

When Do We Eat?

Enabling the **next big thing**

All Adobe® workflow for HD empowers independent filmmakers in creating visual effects for *When Do We Eat?*



Until recently, independent filmmakers had few attractive choices when it came to editing and creating effects for their projects. They could rent or purchase high-end gear costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Or, they could use homegrown, cost-effective desktop workflows and tools, but may not be able to achieve the quality and workflow efficiency desired.

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Leslie Allen,
creative director,
Cinergy Creative

Enter HD, the next big thing for independent filmmakers. HD editing on the desktop using Adobe software lets filmmakers streamline processes, cut costs by hundreds of thousands of dollars, and maximize quality; opening previously shut doors in the film industry and enabling creative options for independent filmmakers that were not financially feasible in the past.

Fantastic effects on a budget

Just ask the creators of *When Do We Eat?* the first feature film from Director Salvador Litvak. Production and Design studio Cinergy Creative designed and completed all the visual effects for *When Do We Eat?* in HD resolution using components of the Adobe Video Collection, including Adobe Premiere® Pro, Adobe After Effects®, and Adobe Photoshop® CS software.

“Adobe tools let us work in HD and efficiently complete a tremendous amount of green screen work—all while staying within a tight budget,” says Leslie Allen, creative director for Cinergy Creative.

Great ensemble cast

When Do We Eat? is the story of the world’s fastest Passover Seder gone horribly awry. It’s about an old-school dad (Michael Lerner) who’s as tough on his sons as his father (Jack Klugman) is on him. On this night, however, one of the boys (Ben Feldman) slips Dad a dose of the drug Ecstasy in order to give him a new perspective. Meanwhile, Mom (Lesley Ann Warren) brings a handsome stranger to dinner and the kids take sides. By the end of the night, Dad’s visions turn him into a modern day Moses intent on leading this hungry group to the promised land of family forgiveness.

The film’s editor is Richard Halsey, who won the Academy Award for his work editing the motion picture, *Rocky*. Other movies edited by Halsey include *Edward Scissor Hands*, *Sister Act*, *American Gigolo*, and *Earth Girls Are Easy*.

Efficient HD workflow

When Do We Eat? was shot using Sony’s HDCAM (1080P at 24 frames per second) format using DVCAM for the offline footage. Although the final online edit was completed using proprietary editing systems, Cinergy Creative relied on Adobe Premiere Pro to create FX dailies and animatics. Allen used multiple, nestable timelines in Adobe Premiere Pro to experiment freely and manage complex, multilayered animatics. He was able to view effects, motion paths, and other elements of the film in real-time to make fast, informed creative decisions.



The compositing capabilities of Adobe After Effects were instrumental in generating a stylized, CGI version of the Garden of Eden, complete with waving grass, waterfalls, and other visual effects.



Leslie Allen of Cinergy Creative used multiple, nestable timelines in Adobe Premiere Pro to manage complex, multilayered animatics for *When Do We Eat?* He viewed effects, motion paths, and other elements of the film in real-time to make rapid, informed creative decisions.

For one segment of the movie, Cinergy Creative produced a stylized, CGI version of the Garden of Eden, with 80 to 100 layers of moving birds, grass, trees, waterfalls, time-lapsed clouds, flowers, and more. In another segment, a volcano explodes as part of Dad's vision as he leads his family across the desert. Dad's visions also take him back to the past, to an era when everything was in black and white and he was just a small boy. According to Allen, Adobe tools helped produce effects in HD for these segments with ease.

High-end production on the PC

Allen is a loyal PC guy who relies on a render farm of high-end PCs based on Intel® Xeon processors running Microsoft® Windows® and the Adobe Video Collection. Especially since the introduction of Adobe Premiere Pro 1.5, Allen says he's amazed at how Adobe has enabled high-end video production on the PC platform.

"The Adobe software is exceptionally stable and powerful," says Allen. "And, because components of the Adobe Video Collection are so well-integrated, you can correct color, composite effects, and experiment creatively. Although you're actually using a number of Adobe tools, it feels as if you're staying within the same environment so you can maintain the creative flow."

Dozens of layers

Adobe software was used for more than 75 effects shots, all of the CGI, and the main title sequence of *When Do We Eat?* Originally, the visual effects were to be completed using proprietary systems. Allen soon realized, however, that the ever-increasing capabilities and power of After Effects combined with Photoshop were more than up to the task and—in many situations—much faster and more capable, especially when moving 60 layers of HD footage. "We were far more efficient once we moved to an all Adobe workflow," says Allen.

Allen completed digital matte paintings using Photoshop CS, bringing them into After Effects for compositing. According to Allen, the speed of the Native Keylight Keyer in After Effects for compositing effects shots was "astounding" and produced extremely clean results. After Effects was also used to stabilize footage and remove video glitches from the HD tape.

Leslie Allen took advantage of integration among components of the Adobe Video Collection including Adobe Premiere Pro, After Effects, and Photoshop CS software to correct color and composite effects.



Integration is key

Using the Adobe Video Collection, Allen can keep all of the necessary Adobe applications running at the same time, cutting and pasting, even dragging elements between applications and working in parallel on each part of the project. Says Allen, "Adobe tools seem to have boundless uses. Combined with powerful machines and tons of creative energy, anything goes. The integration among Adobe tools just gets better and better and the Adobe technical support is really first class."

When Do We Eat? is now complete and the producers are seeking a distributor. As for Allen, he is about to embark on two new completely CGI feature films, both in HD resolution. He will use Adobe tools throughout the process, because for him use of Adobe tools is "no longer optional." Concludes Allen, "Once my clients see the Adobe workflow in action, they shake their heads in amazement at the reliability, speed, and quality of the finished product."

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*Leslie Allen,
creative director,
Cinergy Creative*

Company

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Challenge

- Create extensive visual effects for an independent feature film in HD resolution while staying within a tight budget.

Solution

- Take advantage of the Adobe Video Collection to create animatics, FX dailies, and complete extensive green screen work.

Benefits

- Achieved exceptional quality
- Increased efficiency due to the integration among components of the Adobe Video Collection
- Minimized costs by using reliable, capable desktop tools

Tool Kit

- Adobe Video Collection. Products used include:
 - Adobe After Effects Production Bundle
 - Adobe Photoshop CS
 - Adobe Premiere Pro
- Custom PCs based on the Intel Xeon processor
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional

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