



# The creative force behind

Writer-director Edgar Wright wanted a fast working director of photography who could help him achieve a record for the greatest number of set-ups in a British feature. The film was the cop action comedy *Hot Fuzz* - the much anticipated follow-up to *Shaun of the Dead*. *Hot Fuzz* had the second biggest box opening week of a 15 rated film ever when it opened in the UK recently.

"Edgar is a real film buff with an incredible knowledge of film. He realised I shared the same passion and he knew I had experience of the genre," remarks Jess Hall (*Stander*). The DP was eager to take on Wright's diverse range of references that included *Man on Fire*, *To Live and Die in LA*, *The Last Boy Scout* and the Coen brothers' films. "Edgar wanted to pay an ironic homage to those individual cinematic styles," he adds.

"Kodak was looking for a UK production and post house open to the idea of trialling KODAK Look Manager System Version 2.0 with its new workflow and improved user interface," comments Vic Godding, Kodak Technical and Training Specialist. "The drive came from Jess who worked very closely with Kodak to make the software a great success. KLMS V2.0 quickly became an integral tool on *Hot Fuzz* and it was great to see the benefits in the rushes as well as watching the movie take shape as a storyboard of graded still images in the KLMS software." Godding supported On-Set Grading Colourist Tom Balogh and Ruairi Hardman of Midnight Transfer in pre production as they tested the software to establish a best working practice. "Our heavy workload and large files meant that we needed Kodak's advice on how to organise and store the data so we could quickly pull it up for reference," says Hall.

"It was essential to have a dedicated full-time assistant to operate KLMS V2.0 because I had a very tough schedule and was often operating B camera," notes the DP who trained Balogh during pre production. Balogh took a digital shot and matched the frame, exposure, camera angle and lens for each set-up. He loaded images into KLMS V2.0 on a laptop, built into a Pelican hard case for portability, and selected film stocks and filters; he then set a base grade for Hall to review at the end of each day. "We often worked with low light conditions and highly complex multi-camera action sequences which employed KLMS to its full potential," states the colourist who also talked the dailies grader through the digital images and relayed important details such as time of day or mood.

After Hall made final grading adjustments, Balogh burnt CDs of the images and sent them with the rushes to Midnight Transfer for use as a visual reference by the colourist. "The DPX files I exported took time to organise and burn, but they were high quality," says Balogh. "The rushes properly reflected Jess's vision, so we were able to complete intermediate grades on HD for preview screenings and trailers very quickly and cost effectively. I have been exporting JPEGs on Jess's subsequent movie, *Son of Rambow*. They're much quicker and e-mail friendly, but not of such high quality."

"Tom created an excellent back-up and filing system and when we came to pick-ups and grading further in post production, we could call up a selection of graded stills as a reference," says Hall. "I like KLMS because it works off a print-based look-up table and its calibration of different film stocks is superb. It eliminated the need to explain what I was



## Products

KODAK Look Manager System (KLMS) Version 2.0

doing in words and gave the grader a concrete image shot at the same exposure and based on the real characteristics of my exposed negative.”

Hall spent a considerable amount of time adjusting the grading through manipulation of the negative, lighting and exposure and knew exactly when a scene needed a slight amendment and in which direction. “Using the system as a reference on set gave me the confidence to make adjustments at that stage rather than leave it to DI,” he says.

Rushes were graded off a Spirit onto HD at Midnight Transfer. “Visually, *Hot Fuzz* was very satisfying to work on,” states Ruairi Hardman. “The Kodak negative was of consistently good density, there was minimal grain and it captured a massive amount of detail. Given the fast action nature of the film, coupled with a diversity of shooting techniques, the Kodak stocks were more than up to the job. I spoke to Tom or Jess on a daily basis and KLMS gave us a common platform for in-depth discussions on the look we wanted to achieve. We used the system not only as a visual aid, but it also gave me the grading amendments applied by the DP on set. I could see an emulation of the raw exposed negative and then view the graded version; it was a great insight into his colour direction.”

“As KLMS DPX files originate from digital still frames, not scanned negative, and are viewed on a calibrated laptop LCD rather than a grade 1 HD CRT monitor, Jess and I concluded that KLMS V2.0 could be relied upon to achieve 70% of the grade, with the remaining 30% left for the colourist to interpret and apply. When I saw *Hot Fuzz* in the cinema, I was pleasantly surprised at how closely it compared to what we

achieved in the rushes. I believe this was only possible with KLMS V2.0.”

“It was great to be able to show images to Edgar during the shoot,” says Hall. “If he was concerned about areas that might be too dark or contrasty, we could reassure him that we were getting a literal representation of what he was seeing.” The DP wasn’t fazed when he was given just two days to supervise an HD viewing grade at St Anne’s Post for several preview screenings – despite the film’s 7,500 cuts. “The rushes were close to what I had visualised and the hard drive full of KLMS reference stills provided a really good reference from which to work. There were no big surprises as the film had been well graded throughout the editing and post production processes, but it would never have looked so good at that stage if we had worked from average one lights.”

Greg Barrett, *Midnight Transfer*’s director of film, is familiar with KLMS, having used it on several productions including *Amazing Grace*. “Working with KLMS V2.0 on *Hot Fuzz* was great because the colourist was able to get a clear idea of the grade before the DP entered the grading room. It speeded up the whole process.”

“Vic Godding supported us and the software designer in Paris to ensure that the system functioned to its maximum capability,” states Hall. “With crew and resources pushed to the limit, we had to be flexible and very well organised; after all we were shooting a location film over 13 weeks. We completed 1,750 slates and averaged 35-40 set-ups a day on A camera alone. We appreciated Kodak’s excellent support throughout the production.”

*Hot Fuzz* is a Working Title Films production.