

Fifty Fifty utilises FilmLight's renderless Baselight/Avid workflow to finish BBC documentary

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Soho post house on the road to ultimate workflow efficiency with the Baselight PLUS package.

Fifty Fifty is a dynamic independent post house in the heart of Soho, the production and post district of London. It has recently added Baselight PLUS, FilmLight's complete render-free package, which includes the Baselight grading system, Slate compact control surface and Baselight for Avid Editions plugins. The advantage of collaborative working was quickly proven on a new documentary.



Gary Lineker on the Road to FA Cup Glory was a one-off, 60 minute show for the BBC. The popular footballer turned pundit investigated how fans and players feel about the UK's most prestigious competition. The aim of the creators was to produce an engaging film with very rich production values.

Most of the footage was shot on two Sony F5 cameras, using the Slog3 gamma curve. Because access to some of the interviewees was very limited - as little as 15 minutes - the crew backed the Sony cameras up with a Canon 5D to get covering wide shots. Some of the general views of Wembley Stadium and a sensational opening helicopter sequence tracking a train, used a RED camera.

One of the challenges in post, then, was to bring all these different outputs together to create a seamless, punchy look. "The benefit of shooting log is that you have greater control in the grade," said Julian Nelson, Fifty Fifty's Head of Online and technical workflow, and also the online editor for this programme.

"The colourist, Kenny Gibb, was able to push the contrast and really bring out a rich and vibrant feel to the picture," he said. "The shadows and highlights were protected, so more thought could be given to the preservation of detail."

Gibb had to work hard, with 900 shots to grade in a day. The power and flexibility of Baselight made this daunting task a practical proposition. But the collaborative workflow at Fifty Fifty meant that this was far from the end of the Baselight contribution to the project.

Fifty Fifty also has the Baselight Editions plugin installed in the finishing Avid suite. That means that colour grades are never burnt-in. Avid sends EDLs to Baselight; Baselight sends colour metadata to Avid.



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The Baselight Linked Grade (BLG) colour file is then interpreted by Baselight for Avid, imposing the colour grade in real time on the raw footage. If the edit changes, then the grade follows. This happened on *Road to FA Cup Glory*: when a late change to the programme was made two days before transmission. Because online editor Julian Nelson had set the Avid to preserve 75 frame handles it was a simple job to slip the footage by two seconds and drop in an archive shot to cover the cut.



Most importantly, any smoothing of the grade could be accomplished using Baselight for Avid. As well as adding the real-time grade, the plugin also gives access to the full Baselight toolset, through a Slate control panel if that is the way the editor likes to work.

It means that scenes can be re-graded without sending them back to the Baselight suite. That is a real productivity boost because it means no-one is waiting for the colour room to be free. And, because all you are doing is writing and rewriting metadata, if you need to transfer between rooms you are only sending very small files.



"The round trip between Avid and Baselight is fast and very efficient," said Nelson. "It is not just for huge projects, but anything where you want the flexibility and control to manipulate the edit and tweak anything afterwards. "It retains all of the complicated effects and layering that the editor may have built up in the offline," he added. "These don't need to be rebuilt."

Having the full range of Baselight effects in the online edit also proved to be a major time-saver in another way. "During the online, our client wanted to blur out some branding and personal data," Nelson recalled. "We would not normally undertake that in Avid.

"But by launching the Baselight Editions UI directly inside Avid, we were able to build layers on top of the grade," he explained. "Then we could take advantage of the area tracker, inside/outside mattes and variable feathering that makes Baselight so powerful.

"This saved time and money for our client," Nelson concluded. "Working this way has provided much greater flexibility for our clients, and for our business as a whole."



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