

Project: "SCRATCH CASE STUDY"
▲ ALACRITY MEDIA, USA
Takes to the Road with
the SCRATCH-RED Workflow



Alacrity Media Takes to the Road with the SCRATCH-RED Workflow

Alacrity Media has literally geared up for a SCRATCH-RED road trip with their newly assembled, customized Road Grader van. The Road Grader is used by the 4K Ninjas, an expert team of independent professionals skilled in the use of the RED ONE™ 4k camera and ASSIMILATE's SCRATCH® Digital Process Solution.

Blair Paulsen, owner and operator of Alacrity Media, founded the company to meet the 4K camera and post production needs of filmmakers, cinematographers, and creative teams that are using data acquisition to create their feature films, commercials and other imagery projects.

An early adopter of the RED ONE 4K camera -- camera #19 -- Paulsen firmly believes that RED is where the action is for the future. "Any day I wake up as a DP is a great day for me, and the RED camera just makes it all the better," says Paulsen. "RED uses cine lenses, offers 35mm depth of field, wide color gamut, and resolution to burn. Combine it with the SCRATCH digital post workflow and you can produce amazing imagery, no matter how large or small the budget." To date, Paulsen has done 26 projects with the RED camera that include a Nike campaign and spots for Ford, Dr. Pepper, Diet Coke, as well as music videos.



Image courtesy of Alacrity Media. Sex Pistols Summer Concert Tour (Russia): SCRATCH Scaffolds

Using SCRATCH, Paulsen has developed a highly efficient and cost-effective real-time SCRATCH-RED Data Workflow that delivers quality post-production results with a strong cost/benefit ratio for clients.

"We chose SCRATCH as our post production software because ASSIMILATE developed a real-time SCRATCH-RED Data Workflow that efficiently supports the RED CODE native files and it offers all the DI tools we need," says Paulsen. "SCRATCH is great at conform, construct, color grading, playback, and finishing. Clients can participate in real-time review sessions, make changes on the fly, and actually see how the film will look on the big screen."

Paulsen takes his RED 4K camera and post-production suite on the road in a customized van, the Road Grader, which includes all the state-of-the-art hardware and software needed for digital filmmaking. Paulsen notes, "Clients have varying needs for their projects. For example, a complete post facility on location, an adjunct post

suite parked outside a post facility, or shooting 4K material and playing it back in real time to ensure all the shots are right. We offer the front to back-end services a client needs to produce a high quality film in the most expeditious manner."

The 4K Ninjas

Paulsen is also a member of the elite 4K Ninjas (www.4kninjas.net), a co-op group of independent professionals skilled in the use of the RED ONE 4K camera and the SCRATCH-RED Workflow. They have teamed together to offer complete camera package rentals, with all the peripherals, and broadly experienced on-set camera technicians, as well as on-site post production services.

Along with Blair Paulsen, the 4K Ninjas team includes Steve Tammi (camera #17), Evin Grant (camera #199), Brook Willard, and Zak Sandberg, who all have similar and complementary skill sets. The Road Grader is shared by the 4K Ninjas,

working independently or together, depending on the needs of a given project.

As a co-op team, the 4K Ninjas have grouped together to meet the more complex needs of high-end productions with enough manpower and cameras, as well as the Road Grader post suite on wheels. Paulsen explains, "Some filmmakers want to rent the RED ONE camera for their DP, but have concerns about post workflows. We can layoff to their tape format of choice in real time, right on set. Other times we are the entire camera department. We offer the flexibility to work in the manner that best fits the client and the project."

When rented, our RED ONE 4K camera package comes with a Ninja to answer any questions and help keep the RED shoot on schedule. Any of the Ninja pros can interface with the DP, camera team, sound mixer, playback operator, VFX supervisor, colorist, and support on-set editorial right in the Road Grader. We always provide an on-site camera

Ninja and a Ninja data manager, who handles the downloading, organizing, and verifying of all the footage. The data manager is equal parts I.T. whiz, workflow guru, and REDCINE pro.

Road Grader: Mobile Digital Workflow

At the heart of the Road Grader suite is the SCRATCH-RED Data Workflow. Once the data comes off the RED camera and into the purpose-built Road Grader van, data is copied and backed up on a proper RAID. Using ScratchCine on an over-clocked Globalstor workstation, the clips can be opened and played back in real time at 2K or 1080p from the 4K r3d masters with full quality de-bayering. Editorial can be done right in the ScratchCine interface or in FCP, and conformed via EDL.

SCRATCH is then used for the color correction with lift, gamma, and gain. The JLCoooper Spectrum control surface is used for precise control and speed. The eCinema DCM-23 color evaluation monitor is in a controlled environment that permits high-accuracy color timing on location. When the final cut is approved, we can output to disk or layoff to tape in real time. Using the nVidia Quadra 5600 with HD-SDI daughtercard, the system can layoff to HDCAM-SR (or many other tape formats) in 4:4:4 or 4:2:2 color space without rendering.

"The Road Grader is a complete DI suite on wheels that offers incredible time and cost savings," says Paulsen.

"To work with high-rez 4K footage in a real-time post process is a major breakthrough in filmmaking. Right off you eliminate the cost and time required for rendering or waiting for dailies to come back from an off-site lab. Both production and post production timelines can be reduced significantly, while achieving better results."

Paulsen adds, "The digital cinema negative is available a few minutes after the shot. With SCRATCH, the DP can immediately see the look of the shot, and we can make color corrections on site. The DP gets a sense of how the shot will look in the final cut. For instance, if you want an intense or high-contrast look it's a huge advantage for the DP to actually do a one-light grade to see if they're on target before striking the set. If the schedule allows it, the DP can actually do a rough grade on set and sign off on it."

"Once all the shots are done, SCRATCH soaks in all the data and the time code is automatically there. The user has access to all the metadata. The SCRATCH-RED workflow is so efficient that we save loads of time," says Paulsen.

"Because SCRATCH is resolution independent, we can also use the Road Grader for post production in any format. The beauty is taking the DI suite on the road and adapting to any situation – on site, parking outside a studio, rolling cases of equipment into a facility and setting up shop, or providing 'road service' as a back-up emergency team for any production."

RED-SCRATCH Projects

The 4K Ninjas have been on the go ever since they got their RED cameras. The following are two recent examples.

Sear commercial Supported by Michael Thorton and the 4K Ninjas in Beverly Hills, starring Vanessa Hutchins in a high school environment. The Road Grader was on location for post prep and SCRATCH was used to layoff to SR tape in real time.

Sex Pistols summer concert tour Produced by Johnny Rotten, B-roll shots were taken throughout Russia by Blair Paulsen. The director was River Hagg. This footage, and other footage in different formats and from other sources, went into SCRATCH post production with John Tissavary as the colorist.

Wrapping It Up

"SCRATCH is a far richer, more powerful tool set than we had ever imagined," says Paulsen. "Along with RED, it has truly been a driving force in our business model. Real-time data post production is the way to go for us and our clients, who always have tight deadlines and need the best quality results possible. Not long ago, superior imagery and quick turnaround were polar opposites. This workflow has changed the rules of the game."

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SCRATCH used for the post production and DI on the Sex Pistols Summer Concert Tour (Russia). Images courtesy of Alacrity Media.



The 4K Ninjas go on set with the SCRATCH-RED 4K Workflow in their Road Grader van.