



White Rabbit Productions
Breaking new ground



White Rabbit Productions, LLC
Sacramento, California
www.squawthedocumentary.com

Long-time filmmakers switch from Final Cut Pro to Adobe® Creative Suite® 5 Production Premium software to produce *Squaw - The Documentary*

Tim Walton has been a filmmaker and cinematographer for more than 35 years. He has shot on virtually every format including professional broadcast cameras, high-definition video cameras, and 16mm and 35mm film cameras. For the past 15 years, Walton has been working professionally as an editor and has assembled many award-winning PBS documentaries. He has also been factory-trained on a dozen different nonlinear editing systems.

Considering this resume, you may wonder what Walton is wielding for his newest project: *Squaw - The Documentary*, a national documentary he is co-producing with award-winning filmmaker Mike Madden about the history of Squaw Valley and the 1960 Winter Olympic Games. Always on the cutting edge, the choice was clear for Walton—he is shooting the documentary on the RED ONE camera and editing it in 4K using Adobe Creative Suite 5 Production Premium software.

"I was among the first Final Cut Pro users in Northern California, but my Final Cut Pro days are over," says Walton. "Because it is inherently a QuickTime editor, Final Cut doesn't support a full-fledged RED 4K workflow. On the other hand, Adobe Premiere® Pro CS5 and the other components of Creative Suite 5 preserve all of the glorious 4K quality and metadata the RED ONE camera delivers—all in a workflow that blows me away with its integration."

Squaw Valley has a rich history of transformation from the “valley of the squaws” to a world-class resort. *Squaw - The Documentary* focuses on the larger-than-life characters who founded the resort, as well as the obstacles that had to be overcome to pull off hosting the 1960 Winter Olympic Games.



Challenge

- Create a breakthrough documentary film
- Shoot on RED ONE and preserve 4K quality and metadata
- Work faster while maximizing creativity

Solution

- Tap into support in Adobe Creative Suite 5 Production Premium for 4K workflow
- Move seamlessly among components of CS5 Production Premium
- Take advantage of Adobe Mercury Playback Engine and 64-bit support

Benefits

- Broke new ground with compelling story and cutting-edge workflow
- Preserved 4K quality and metadata of RED ONE
- Worked faster by editing 4K files in real time
- Easily finessed color and other attributes
- Enhanced creativity by adding filters in Photoshop CS5

Toolkit

Adobe Creative Suite 5 Production Premium. Components used include:

- Adobe After Effects® CS5
- Adobe Photoshop® CS5 Extended
- Adobe Premiere Pro CS5

A tale begging to be told

Walton, who is writer, director, and editor of *Squaw*, works by day as an editor on *America's Heartland* for Sacramento's PBS affiliate, KVIE. He is putting together *Squaw - The Documentary* with White Rabbit Productions, a company created for the express purpose of producing the film. In addition to Madden, the White Rabbit team includes Director of Photography Brian Hamm and Executive Producer Kitty Walton.

The inspiration for *Squaw* came from Tim Walton's parents, Clara and Walter Walton, who were avid amateur figure skaters. The stories told around the ice rink where they trained often centered on Squaw Valley, the 1960 Olympics, and the larger-than-life characters surrounding the event—not to mention the fact that almost every conceivable natural disaster, from avalanches to floods, had to be overcome to pull off the games.

"When Squaw Valley put itself in the running for the 1960 Olympics, it was accessible only by a dirt road, and it featured a modest 48-room lodge and a rope tow," says Walton. "Squaw Valley Founder Alex Cushing was a charmer and tried to get the Olympics as a publicity stunt—then realized he was up to his neck when Squaw Valley was actually selected."

The documentary combines spectacular digital footage shot with the high-end RED ONE camera, with archival film and photographs to document the fascinating history of Squaw Valley. The transformation from the peaceful "valley of the squaws" into a spectacular resort is a compelling story colored by visionary men with larger-than-life personalities.

Preserving 4K quality

Inspired by the valley's rich history as a summer home to the Washoe Indians and by the against-all-odds Winter Olympics tale and the personalities involved, Walton embarked on the project. He started out editing the project on his old standby non-linear editor, Final Cut Pro, but soon became frustrated. He struggled because Final Cut Pro forced him to convert the 4K RED R3D files to 2K, losing quality in the process. The conversion also meant that he lost all the metadata controls for adjusting exposure, color, and other variables that are inherently available with the RED workflow.

While Director and Editor Tim Walton used to be a Final Cut Pro user, he has now switched to Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 due to its support of the RED camera format, integration with other applications in Adobe CS5 Production Premium, performance in editing 4K files, and other factors.



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“The image quality with the RED ONE camera is stunning, and I didn’t want to lose that,” says Walton. “I had the opportunity to test Adobe Premiere Pro CS5, and I took it. Working with Creative Suite 5, including Adobe Premiere Pro CS5, I can preserve all the 4K quality and work with all the metadata from RED so I have a lot more control. Then for further finessing, I can take the files into Adobe After Effects CS5 and work on them natively from there with full 64-bit speed.”

Timesaving integration

Walton notes that preserving 4K quality is not the only advantage to using the latest version of Adobe’s video tools. A long-time After Effects and Adobe Photoshop user, he is impressed by the integration among components of CS5 Production Premium, which streamlines his constant moves among Adobe Premiere Pro CS5, After Effects CS5, and Photoshop CS5 Extended.

“It’s almost magical to be able to tweak something in After Effects CS5 and tab back to the timeline in Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 to see how it looks,” says Walton. “Other software packages don’t come close to measuring up in the area of integration. Adobe software gives you the ability to seamlessly go back and forth among the applications without intermediate rendering—the workflow is genuinely unique in the industry and it lets me work faster and with fewer creative interruptions.”

Editing in real-time

Since switching to Creative Suite 5 Production Premium, Walton can edit 4K RED R3D files in real time using the Adobe Mercury Playback Engine in Adobe Premiere Pro CS5. His workflow is further accelerated due to native 64-bit support in After Effects CS5, Adobe Premiere Pro CS5, and Photoshop CS5 Extended.

“The Mercury Playback Engine is stellar because it gives me the ability to work real time with the 4K RED files—I literally couldn’t pay enough money for that,” says Walton. “I’ve used a dozen different nonlinear editors and know of none that compare to the capabilities and streamlined workflow Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 offers today.”

Effects made easier

In addition to letting him work faster, the components of CS5 Production Premium help Walton easily add creative touches to the production and generate tools to market his film. For instance, Walton used Photoshop CS5 Extended to apply effects to the video for the splash page of documentary’s website.

White Rabbit Productions shot the documentary on the RED ONE camera and is editing the resulting 4K footage in real-time, thanks to the new Adobe Mercury Playback Engine in Adobe Premiere Pro CS5. With this workflow, the White Rabbit team can preserve all of the quality the RED camera offers.



"Today, Adobe Creative Suite 5 Production Premium is the Joneses—and nobody else is keeping up."

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"The ability to apply filters and adjustment layers to video in Photoshop CS5 Extended saves a lot of steps and is a great way to add subtle effects quickly," says Walton. "For the splash page of the website, I was able to take a shot of a skier hiking up a mountain at Squaw Valley with the sun behind him and add a lens flare effect in Photoshop CS5. The process is very fast—and, the minute I'm done I can easily incorporate the files into my Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 projects."

Charting the future of filmmaking

Walton and the White Rabbit team are currently about 70% finished shooting the film and are organizing and logging the RED and archival footage and still photos. They are also putting together a trailer to help market the film. Walton estimates that he will have a rough cut completed by June 2010.

As a professional filmmaker and TV professional who has tried every editor on the market, Walton is openly enthusiastic about his newfound, all Adobe workflow—and its ability to equip the White Rabbit team to produce a breakthrough new documentary.

"I remember at one point I was working with the Media 100 HD at my day job, but the funny irony was that it wouldn't cut HD," recalls Walton. "Media 100 wasn't keeping up with the Joneses. Today, Adobe Creative Suite 5 Production Premium is the Joneses—and nobody else is keeping up."

For more information
www.adobe.com/products/creativesuite/production/



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