

CASE STUDY

FRANK LADNER – *HICKORY NEVER BLEEDS*



CUSTOMER

Frank Ladner, US

Independent filmmaker – director and cinematographer of *Hickory Never Bleeds*
www.hickoryneverbleeds.com

CHALLENGE

To quickly and easily assemble dailies into a rough-cut

To modify scenes to fit creative vision

SOLUTION

Grass Valley EDIUS

Multiformat nonlinear editing software with ability to work instantly, without rendering

BENEFITS

Sequencing tool to quickly group clips in sequences, play and reorganize on the timeline

Masking tool to create slight vignette effects

Layouter tool for zooming in on still photos or video images and the ability to animate them

Grass Valley EDIUS Helps Shape *Hickory Never Bleeds*

BACKGROUND

As most independent filmmakers will tell you, technology should not get in the way of creativity. It should cost-effectively help the process in a highly transparent way.

That was the thinking of director/cinematographer Frank Ladner when he made his first full-length feature, a quirky “mocu-mentary” called *Hickory Never Bleeds*. Shot over eight months (February to October, 2011) in Southern Mississippi, the comedic, sci-fi story follows the curious, yet hilarious efforts of the Monster Defense Team, a group appointed by the 94-year-old mayor of the town of Farr after the small, reportedly monster-inhabited town is ridiculed by local and national media. Town residents round out the quirky personalities presented in this story, offering up their theories about what the creature is, where it came from, and what should be done about it.

To capture the dry humor and backcountry actions of the ragtag investigative team, Ladner used a Canon EOS 7D DSLR camera (shooting 1080p24) and a separate (modified) Marantz PMD-660 solid-state audio recorder in the field. He would shoot each day, then assemble a rough-cut that night (wherever he happened to be) on the latest version of Grass Valley® EDIUS® multiformat nonlinear editing software. With no real script and a cast of local talent (he hesitates to call them “actors,” and he himself makes an appearance in the film as the Monster Team’s most reclusive member, Leland Walles, Ladner knew he had to work fast and instantly understand what he was getting in his dailies and how his story was shaping up. The frenetic speed of his workflow was directly related to the capabilities of the tools and functions found within EDIUS.

Organization Is Key

“I was very careful to organize my clips and label everything in the proper bins [within EDIUS],” said Ladner. “That was key to this project. I didn’t have a script, but a rough idea of how the story would go. And I used local people, which can be dangerous. I didn’t do any casting—I just picked people based on the way they looked and how they spoke. That was the very nature of this film and it worked nicely. But I could not have put it all together as efficiently without EDIUS.”

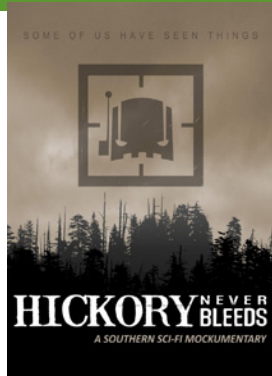
To emphasize the value of EDIUS, Ladner said the Sequencing tool really helped shape the film by allowing him to quickly group clips in sequences so that he could look at them on the timeline, see all of the tabs immediately, and reorganize the story as necessary.

“I was free to move individual frames or groups of scenes around as I saw fit very easily,” he said. “That was really cool because I could rough out the storyline a lot quicker using a few sequences, then once I got it right I put it all onto one large timeline to render it out as a lossless compressed AVI file.”

Ladner uses a three-year old Sony Vaio multicore (2.30 GHz) workstation with external USB drives. “This computer handles EDIUS like a champ.” A dedicated 7200 RPM 1 TB USB 3.0 storage drive was used for *Hickory Never Bleeds*, with a redundant drive for backup. The final file was then compressed with an external MPEG-2 codec before final output to Blu-ray Disc/DVD.

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Frank Ladner, Director/Cinematographer
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Working With A Solid Foundation

Ladner said he came to use EDIUS in a very accidental way. He was looking for a stable system after years of frustration using other systems. He got a free 30-day demo version of EDIUS, was easily able to put together a music video with it, and was quite impressed with its features and speed. He soon purchased a full version for his new project.

"My first impression of EDIUS was that it was almost too good to be true, because it never crashed on me once," Ladner said. "Also, I didn't have to wait around rendering or converting files, or have to work with low-resolution proxy versions before I could start editing. I can't say that about other editing programs I've used previously. For the first time, I actually liked the editing process. EDIUS freed me to focus on the creative part of the project and not get bogged down in technical details of putting the pieces together. That was very empowering."

He added that the ability to simply drag and drop his 7D (as .MOV files compressed with a H.264 codec) footage onto the EDIUS timeline and start editing immediately (with no transcoding) "was like a dream come true. It was all frame-accurate and there was no lag or stutter at all. It just worked."

All The Effects Built-in

Hickory Never Bleeds also makes heavy use of speed changes, color grading, camera stabilization, green screen keying, and many other effects tools within EDIUS. Ladner said the three-way color corrector adjustments within EDIUS were used for virtually every interior and exterior scene.

"I shot flat with the Canon 7D, so color correction was critical for some scenes," he said. "Having those tools at my fingertips in EDIUS allowed me to quickly and accurately boost the colors as required. Because I was shooting in a flat style, I also used the Sharpness tool within EDIUS to enhance some of the frames."

Ladner also used the Masking tool to create some slight vignette effects (blurring certain unwanted parts of an image) and the Layouter tool, which let him zoom in on still photos or video images and animate them.

The Inherent Value Is Speed And Efficiency

At the end of the day, the real-time codec and other features of EDIUS helped Ladner work faster. "I enjoy working in EDIUS because it is easy to use and I get quick results," he said. "I love the fact that I don't have to render. Being able to work in real time gives me the creative ability to test multiple effects with my film and quickly make changes. That's what every filmmaker is after. It's a night and day difference from other products on the market, and I have recommended it to all my friends."

After its official gala opening in August of 2012—where "everyone liked it"—*Hickory Never Bleeds* has been screened at several local Mississippi festivals. The DVD is available on Amazon.com.

ABOUT GRASS VALLEY

For more than 50 years, the Grass Valley name has been synonymous with innovation, leadership, and performance. Our full range of solutions and services is unmatched in the industry, leveraging the economies of scale of the IT industry with our proprietary core knowledge of media processing and storage. Grass Valley customers include most of the world's leading broadcasters, teleproduction facilities, and service providers, as well as independent video professionals who rely on our products to cover the world's most high-profile live events, as well as to

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