arrow, a red arrow, and a blue dot now appear. These allow us to move and rotate an object in three dimensions:

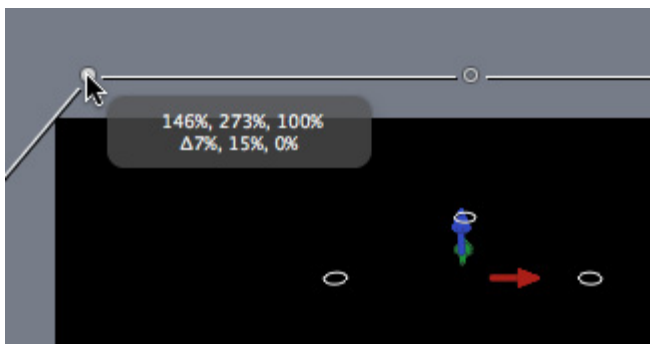
- Red = Horizontal
- Green = Vertical
- Blue = Depth

NOTE: Think R/G/B - Horizontal/Vertical/Depth. Clever, these programmers.



9. Click in the top circle and a red line appears, which allows you to rotate the rectangle back in depth. (You can experiment with other circles in this control, but the red one is all we need to change.)

Rotate Red back until its about **-54** degrees. Don't worry if this isn't perfect, there is plenty of time to adjust this later. Notice how the edges of the black rectangle no longer fill the frame. We will constantly be adjusting the size of the rectangle during this exercise so by the end it does fill the frame.



10. Because the rectangle stretches back into space it no longer fills the frame. Hold the **OPTION** key and grab either of the top two corners and stretch the rectangle until it fills the entire frame with black.

NOTE: Holding the Option key adjusts both sides at the same time.

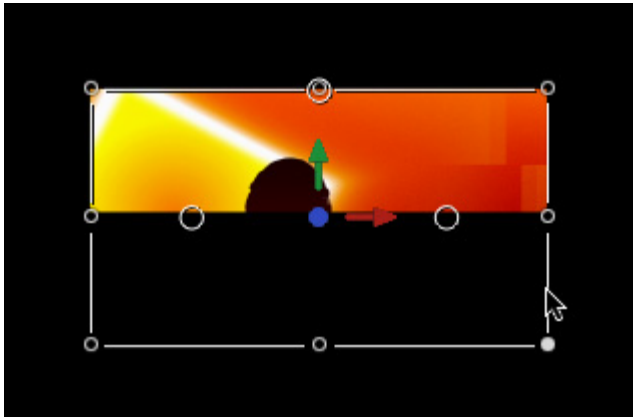


11. Click the **File Browser** tab (in the extreme top left corner) to display your hard disks and file system. Using the Browser in the lower half of this window, find a video clip you want to use as your source image.

12. Select it to load it into the Preview window at the top. Click **Import** to load it into the Canvas.

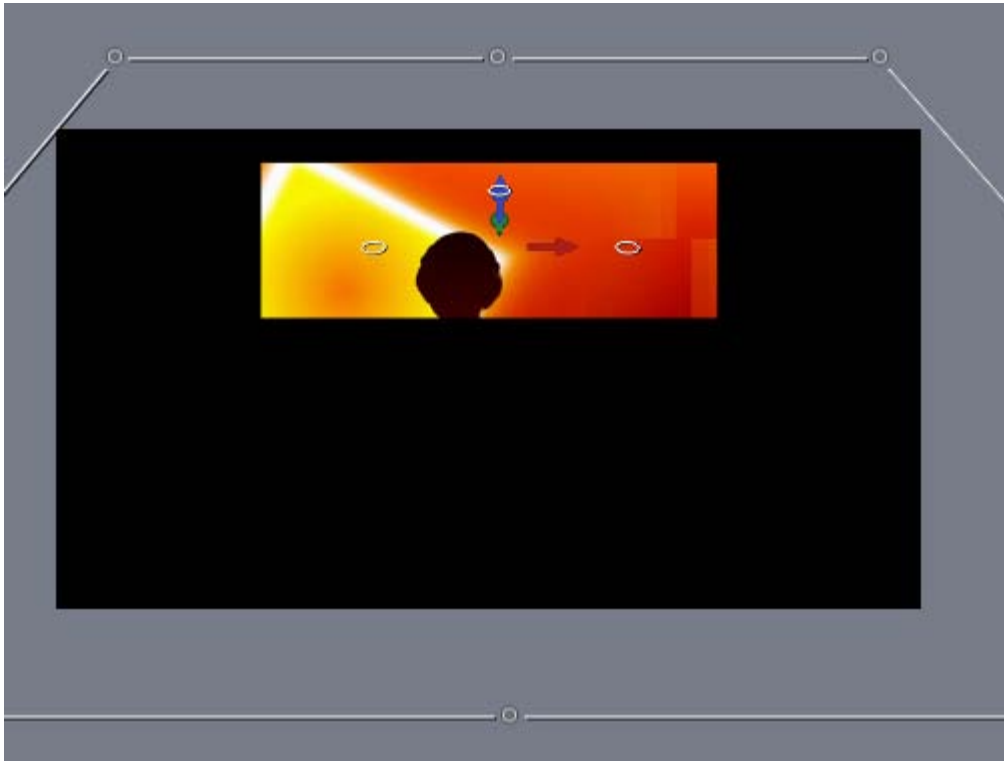
NOTE: When the playhead is not playing, new objects are placed at the position

of the playhead. If the playhead IS playing, objects start at the beginning of the project.



13. Hold **SHIFT** and **OPTION**, then drag any control dot that you see to scale the image smaller. Shift constrains the aspect ratio, while Option scales the image from the center. Make it whatever size you want, but for this, make it small enough to fit in the upper portion of the frame.

If you are like me, the black rectangle slices that image somewhere near the middle.

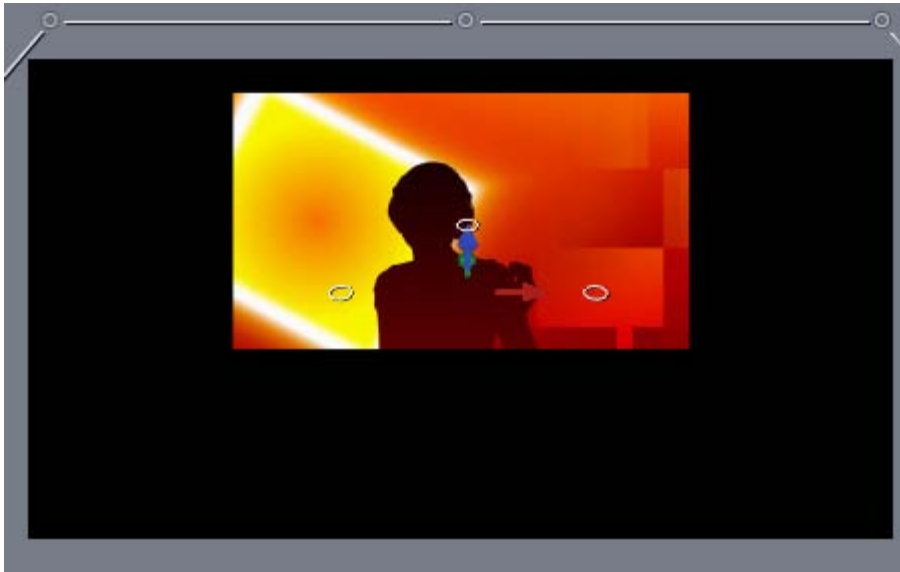


14. So, select the rectangle by clicking it and drag it lower in the frame. You want to see the entire video image of your clip.



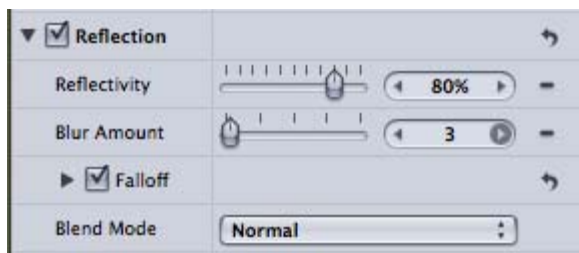
15. If portions of your background appear around the edges of the black rectangle (this is the reason we switched the background display to transparent back at the beginning of this

exercise), grab the edges of the rectangle and resize it until it covers the frame and doesn't block any of the video clip.



Now the cool part starts.

16. Select the rectangle, just in case it isn't selected. Click the Inspector tab (top left corner)



Click the **Properties** tab and turn **ON** Reflection.

Wow!!

Add a few points of **Blur** (I used **3**), and turn **ON** Fall-off.



A very cool reflection effect!

Webinar Note: Has Motion baffled you? Well, I've created a three-part webinar series to help overcome your fear of Motion. They are:

- [Master Motion: Even if Motion Graphics Scare You](#)
- [Advanced Motion: Create a DVD Menu](#)
- [Unlock the Power of 3D Space in Motion](#)

This technique is a simpler version of an exercise in the Motion 3D title.

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OUR GIFT TO YOU -- A FREE WEBINAR!

To celebrate the holidays, we want to offer you a free gift - a free webinar called "Ask Larry Anything!"

Wednesday, Dec. 29, I am hosting three shows - 9 AM, 1 PM, and 5 PM Los Angeles Time.

We have **only 100** seats for each event - so sign up today. This is **totally free** and we have not yet decided if we will provide a downloadable version after the event or not.

[Click here to learn more and register.](#)

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TECHNIQUE:

CREATING TEXT WITH CAST SHADOWS USING TITLE 3D

Here's another technique that grew out of a recent webinar -- creating cast shadows using Boris Title 3D. Title 3D is bundled with your version of Final Cut, so you already have this installed on your system.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Boris Title 3D is not stable inside Final Cut Pro 7 unless you have the latest version; which is free. Please [watch this free demo](#) with instructions on how to find out what version you have and where to upgrade. (The information you need starts about 1:20 in.)



Here's what we are going to create. An outlined, angled clip with a cast shadow. You can't

create this using Final Cut's Text tool.

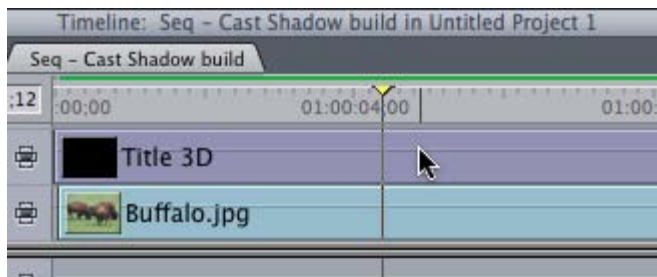
NOTE: This demo should work with every version of Final Cut from about FCP 5 or later.

1. Start by adding a background image to track **V1** in Final Cut Pro.



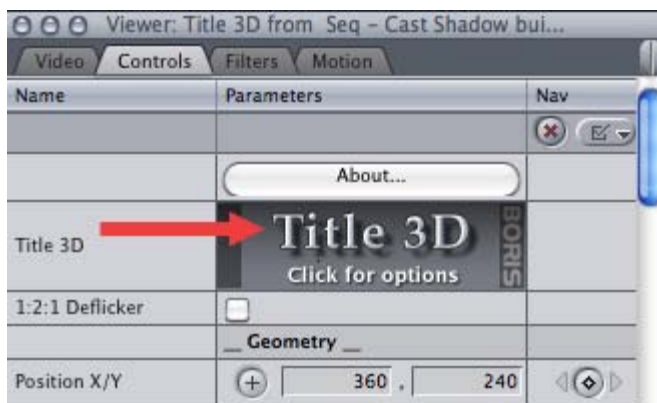
2. Click the **Video** tab in the Viewer and go to the lower right corner and click the **Generator** button. (It has a small letter **A** on it.)

3. From this pop-up, select **Boris > Title 3D**.



4. Edit this clip so it is on the track above your background clip.

5. Double-click the clip to load it into the Viewer and click the **Controls** tab.

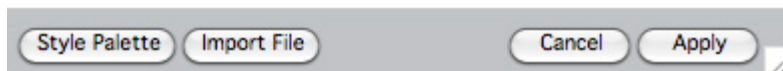


6. Double-click directly on the **Title 3D tile** to open up the text editor.

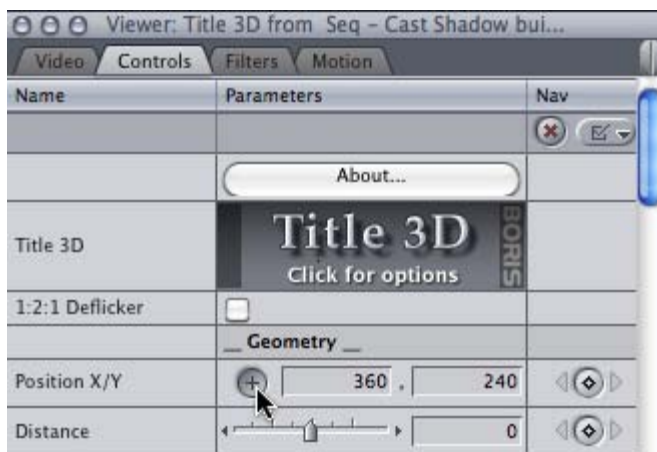


7. Enter the text for your title in the upper portion of this window. For my example, I'm using "Buffalo".

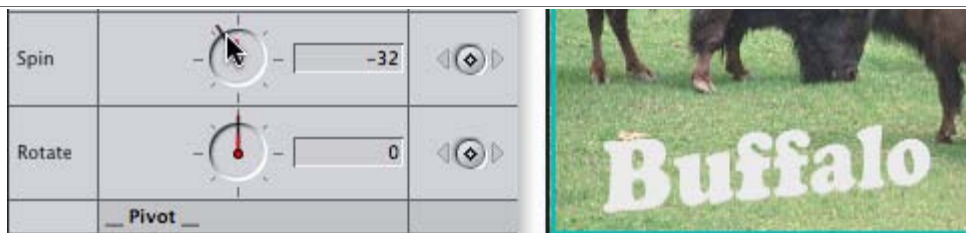
8. In the lower portion of the window set the font and size of the text. In my example, I'm using **96** point **Cooper Black**. Although you can, I'm not making any adjustments to any other setting in this window.



9. Click **Apply** to accept your entry (lower right corner) and look at it in the Canvas. If the position is wrong, **DON'T move** this clip in the Motion tab!



10. Instead, click the cross-hair next to **Position X/Y**, then, without clicking anywhere else, click in the Canvas and drag your text clip where you want it to go.

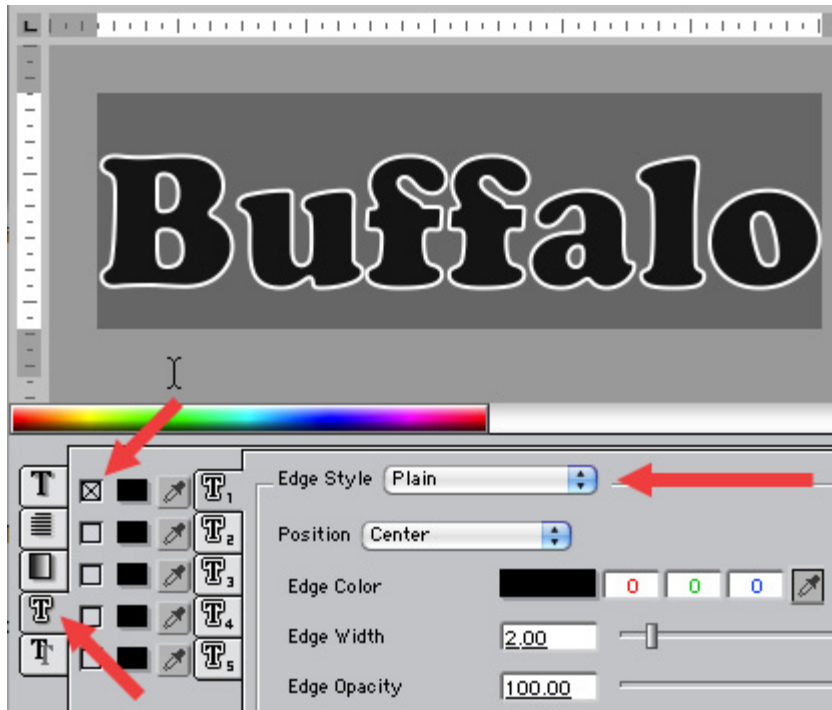


11. Although this is optional, you can impress your friends by scrolling down a little farther in the Viewer and adjust the **Spin** setting. Watch how this provides a 3D perspective to your text.

(Yeah, OK, go ahead and see what **Tumble** and **Rotate** do. I'll wait.....)

We now have our text positioned, rotated, and sized properly. Now to add the shadow.

12. Scroll up to the top of the Viewer and double-click the **Title 3D** tile in the Controls tab.

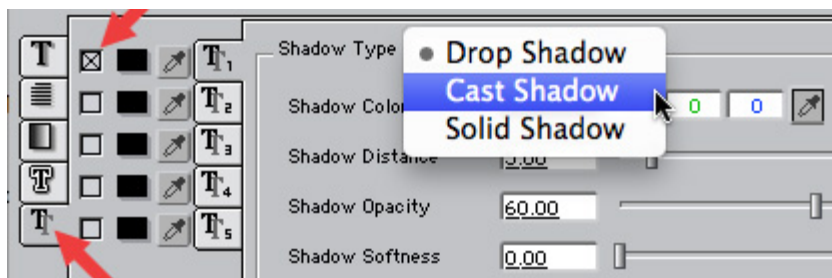


13. In the lower panel, far left side, are five tabs. Click the **fourth** one down. This allows you to add edges and bevels to text.

14. Before you can apply any effects you need to select the text you want to apply it to. So, select your text. (This image shows our text selected with the edge effect applied.)

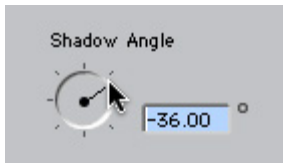
15. Then, click the checkbox for the top box. By default it adds a plain back line around all your text. Since all we want to do is define the edges of the characters a bit better, this is fine. However, feel free to see some of the other choices available.

NOTE: Remember, you need to select your text before you can apply an effect.



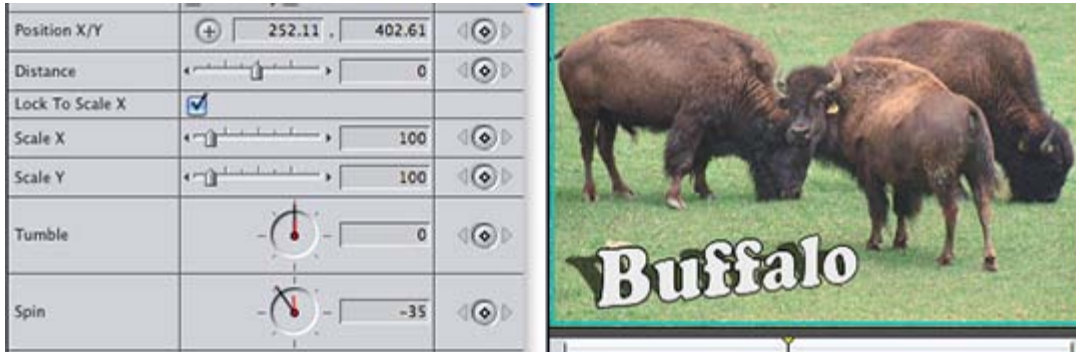
16. To add a cast shadow, click the bottom tab on the left side.

17. Be sure your text is selected, then click the top checkbox, and change the popup menu to **Cast Shadow**.



18. With your text still selected, adjust the shadow angle so it falls in the direction you want. For my example, I set this to **-36°**.

Click the **Apply** button and admire your new effect.



Cool, again!

Webinar Note: I've created an hour-long webinar filled with how to create fascinating effects using Title 3D. To learn more, [click here](#).

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A FACEBOOK CONVERSATION

Recently, on our [Facebook page](#), I started a conversation with readers when I asked: "The industry is committed to tapeless video. What are your biggest challenges with it?"

Over 1,700 people read this and many responded. I thought you'd be interested in a summary of what they had to say.

Noel McElligott Storage, damn hard drives break all the time!

Larry Jordan Noel, I've been writing and talking about storage for a long time. It is even more important than the speed or RAM of your computer. Here's a tutorial that explains more: <http://tinyurl.com/2vup8d6>

Daniel Jacobs Archive!

Caps H I [have to] check all the time for supporting files.

Michael J. Müller Backup and archive.

Larry Jordan Daniel, Michael, Brian, I agree that archiving is critical - and it's easy to do IF you have a lot of money. It's figuring out how to do it safely and cheaply that is the challenge today. I'll look into this further and see what I can do.

Rick Jones Conversions. If only all formats could be edited natively. Getting closer but not there yet.

Larry Jordan Rick, in spite of appearances, you don't WANT to edit all formats natively. Many times there are too many trade-offs when editing a file in its native format. H.264 is a classic example. So is MPEG-2. It is far better to convert formats that take forever to render (HDV) into something that renders much faster and with higher quality (ProRes). Here's a Tutorial I did that goes into a lot more detail about this: <http://tinyurl.com/3yig93w>

Neil Gregory [I agree with] what Rick said. When will FCP work with P2 raw files without transcoding, please?

Brian Pshyk Larry, for me it is archive with non-client content.

Jim Burns I already own 7 devices that use tapes. There is no compelling reason for me to move to a tapeless workflow. I'll try to hold out for as long as it makes sense.

Don Lewis Tapes, Tapes, Tapes. We all have so many of them. And what about storage degeneration? How long can we store to tapeless media, or our external HDs, for that matter?

Ludwig Schramm backup and archive

Julie Smith Stoecker Fear of loosing my original footage. At least with a tape, I can recapture it if the file gets lost or corrupted. I can't do that with tapeless. Space is also an issue, affordable space that is.

Peter Neill In local TV news, keeping track of memory cards, which are substantially more expensive than tape and compatibility issues - e.g. Quantel SqEdit doesn't recognize AVI files.

Matt O'Connor loss of raw footage - I've still got the very first mini dv tape I shot on (1996) and it still plushest on a JVC GY-HM100U ("Apple Cam") in March 2010, files corrupted and I lost the lotted the client.

Lance Ogren While sometimes it's nice to have the original raw footage on tape, I occasionally spend too much time searching for an old clip that strikes my fancy..... and then what about all the tapes I've got for the cameras I had to sell when I upgraded. It's a pain to keep borrowing different decks, but I don't use the tapes enough to make buying a deck worthwhile. Sometimes I wish I had all the raw footage already digitized and backed up on hard drive. Wait, at least I've got easy access to all the Tapeless footage.

Johannes Schoutsen Simple, Archiving! I film on average about 140GB a weekend. This material sits on the Drobo till they come into the pipeline for the edit. The time it takes from Post to Delivery is a stressful time, for I do not have a hard copy (tape) of [my source media.]

Gerald Davenport Well, it's all been mentioned: archiving, conversions, storage space, and.... you know with new technology that fixes or makes some things more convenient it breaks the bonds on others. Nothing is 100% prefect for everyone or every need.

Derrick Charleston Getting different software/computers to "talk" to the cards. Too many CODECS. It's a "pissing" contest now. There needs to be a universal acceptance like mini DV tape was so simple! It just WORKED!

Larry Jordan Derrick: I agree that simplification is ideal. However, it won't happen in the near future, it will only get worse. Sigh...

Share in the conversation - visit our [Facebook page](#) and join in!

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TECHNIQUE: CONVERTING AUDIO FILES FOR FINAL CUT PRO

This next tutorial came from a question that **Derrick C.** asked us on [Facebook](#), but it has a longer answer:

Why doesn't MP3 audio play nicely with Final Cut Pro? What audio formats do?

The answer is because Final Cut Pro was invented to support only uncompressed audio files. There are only three audio formats that Final Cut supports: **AIF** (and **AIFF**), **WAV** (and **Broadcast WAV**), and **SDII**. All compressed formats (like **MP3** and **AAC**) need to be converted into an uncompressed format before you can edit them.

You can do this conversion in Soundtrack Pro, QuickTime, Compressor, or lots of different audio applications. [Here's an old article](#) that explains how to do this in earlier versions of QuickTime.

In this technique, I'll show you how to do this more easily in Compressor. Apple's Compressor allows us to easily convert a file from compressed to uncompressed. Here's how.

1. Open Compressor.



2. Drag the audio file you want to convert into the gray box with the downward pointing arrow.



3. Click the **Settings** tab (lower left) to select it. It is generally selected by default.

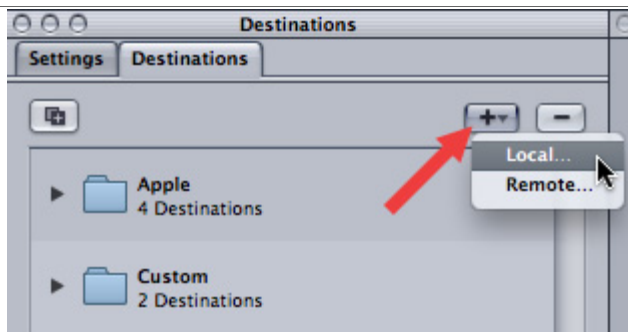
4. In the search box, type **AIF** and press **Enter**. There are four existing presets to convert your audio file. For video, the best choice is **AIFF 48:16**.



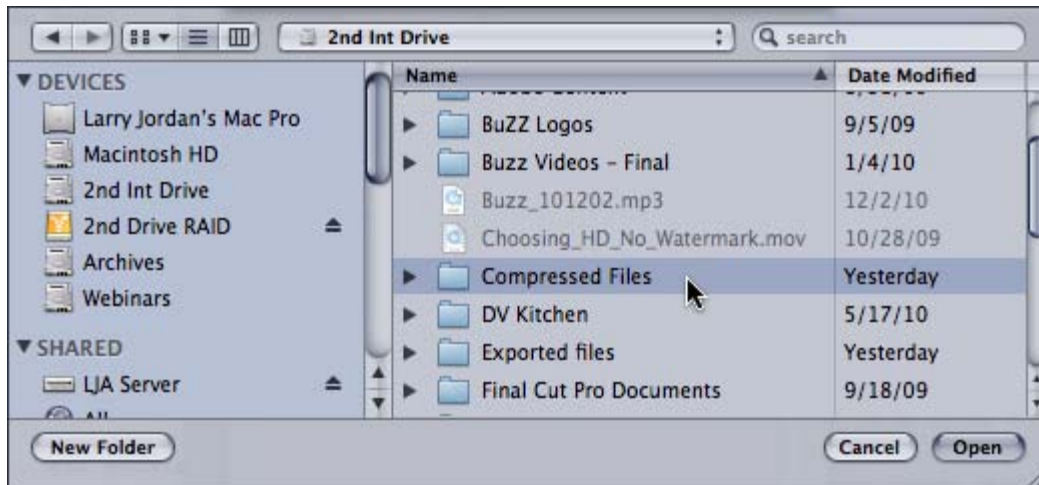
5. Grab the **AIFF 48:16** setting and drag it into the Task Bar (top window) and drop it on the file you just imported. (Not in the drop box with the audio file, just anywhere in the Task Bar.)

Once you start compression, by default, it will store your audio file at the same location as the source file. While this works, I long ago developed an improved workflow.

6. Click the **Destination** tab to select it. (It's just to the right of the Settings tab.)

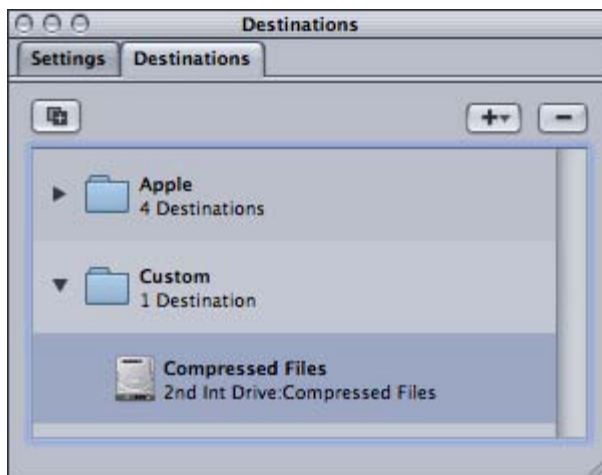


7. Click the **Plus** key to create a new destination for all your compressed files.



8. Then, on your second drive create a new folder called **Compressed Files**. (Locating this folder on your second drive is not required, but I find it helpful to always store my media on a drive other than the boot drive.)

9. Click **OK** to accept that location.



A new destination, called "Compressed Files" now appears in the Custom folder.



Drag that new destination up to the Task Bar and drop it on top of the existing destination.



So, the steps to compress a file are to:

- Import the file into the Task Bar (dragging is the fastest way)
- Apply a compression setting
- Apply a destination
- Make sure your file name is OK, change it if necessary.

Press **Submit** (the first time) to send the file into compression.

Press **Submit** a second time to tell your computer it's time to get started.

This is fast, with high-quality, and you already have all the software you need to convert your audio.

What makes this REALLY efficient, though, is to automate this entire process by creating a droplet. Then, you can just drop any audio files that you need to convert directly on the droplet and everything is automatic.

[Here's an article](#) that explains how to create a droplet to automate your compression.

UPDATE - DEC. 20, 2010

Mike Jankowski writes:

Larry, as usual your newsletter is wonderful and chock full of fantastic advice. Thank you... and take some time off for the holidays!

But that audio conversion-via-Compressor bit...ugh! maybe it's simpler if you set up a droplet and drag the file on it (don't know, haven't tried); but step back and look at how long it took you to explain that process.

Here's how I do it with QT7:

- 1) open mp3, aac, etc, in Quicktime (usually by CNTRL clicking and "Open with")
- 2) hit Apple-E (export), select AIF or WAV if it isn't already selected.
- 3) save the file to the same place as the original
- 4) when it's done, drag it to where it ought to live.

A WHOLE lot more simpler, no? Not batchable, no, but then I usually run into compressed files one at a time, so who needs a batch?

Not that I don't like Compressor, it's just too klugey for a simple transcode like this.

Larry replies: Thanks, Mike, for this technique.

Your system is perfectly fine - as long as you are converting a single file. The batch processing that droplets provide is worth the extra few steps to setup.

And, as with most things in life, it always takes a lot of steps to explain a simple thing.

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PASSING THOUGHTS

NEW BOOKS TO READ

Here are three excellent new books to add to your library. Two that I've read and one that I am looking forward to reading.

The Green Screen Handbook, by Jeff Foster
Sybex Press. ISBN: 978-0470521076

This is an outstanding book for anyone doing green screen work. This covers everything you need to know from production to post, with an excellent DVD of examples attached.

Mastering Multicamera Techniques, by Mitch Jacobson
Focal Press. ISBN: 978-0240811765

I spent 20 years directing multicamera shoots, and I still learned a lot from this book. The demo files on the DVD are beyond outstanding -- multi-camera performances from Paul McCartney and Elton John. This is a perfect gift for someone thinking of producing a multi-camera show.

Color Correction Handbook, by Alexis Van Hurkman
Peachpit Press. ISBN: 978-0321713117

Alexis continues his tradition of easily explaining the visual images using words. From picking the right gear to equipping your suite to making the most of your software, this book will change how your view, and correct, your images.

NEW ON KENSTONE.NET

1. Final Cut Express and the Middle Child Syndrome, article by Steve Martin.

"The purpose of this article is to give you a complete rundown on the key differences between Final Cut Express and Final Cut Pro. While Final Cut Express lacks a lot of the professional features of it's older sibling, it does not lack any editorial power."

2. Contour HD Camcorder, review by Steve Douglas

"Finally, the day was done, laid back, turned on the Discovery channel. The star of the show had a tiny little camcorder attached to his helmet. The scene switched from the main camera to the footage that was shooting from this little POV cam and I just knew I had to check it out for myself."

3. CalDigit USB3 AV Drive - Review by David A. Saraceno

"CalDigit's AV drive, a Mac compatible SuperSpeed USB3 external hard drive bundled with either an ExpressCard 34 or PCIe card and a custom Mac driver. My evaluation package easily installed in an available PCIe slot in a 2009 MacPro. Compatible MacBook Pro owners can purchase the ExpressCard 34 bundle with the drive. The 1TB AV USB3 drive performed surprisingly well using USB3, and provided the fastest write speeds I've seen for a FW800 device."

4. Red Giant's Magic Bullet Denoiser Review by Steve Douglas

"Low light = video noise, there is no doubt of that. Of course there are many other factors that contribute to video noise but the entire focus is where to go from here, when you have footage that simply can't be re-lit or shot. Red Giant, a company which produces some of the finest plug-ins for both Adobe After Effects and Final Cut Studio, has recently brought out their own Magic Bullet

Denoiser."

5. Litepanel's Hybrid LED Light - review by Steve Douglas

"Litepanels has been a major player for the introduction and use of LED lights for on camera video lights. First with their Litepanels Micro, soon to be followed by its somewhat larger and more durable Litepanels MicroPro, and now, for both camcorders and still imaging cameras, comes the MicroPro Hybrid."

A COOL FILM

Ricardo Jacques Gale sent me a link to his recent film: *Touching Home*. Stunning pictures, take a look.

http://www.ricardogale.com/index_v2.html

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READER MAIL

To get faster answers to your questions, please visit my [Forum](#), or my [Facebook page](#); both of which I visit regularly.

Here are some reader highlights from the last month.

QUESTIONS FROM FACEBOOK

Our Facebook page gets flooded with questions - as does our Forum -- and I try to answer questions in both places. Here are a few highlights:

Brian P asks: I'm confused about this whole backup/archiving business for tapeless media. I just shot P2 and now have 120 GB of data to backup. How?

Larry replies: Brian, while hard disks are a good place to store media you are working on, they are not ideal for long-term (longer than 5 years) storage. Blu-ray Discs are an option, but using them on a Mac can be tricky. My recommendation is LTO-4 or LTO-5 tape drives.

[Here's an article](#) I wrote that talks about these options more.

Sharon LaR asks: What are the duties of an assistant editor?

Larry replies: Sharon, the interesting thing about assistant editors is that they don't, generally, edit. They are responsible for organizing the work of the editor, maintaining the equipment, getting files from point A to point B, and keeping things running smoothly so that the editor can edit.

Two excellent books were released this year that detail what an assistant editor does.

Make the Cut, by Diana Friedberg and Lori Coleman
Focal Press. ISBN: 978-0240813981

The Film Editing Room Handbook, by Norman Hollyn
Peachpit Press. ISBN: 978-0321679529

I've read both and both are excellent.

Cem Y asks: How do we edit 3D video in FCP?

Larry replies: Using one of three plug-ins from [Cineform](#) or [Dashwood Cinema Solutions](#). The price for these plug-ins ranges from \$99 to \$2,999. I recently completed a webinar on the whole process of editing 3D video in Final Cut Pro. You can [learn more about the webinar here](#).

Also, here's an article I wrote about this recently: [Thoughts on Stereoscopic 3D Video](#).

Jiri F asks: I want more tips on getting organized and workflow.

Larry replies: Jiri, this is something I've written about a lot. Here are three articles with more details that you can check out:

- * [Organizing your Final Cut System](#)
- * [Organizing and Naming your Files](#)
- * [Equipping Your Final Cut System](#)

Ahmahallah asks: What plug-ins should we use to output to a on-air play-out server for a television broadcast?

Larry replies: Ahmahallah, this depends upon your play-out server and what files it accepts. Many, but not all, accept QuickTime movies, which can be exported directly from Final Cut Pro.

Others require H.264 files with high bit rates, which can be exported using **File > QuickTime Conversion**.

Still others prefer other formats, which Final Cut Pro does not natively support.

Two utilities that may help are:

[Flip4Mac](#), from Telestream
[MXF4Mac](#) from Hamburg Pro Media.

Enda G asks: What is the correct encoding for TV?

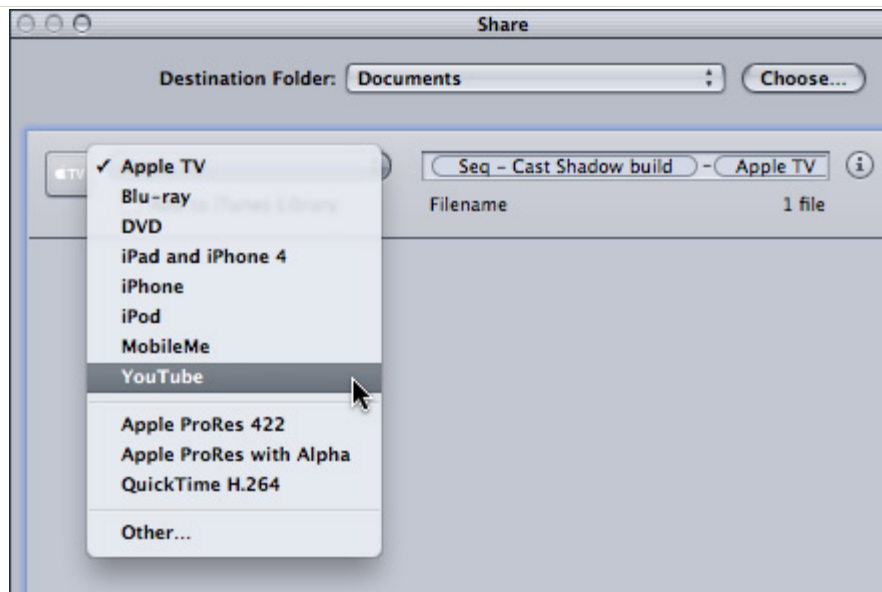
Larry replies: This totally depends upon the requirements of the broadcast station. Smaller markets are still working with SD and DigiBeta. All networks are exclusively HD, however some require 1080i material, while others require 720p. Some accept files, while others expect final delivery on HDCAM tape.

What you need to do before you start any project is to find out **PRECISELY** what deliverable format you need to create. Nothing is worse than getting to the end of a project and discovering that you did it in the wrong format.

Also, don't assume the producers know what they want. Have them, or yourself, contact the broadcast outlet directly and get a written description of what you need to deliver.

Glenn asks: What is the best way to encode for YouTube or a department webpage?

Larry replies: Glenn, these are not the same. A very easy way to encode for YouTube is to use the YouTube option built into Final Cut Pro 7.



To select it, choose **File > Share**. Final Cut will export and compress a version specifically for YouTube and, if you provide your login information, it will automatically transfer the compressed file to your YouTube account.

For video posted to the web, this depends upon what your website requirements are. For simple QuickTime movies, I like encoding using the **iPad and iPhone 4** setting in either Compressor or Share.

For Flash movies, you'll need to purchase third-party software for the compression. While it is possible to fool Flash into playing an H.264 file by changing the file extension, it is better to use software specifically for creating Flash movies using a range of codecs and settings.

UPDATE - DEC. 22, 2010

Al Davis sent this:

In your most recent newsletter, you reference how to encode for Flash.

"For Flash movies, you'll need to purchase third-party software for the compression. While it is possible to fool Flash into playing an H.264 file by changing the file extension, it is better to use software specifically for creating Flash movies using a range of codecs and settings."

This is not my experience at all. Initially, I thought I was the last person in the field that got it; in terms of how successful you can be with embedding H.264 content into Flash. Prior to that I was really encouraged by ON2 VP6 codec; but could not understand while other offerings still looked superior. Then I got it!

H.264 with a Flash wrapper. (Apple essentially did the same thing with QuickTime - embracing H.264 as the codec of choice). I no longer encode for web with Quicktime Player; only because Flash is so superior as a cross-platform media. (No PC complainers!!) At 1st I did as you suggested, and changed the .mov to .flv. NOT NECESSARY! I now work with one of the many Flash players that you can download and purchase. Encode with fantastic results in H.264; and attach the player. Voila.

Attached is a link to see as an example.

http://www.visual-velocity.com/brookline_soccer_tutorials/10_min_wu/videoPlayer.html

This one is even better (my medical work that I shoot and edit) -
WARNING SURGICAL SCENES (artfully done) ;-)

http://visual-velocity.com/visual_velocity_or/vv_reel/videoPlayer.html

Larry replies: Al, thanks for the update!

Dave E asks: What can you tell me about PluralEyes?

Larry replies: A great deal. Take a look at this [technique/review](#) that I wrote.

Piotr K asks: What is the best FCP sequence setting to use for a slide montage of JPEG images?

Larry replies: Final Cut Pro is designed for creating video. If you simply want moves on stills, without turning them into video, using iPhoto or other image animation software will yield far smaller files.

However, if you need to create video, a really good codec would be either Animation or ProRes 422. (You need to create a custom Audio/Video Setting to use either one of these.) Then, after you export the file, compress it into H.264. Both Animation and ProRes support extremely high image quality. ProRes has the edge if your system supports it, but both are good.

LOCKING A QUICKTIME MOVIE

William Aleman sent this:

I'm happy to share that I have found the feature I was looking for to lock QuickTime movies from being downloaded or saved by the visitors on the Internet. I was looking for this solution because I had posted a QuickTime movies, blocked it for downloads and a friend of mine was able to use the "Save As" feature and download it anyway.

The features consists in using AppleScript Editor to write the commands inside the video clip file, Instead of depending in the use of HTML or XML syntax like <"KIOSKMODE="True"> among other types, which do not offer as much protection as the script method does.

The target command is "Save as Un-editable". After setting this savable property to false, the original movie is exported as a self-contained movie. Out of respect to the authors of the book I'm not displaying the content of the AppleScript command but anyone interesting on the subject can find extended information in the book "QuickTime for the Web" For Windows and Macintosh, third edition, 2007, published by Apple. The included CD that comes with the book, also provides about 100 scripted droplet files for QuickTime. The book also describes other tricky methods to protect the QT movies in general.

In addition to internet file copy protection, the video clip can not be copied, saved or modified after it has been scripted unless the user has a special tools to un-lock the commands. So, anybody using this feature should always apply this commands to a copy of the original file, otherwise the original can not be saved or altered in any way.

Of course, today anyone can use a screens hot software to copy the content of a video clip, but at least this will stop the honest users, as the authors of the book called them.

Larry replies: William, thanks for sharing this.

TWO AUDIO QUESTIONS

L. Blake Baldwin asks two audio questions:

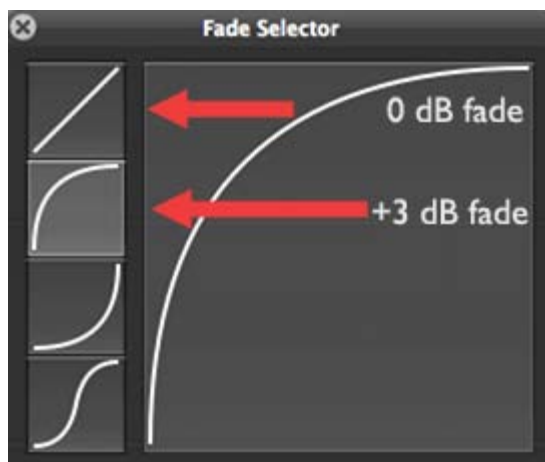
1. Why does the Master Gain default to .51 in Final Cut's **File > Log and Capture > Settings** tab? Is that the proper setting?
2. Under what circumstances do you use a +3 dB audio transition instead of a 0 dB audio transition?

Larry replies: Blake, good questions.

About your first question, on my system, Master Gain defaults to 1.0. The 0.51 value does not strike me as a correct setting. This could be caused by accidentally changing the master gain in the audio mixer (**Tools > Audio Mixer**), or corrupted preference files. Trashing your Final Cut Pro preferences should reset this setting to the correct value.



Regarding your second question, audio gain is not linear, it's logarithmic. This means that when you do a straight linear fade between two audio clips, there will be a slight fade -- of about 3 dB in the middle of the transition. This linear fade is called an "equal power" transition. (I've illustrated it below using a screen shot from Soundtrack Pro, which shows the shapes of the two fades that Final Cut Pro supports.)



To fix that audio dip during the transition, we can add 3 dB of gain to the middle of the effect, thus canceling out the audio dip. This logarithmic fade is called an "equal gain" transition.

In general, use the 0 dB transition when fading to or from black. Use the +3 dB transition when fading between two audio clips. The +3 dB fade is the default setting for Final Cut.

CONVERTING 4:3 TO 16:9

Randy White asks:

I have a TV program that is 4x3 and now I have a station that wants it in the 16x9 format. How do I upsize my original 4x3 video to 16x9?

Larry replies: The easiest way is using Final Cut, though Compressor is also an option.

Simply drop your finished 4:3 sequence into a 16:9 timeline using the same codec and re-export.

You'll get black bars on the sides of your image, but your images will be intact, without cropping.

If you need to fill the frame, you'll need to crop a portion of your image at the top and the bottom to get it to fit properly; plus the image will look a little grainy and blurry. Because you are cropping the image, you also run the risk of losing something essential in the image.

I'd suggest going with the black edges to preserve your image.

A DIFFERING OPINION ON EXPORTING

Alexander Kallas takes exception to something I wrote:

Larry, in your article -- [Exporting From Final Cut Pro for a DVD](#) -- you write:

Using Compressor always takes longer than real-time. And, with one exception, yields the same quality as exporting as a QuickTime movie. Based on what I have been told, the benefit of going directly to Compressor is that if you have created a Motion project using 32-bit float space for your calculations, your Motion projects will look slightly better when you go directly into compression without first exporting.

However, if you create your Motion projects using the same video codec as your Final Cut project, you don't get this benefit.

I beg to differ. If you have graphics or effects created in Motion, then you are better off exporting a self-contained QT movie for Compressor.

Compressor ignores the FCP sequence settings and converts the raw data from the [Motion project] directly to the format you have chosen in Compressor.

Problems with pixel aspect ratios can occur when the sequence contains computer generated graphics or titles. Looking forward to your thoughts.

Larry replies: While you are correct, prior to Final Cut 7 I never found the improvement in quality to be worth all the extra time it took to export and compress the file.

The rules changed, however, with Final Cut 7. Now, Sending to Compressor is a background activity, which means that your system is not tied up during the export.

If you have a Final Cut Pro project that contains Motion projects, especially Motion projects created using gradients and blend modes, this option is worth exploring.

TARGETING TRACKS

Sebastian Guest asks:

Is it possible to use the keyboard to target audio tracks with a track number higher than 9?

Larry replies: No.

For tracks 1 - 9, there is a keyboard shortcut, but not higher numbered tracks.

- Video: **F5** followed by (NOT at the same time as) the track number.
 - Audio 1: **F6** followed by the track number
 - Audio 2: **F7** followed by the track number.
 - **Shift+F5** or **F5+0** disconnects the video patch
 - **Shift+F6** or **F6+0** disconnects the a1 patch
 - **Shift+F7** or **F7+0** disconnects the a2 patch
-

TRANSITION TRICK

Richard Day sent this in:

FCP will set your transition to 1 frame if you don't have handles on both clips. I wanted to start a transition at the very beginning of the second clip, but the Transition Editor would not let me select the left-most alignment button, even though I had enough frames on the first clip.

I temporarily set up a dummy edit (to Slug) elsewhere using the left-most transition alignment button, then copied the transition and pasted it at my original edit point -- it worked!

Larry replies: Thanks! You can also accomplish this by dragging a transition from the Effects tab in the Browser. Or, by Option+dragging a transition from another edit point, which makes a copy of the transition as you drag.

To change the timing of a transition, select it and type:

- * **Option+1** to start it at the edit point
 - * **Option+2** to center it at the edit point
 - * **Option+3** to end it at the edit point
-

TRACKING DOWN A RENDER FILE

Richard Day writes:

I've searched for answers in many places, so you're kind of a last resort.

I rendered a sequence (10 hours! - Neat Video noise remover) and the following happened:

-- I was told I was out of disk space and could I free some up by removing render files

-- but there was TONS of extra space on my external render file drive (750 GB), but my *startup disk* was nearly full now

-- the startup drive was not listed, even as an alternate, in System Settings

So my questions are:

1) Does FCP store render files (invisibly/as temp files) on the startup disk, then transfer them to the render file disk?

2) Is there a way to "Reveal in finder" render files located in the Render Manager? Control-click did not help.

Larry replies: First, there are no hidden render files, nor are they stored on one disk then copied to another.

My guess is that this was caused by corrupted FCP preference files -- delete those and your problem should go away.

Here's an article that explains how: [Trouble-Shooting Your Final Cut System](#)

Note: As a postscript, Richard sent me a second email saying this fixed the problem.

FIXING A PROBLEM WITH CANON 5D IMAGES

Rick LeCompte sent this in:

I was working with some 1920 x 1080, Pro Res 442, 23.98 footage shot on the Canon 5D, and I'm comping some green screen shots. Everything looks OK as I set it up, but when I render the shot it ends up with thin vertical lines visible. The lines are not just over the green screen areas but over the foreground talent. I had never seen this before.

Then, I solved this problem. I originally set the key up with Color Smoothing 4:2:2 and Chroma Keyer. It turned out that by removing the Color Smoothing 4:2:2 filter from the key, the lines went away. Something in the 5D doesn't work with the color smoothing because I had the lines return with Color Smoothing 4:1:1 also. Anyway, it's fixed, and thought you might be interested.

[To give credit where credit is due, I should mention that my assistant, Jesse Kerman, did the dirty work experimenting with the clips.]

Larry replies: Cool, thanks for letting me know.

A SIMPLE QUESTION

Andy Roberts asks:

Larry, I'm using FCP 6 on a Mac. Simple question: I'm trying to edit some footage that I grabbed off a DVD. What is the fastest way to delete curse words from audio. I'm used to working in Logic and simple editors like Fission where I can simply select audio and press delete. I'm working with one large file from the DVD (MacTheRipper and MPEG StreamClip) and I can't seem to see the audio waveforms in the section I am in and key-framing seems a bit cumbersome to remove single words here and there. Of course I want to keep the files in sync.

Larry replies: Andy, thanks for writing!

Command+Option+W toggles waveforms on and off in the Timeline.

Use the Blade tool (**B**) to cut before and after the words you want to delete.

Select the portion of the clip you want to delete and press **Delete**.

IMPROVING EXPORT IMAGE QUALITY

Brian Pshyk asks:

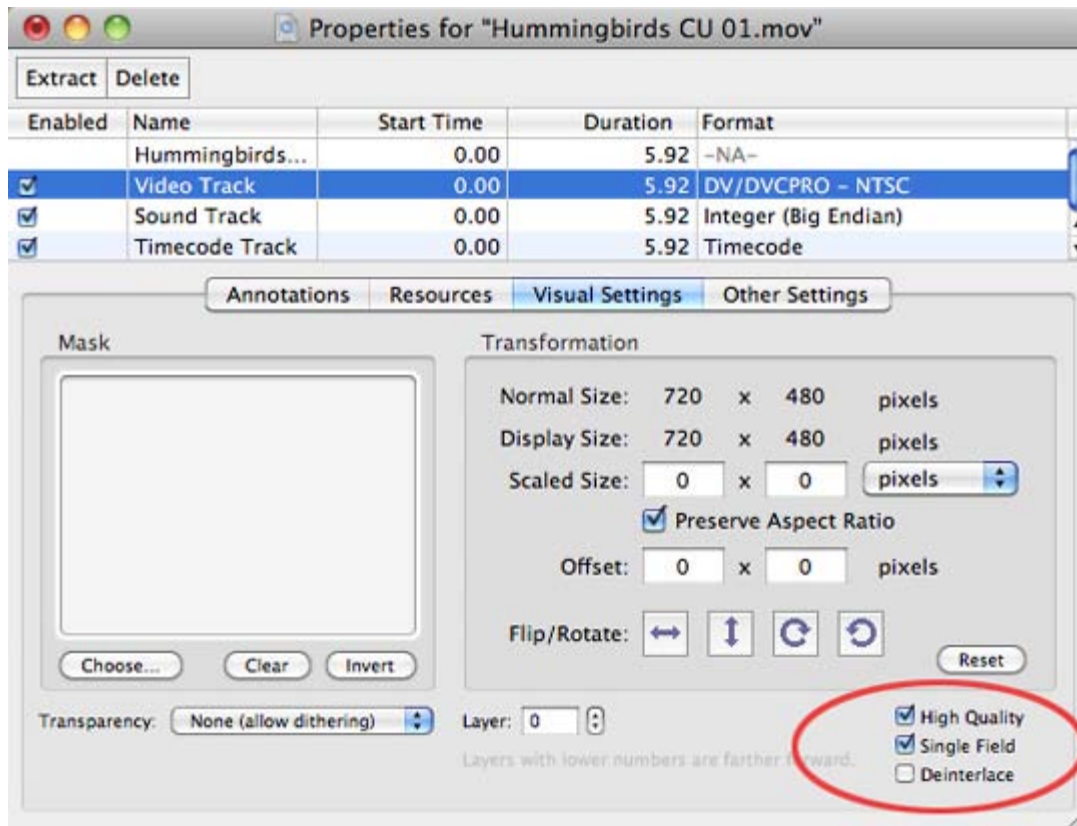
I have a quick question on export quality. Why is it that when I export my sequence as a mov that the quality of the QuickTime is soft. My sequence settings are 720x480 DVCpro50 compression. I export with the "same as

sequence" settings not going higher, but not compressing more and I still cannot get the sharpness like I have in the canvas window. Is this something I just have to accept? Can it be a problem with the quality of my computer monitors?

Larry replies: Hmm... I know I have an article about that here somewhere.... (rustle, rustle).

Here you go, read this: http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj_dv_look_bad.html

To fix it, open your movie in QuickTime 7. (QuickTime X doesn't have this ability. QT 7 is in the Extras folder of your OS X 10.6 installation disks.)



Go to **Window > Project Properties**

Select the Video track

Select Visual Settings tab

Turn **ON** High Quality

Turn **ON** Single Field

Done.

PICKING THE RIGHT CODEC

Douglas Steick asks:

I enjoyed your Soundtrack Pro & Motion training on Monday and did get some workflow issues resolved, however I did not ask this:

Scenario:

First, I crop, resize, and clean-up various video formats (mostly infrared imagery from sensors, ranging from 1288 1024 to 5K 5K) with After Effects to 1920 1080.mov files.

Second, these .mov files are run through Motion to add various text treatments and then sent to Compressor to create the "final" .mov files.

Third, these "final" .mov files are imported into FCP.

Goal is to deliver the best image quality possible for delivery as an interactive Blu-ray Disc.

With this workflow I have used the Apple ProRes 422 (HQ) codec for all steps. While reading your "Picking the "Right Version of ProRes" article, I was particularly interested in the statement: "We use the Animation codec when we want to move files between one application and another, for example, between After Effects and Final Cut. Then once it's in Final Cut, you render it into the final version you need for your project.

Question:

Should I be using the Animation codec out of both After Effects and Motion, and importing those files into Final Cut with it's project settings set to Apple ProRes 422 (HQ) and decline the offer for Final Cut to reset the project settings when the Animation file lands on the timeline? Or should FCP be set to the Animation codec? Then send to Compressor for the H.264 (I am actually using the x.264 codec) for Blu-ray authoring?

Larry replies: Doug, great question. The short answer is no.

Here's a medium answer.

The Animation codec is for FCP 6 and earlier. For FCP 7, you should be using ProRes 4444, which is virtually lossless and higher quality than Animation.

Here's a longer answer:

When exporting your files from After Effects, export them as ProRes 4444 - highest quality, can include alpha channel data, greater bit depth than most other video formats. Only downside is large file size.

Bring those files into Motion and do your processing. Since you've already scaled and converted them in After Effects, there is no benefit to exporting them from Motion. Just save the Motion file -- very small and VERY fast -- and import that into Final Cut for final editing.

When you are done editing, export as a self-contained movie and compress that to H.264 in Compressor. This should be much faster and retain more quality -- especially in the shadow areas of your image.

A QUESTION ON TIMECODE

Sebastian asks:

I'm delivering an 88min feature, for which we have a number of deliverables - 23.98NDF, and 59.94DF. The project has been posted at 23.98NDF, when we play the feature out to tape at 59.94DF, the out point on the tape's TC is ~5sec later. This poses the question - will our feature (at 88mins on NDF) cause issues with a station if we give them a DF tape that clicks out at 88m and 5s? How do things usually work when there are multiple deliverable types and one pre-specified duration?

Larry replies: The reason that drop frame timecode was invented was because non-drop did not properly indicate running time.

As you have discovered, there is a difference in running time between DF and NDF material.

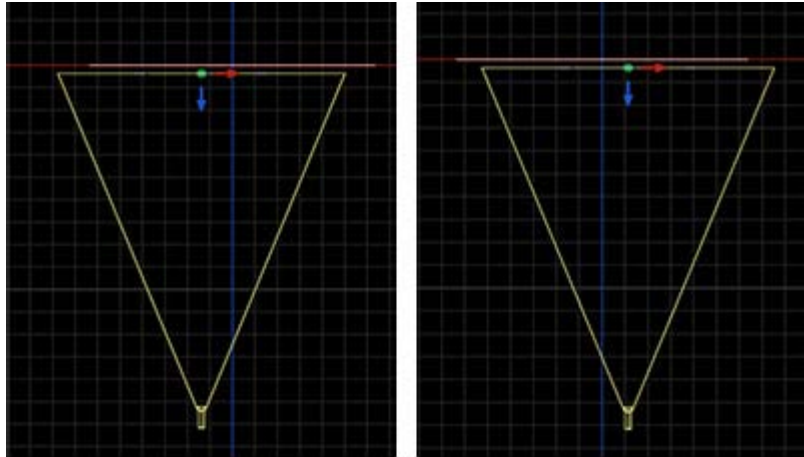
The DF is correct, the NDF is not.

So, if you need to deliver something for broadcast, you will need to use drop-frame timecode. If your movie needs to have an exact running time of 88 minutes, then you will need to switch to drop-frame timecode AND cut five more seconds.

The CONTENT is identical between DF and NDF. The TIMING is not.

CREATING A STEREOSCOPIC 3D EFFECT IN MOTION

Pieter asks:



After seeing your Webinar about Stereoscopic 3D I came up with the following thoughts. If I load footage in Motion and make two different clips with different camera points of view (left and right). Will this work?

Larry replies: Maybe. What makes 3D work is that different elements in your shot align differently when viewed from slightly different horizontal angles; about 63 cm.

If all your objects are at the same depth, this won't work.

If you objects are spread out in depth, it may work.

The problem is, there's no way to combine these two cameras in Motion in real-time so that you can adjust your elements for best effect. In other words, this will be a very time-consuming way to create a stereoscopic 3D image due to needing to use FCP for your preview system.

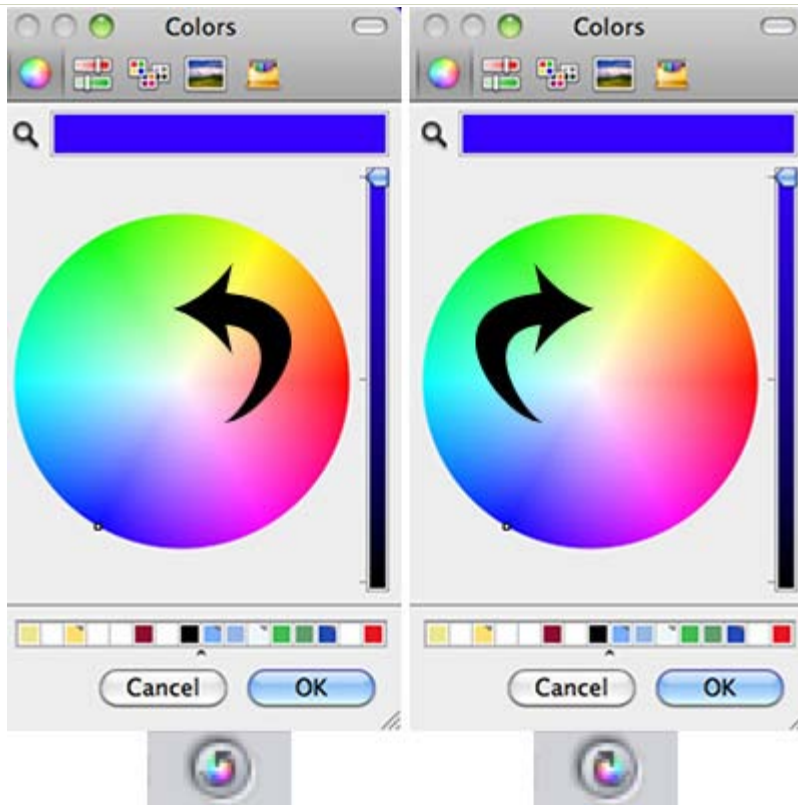
THE WORLD-FAMOUS UNKNOWN THINGY

Jarko Romanesko asks:



Can you perhaps tell me what the "color spiral button" is for and what the proper name is?

Larry replies: I've been waiting and waiting for someone to ask me this question!



Yes! This button determines the direction colors will rotate around the color wheel when you have applied keyframes to change the color of something.

For example, the left image illustrates color rotation going from red to green to blue or, on the right, from red to blue to green.

I call it the Color Thingy.

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WRAP-UP

Well, that's it for this issue. Feel free to use my [Forum](#) for more questions, I always enjoy talking with you. And, this way, we can all learn from each other.

For current news and in-depth interviews on what's happening in our industry, be sure to listen to the [Digital Production BuZZ](#) every week.

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Until next month, take care, and edit well.

Larry

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