

EX

TAPELESS RECORDING SYSTEM XDCAM EX

PMW-EX1

Demand explodes for revolutionary solid state camcorder

Seamless editing

XDCAM EX supports all the major editing systems

SxS PRO media

32GB memory cards record up to 140 minutes of HD



Licence to thrill

BEHIND THE SCENES
ON THE NEW BOND MOVIE

Welcome to the tapeless world

Since the revolutionary PMW-EX1 solid state camcorder started shipping towards the end of last year, there has been an explosion in productions turning to tapeless for the first time. The high capacity SxS PRO ExpressCard memory cards offer affordable solid state recording of up to 70-minutes HD quality, with a doubling of capacity this year when new 32GB cards start shipping. With incredible workflow advantages and robust, industry-standard media, the XDCAM EX production system is changing forever the way programmes are made.

further information
www.sonybiz.net/ex

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The PMW-EX1 solid state camcorder is being widely used to capture the sights and sounds at large music events – whether it is classical concerts at the Royal Festival Hall, an UNKLE gig at the Brixton Academy, or Iron Maiden's 2008 World Tour.

EX steals the show

Videographer Johnny Burke has been responsible for filming and post producing rock group Iron Maiden's concerts for a decade. Now, he's using the PMW-EX1 to shoot the band's latest tour. The first leg of the 2008 Somewhere Back In Time World Tour played 21 cities across four continents in just 45 days.

EMI Classics is to promote the new album by pianist Evgeny Kissin and conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy with a behind-the-scenes video shot on PMW-EX1s supplied by Prime Television, and directed by Paul Bates of White Water Media. The recording features Ashkenazy conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall with Kissin performing Prokofiev piano concertos.

11:22 Entertainment captured the action at an UNKLE concert at the Brixton Academy in London in March. The shoot, involving five PMW-EX1s, is for feature film documentary, The Man from UNKLE.





Putting the boot in

Nice Shirt Films had YouTube viewers stampeding to post reactions after it released a viral ad for Nike football boots. Shot on the PMW-EX1 camcorder, Lace Your Feet shows an athlete appearing to tie up his own feet.

Nice Shirt's Jon Hollis used a prosthetic foot manipulated in post production to create the effect. The ad, part of a four-part viral campaign for Nike's 230g Mercurial Vapor 4 boot, caused a stir when it appeared on YouTube in February.

Hollis, who directed the four ads, says the Sony PMW-EX1 deserves a lot of the credit. "For one shocking moment, you think maybe the athlete is tying up his own feet. It looks like a film camera captured the images. Nike are so impressed, they'd like to show the ads on TV. Unfortunately, they can't because the content is too disturbing.

"If they could be shown on TV, the funny part is I'd have to downscale the internet version from HD to standard def," he says.

Hollis, a founding director of The Mill, says solid state makes a huge difference in post production. "Transferring rushes from EX cards to a laptop is quick and simple. The same amount of material on 35mm would have taken about half a day. With the EX cards, I was editing within ten minutes," he says.

Nice Shirt Films has also used the PMW-EX1, which was supplied by Sony Specialist Dealer Creative Video, on ads for Allied Irish Bank and Frisks, a Japanese mint.

Life in the city

Midlands production house, Isis Media, has produced a pop video for the Community Channel on Sony's solid state PMW-EX1 camcorder. The project, made with charity The Young Disciples, tackles teenage gang culture in Birmingham.

"The PMW-EX1 is a one-man outfit with an incredible end result," says Isis Media's Ben Robinson. "It's unobtrusive, the picture and sound quality is what you'd expect from Sony's CineAlta brand and it feels like a professional film camera."



To the ends of the earth

Expedition Media has used an XDCAM EX camcorder with HotCam UK for their latest expedition in the African desert. Operating 120 metres below sea level, Sony's PMW-EX1 showed exceptional endurance and robustness, and proved to be a light-weight option for both crew and the camels that carried them.

"This small camera was literally taken to 'hell' and back! Despite the bodywork taking a beating and the LCD screen pushed to breaking point, the internal working of the memory card-recording camera held fast," says Richard Farish, co-director of Expedition Media, a website resource of adventure crews.

Expedition Media's latest expedition was heading up a technical team that trekked to a part of Ethiopia that is officially the hottest location on the planet. The team, working with the PMW-EX1 and an HDW-790P HDCAM camcorder, passed through some of the most treacherous and hostile environments known to man.

"Tracking alongside the presenters, or running ahead to film majestic shots of the team passing through the breathtaking terrain took a super human effort," says Expedition Media co-director Paul Mungeam. "When carrying the HDW-790P in 50 degrees of heat became too much, the crews would tie the larger camera to a camel and opt for the lightweight PMW-EX1. This combination meant that none of the epic journey was missed. The durability and versatility of the Sony cameras combined with the skill of the Expedition Media cameramen resulted in some stunning results."

www.expeditionmedia.co.uk

PS3 shorts on EX

A new series of short films designed to be shown on PlayStation3 have just been shot in HD with the PMW-EX1 camcorder. "These are short snappy, low budget films: the idea is to showcase digital technology and show what you can do with good ideas and small budgets," comments Carl Christopher, sponsorship and events manager for Sony Computer Entertainment UK. "The EX1s gave excellent picture quality and were very easy to use," he says. "The results show what you can do with the right digital technology."



Nuclear fall-out

A low-budget horror about the survivors of a nuclear attack being pursued by an unknown predator has been brought chillingly to life by the PMW-EX1. Stephen Tate reports

UK production company Angry Badger Pictures has produced Europe's first feature film on the Sony XDCAM EX camcorder. Three PMW-EX1s shot S.N.U.B! on location at the Kelvedon Hatch secret nuclear bunker in Essex in January.

Talks are already underway to sell the film rights to either 35mm, or digital cinema distributors in the UK and other world territories. The low budget horror feature follows the survivors of a nuclear terrorist attack on London trapped in a government bunker with an unknown predator.

Angry Badger's John Adams says the PMW-EX1's CineAlta pedigree more than met the task of shooting a production in an underground bunker. "We wanted a dark, eerie, creepy atmosphere. The PMW-EX1 was the most logical camera to use because it is incredible in low light.

Director of photography, Jordan Cushing, supervised the PMW-EX1s on the 12-day shoot. Hirecamera supplied the kit, which was in-turn supplied by Sony Specialist Dealer, Top-Teks.

"Grading the film, it was amazing to see what the camera had picked up. We shot in full HD at 25P.

That gives us the option of a 35mm blow-up.

"The PMW-EX1 gives you the look of film. The other big plus is the camera's size. It gets into the little corners that defeat bigger cameras. That helped us ramp up the film's menace," he says.

Adams also found the PMW-EX1's SxS PRO media easy to use. "The download times are so quick, we were viewing rushes on a monitor 10-15 minutes after shooting," he says.

The XDCAM EX format also reduces post production costs because it eliminates the process of digitalising tape. "It's money that can be spent elsewhere," he says.

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DoP Philip Bloom is shooting a documentary about the lives of people who do night shifts. Stephen Tate reports

On the nightshift

Freelance director of photography, Philip Bloom, has teamed up with award-winning director Vanessa Vassar to document some of the world's strangest nightshifts using Sony's new XDCAM EX camcorder, the PMW-EX1, purchased through Sony Specialist Dealer, Mitcorp.

Filming began in March, following a dockland patrol officer in Los Angeles. Other characters include a woman who runs a Japanese speakeasy, a man who delivers bagels in New Mexico and a minister who performs 24-hour marriages in Las Vegas. Later in the year, the production travels to other parts of the world to collect more stories for the series, which has the working title, *Nightshift*. Vassar's production company One Nightshift Productions plans to screen the film at the major festivals in 2009.

Low light quality

Vassar won Best US Documentary at the 2007 Iowa Independent Film Festival (IIFF) for *Cinderellas of Santa Fe* (2006). The film followed the lives of artists holding down ordinary jobs to survive.

She chose Bloom to film her latest project after producer Tony Selzer discovered a series of shorts produced on the Sony PMW-EX1 camcorder that Bloom had posted on his website.

"She liked the picture quality, especially in low light," says Bloom. "The PMW-EX1 is perfect for this project because we're travelling all over the world meeting people in all walks of life who have one thing in common. They work the nightshift.

"We followed the patrol officer around in next to no light, with remarkable results. The size of the camera made filming in a cramped patrol car quite easy, especially with a Sony 0.8x wide-angle lens.

"It's an ideal camera for a talking heads documentary. Subjects feel far more relaxed with a smaller camera," he says.

Bloom believes the PMW-EX1's solid state

media improves workflow in post production, too. "I was never a fan of tape. The solid state cards transfer footage up to ten times quicker than real-time. The continuous record feature between the camera's two card slots is excellent as well. As one card fills up, the camera hops to the next and carries on recording. In post production, software stitches the gap together automatically. You don't miss a thing. Being a CineAlta camera, the EX1 also shoots 1080 in native 24P, so we can transfer to 35mm with ease," he says.

Lens adapter

Bloom uses the PMW-EX1 with a Letus Extreme 35mm lens adapter to create a more filmic look. "The adapter increases depth-of-field and gives a more organic look. The PMW-EX1 partners up well because the adapter isn't great in low light, whereas the EX1 is awesome," he says.

The former Sky News cameraman used the camcorder and adapter to shoot a series of news features on world religions for *Five* that broadcast over Christmas 2007.

The PMW-EX1 shot four of the features in the *Five Faiths* series, two with the adapter and two without. The fifth news feature used a PDW-F350 XDCAM HD camcorder.

Bloom also produced a seven-minute short for the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers Regimental Museum in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, with the camcorder. The film re-enacts the regiment's time in the trenches during the First World War and was produced in association with Blackbox AV, which specialises in museum film installations.

"The results are amazing. I bought the PMW-EX1 to be a B camera for my F350. Instead, it has become my A camera. I do 95 per cent of my HD work on it now. It is the first time I have been able to use a small, cost effective camera and not compromise the picture quality. I can now get the look of film on video at a fraction of the cost."

New EX3 camcorder

Sony has unveiled a new XDCAM EX camcorder, the PMW-EX3, which will be available from mid 2008.

Director of photography, Philip Bloom, has tested the camcorder and says, "It's a massive step up.

There are three major differences to the EX1. The first is that you can put on different lenses. You can use much bigger and better quality half-inch lenses, and also wide angle lenses.

"The second is that the viewfinder is much better. They have got rid of the viewfinder from the EX1 and tweaked the LCD screen, moved it out and made it much bigger and put a viewfinder on it. The image is sharper and better quality.

"The third improvement is that the EX3 is a semi shoulder-mount, so it is much more practical. It has got a curvy shape at the back to fit into the shoulder."



PMW-EX3

PMW-EX1 has Bond in its sights

Special Treats Productions is using the PMW-EX1 to shoot behind-the-scenes footage on the latest James Bond movie, as Adrian Pennington reveals



Special Treats Productions, arguably the world's leading producers of promotional and broadcast content for major entertainment, music and feature film events, is putting the PMW-EX1 through its paces on action scenes for the latest James Bond film.

For 20 years, the Camden-based company has been building a reputation for excellence on both sides of the Atlantic, delivering media for press junkets, world premieres, DVD and webcasts, as well as broadcast programming for Hollywood blockbusters including Die Hard 4.0, The Bourne Ultimatum and The Da Vinci Code.

It has also forged a strong relationship with Bond producers, Eon Productions, having worked on exclusive behind-the-scenes footage for the last three 007s in the series. That relationship is continuing for Sony Pictures Entertainment's Quantum of Solace, the 22nd Bond release, which is currently in the midst of a six month shoot, directed by Marc Forster (The Kite Runner).

A dedicated Special Treats team is on set for every day of filming. Since this large scale production often has several units filming concurrently, this requires, typically, three single camera operations following Bond on location in Panama, Peru, Chile and Europe.

Special Treats managing director and producer Colin Burrows explains, "The Bond films are different because the production team knows exactly what they want and once they trust that you

will deliver, you can be far more proactive than normal about suggesting story angles or shots or ways of working on set."

Unusual angles

When the second unit, directed by acclaimed 2nd unit director Dan Bradley (The Bourne Ultimatum, Spider-Man), goes out to shoot in Italy's Lake Garda and Austria this Spring, Special Treats will use the PMW-EX1, supplied by Sony Specialist Dealer, Mitcorp.

"We're particularly impressed with the quality of the image," Burrows says. "We're very pleased with the lenses and the handling is intuitive — it has clearly been designed for professional use."

Burrows has been working out the workflow he'll use with the PMW-EX1. "We've transferred content onto our Final Cut Pro systems without a problem and our senior editor has sat down to play with it. Anyone familiar with nonlinear editing will have no problem grasping the concept. Clearly, the whole industry is moving toward tapeless production which brings with it challenges in terms of archive. It made sense on such a hi-tech, high octane production to try the EX1 out."

- SxS PRO solid state recording media
- Multiple frame rate recording
- 1080i/720P switchable
- 35Mb/s or 25Mb/s HD recordings
- Three 1/2-inch Exmor 1920x1080 CMOS Sensors
- Wide-angle Fujinon 14x zoom lens
- 140 minutes HD recording on two 16Gb cards
- Wide variety of accessories





Rachel Hyde-Harvey
plays Sofia Taylor



Dear diary



Sofia's Diary is what producer Triona Campbell of Campbell Ryan Productions calls "the best of its kind" – a daily web-based drama screened on the social networking site Bebo. The first Bebo interactive drama series, KateModern, achieved over three million views in its first eight weeks, so all eyes are on this latest online drama. "The show is also going into other areas of media with blogs, comments, texts and a column in a magazine," she adds.

The workflow necessary to produce Sofia's Diary's three minutes of drama a day is tight, which is why they chose PMW-EX1 camcorders for the shoot. "The cameras are tapeless and being in the digital online world this saves so much time, no more logging tapes and coding," explains Campbell. "The memory can go straight from the camera into the editing suite: so if we shoot at 8am the memory card can be at the suite by lunchtime. Also, these cameras weigh less and are more flexible getting in and out of places, they are also fantastic in low light."

The crew of 20-30 shoot several minutes of the show a day. There are 130 episodes in season one and the production team have mapped out the first half – although there is a limit to forward planning as it is an interactive series, with Bebo polls determining the way the stories go. "It is important that kids see the consequences of their actions so they will vote on options and see the results of both. Although only the chosen option will advance the storyline," says Campbell.

Why use HD technology when the show is viewed on the net? "There is a precedent for these shows to transfer to television," she says. "Also this had to be a quality product – no shaky, shaky cameras or people running up stairs with dodgy sound. This has to be a quality drama on the web, so we shoot and light like a traditional television production.

"Two or three days after shooting, the footage can be going out live. We are defining a new type of language. We cut a lot, the story lines are quite soap-ish but we have as much story in three minutes as a soap does in 20 minutes. It's soap on speed," she says.

www.bebo.com/sofiasdiary

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The memory can go straight from the camera into the editing suite: so if we shoot at 8am the memory card can be at the suite by lunchtime.

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Picture credit: © 2008 Danjaq, LLC, United Artists Corporation and Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.

Bond girls Olga Kurylenko (left) and Gemma Arterton.

Editing

Making the connection

Thanks to free-to-download transfer software from Sony, XDCAM EX integrates smoothly with all the major editing systems, as David Wood reports

In an increasingly IT, electronics and software-driven world, camcorders have had to adapt to a new range of challenges, including making sure that the HD images they produce can integrate smoothly with the third party technologies that are now central to the post production process.

Sony's XDCAM product manager, Phil Myers, says, "One of the big learning curves for Sony has been recognising that an industry which has historically been hardware-driven, is now as much about software." This means that XDCAM EX not only has to produce the best pictures, but has to integrate smoothly with the big industry nonlinear editing systems (NLEs) from Apple, Avid, Adobe and Sony Vegas. "Now we have got to make sure there's quality software that comes in the box with the camera which enables the hardware," says Myers.

Sony has invested a lot of energy in making workflows for its XDCAM range as smooth as possible, with, among other things, free-to-download transfer software, which provides nonlinear editing systems with seamless, native support for the XDCAM product family.

Sony Vegas

Sony Creative Software product manager, Matt Brohn, who looks after the Sony Vegas NLE system says, "I find XDCAM EX is working really well with Vegas at 18, 25 and 35Mb/s MPEG HD, mainly because of the Clip Browser software, which wraps the native MPEG4 files in an MXF (material exchange format) wrapper so that most NLEs can use it."

Sony's transfer software enables the benefit of instant tapeless editing, without having to wait for

hours of capture, says Myers. "This means that XDCAM can offer high speed access to content."

Final Cut Pro

This was one of the big benefits for editor Luke Price, who has been editing from Professional Disc and SxS PRO media on Ginger Production's ITV show, Adrenaline Junkie. With the series generating a lot of footage (hundred of hours on series three), one benefit of using XDCAM was that it required very little ingest. "Tapeless helped a lot with that, because we gathered so much material," says Price, who runs his own FCP facility, New Born Adventure. He recommends using the latest Final Cut Pro 6.0.2 in conjunction with XDCAM EX.

Avid systems

On Avid editing systems, there are a number of solutions for XDCAM workflows. The new XDCAM EX Version 2 Clip Browser software from Sony – which was announced at NAB 2008 – provides native MXF Op-Atom File Export to Avid Media Composer, as well as the option of file transcode support to XDCAM HD and XDCAM HD422 Professional Discs.

As Avid's Deepraj Sandhar points out, the beauty of the XDCAM workflow is that the user can go from beginning to end without having to use third party applications. "It's an efficient way of working with no other windows popping up," Sandhar says.

Cut to the chase

XDCAM EX has revolutionised the editing workflow for Sky One series, *Road Wars*, reports David Wood

Filming high speed chases from the back of a police car demands a lightweight camera. When Sky asked *Road Wars* producer, Raw Cut Television, to shoot in HD, it found the new PMW-EX1 camcorder had everything it wanted.

Filed by cameramen embedded with Thames Valley Police's road crimes unit, *Road Wars* is an edgy, seat-of-the-pants show that involves cameramen shooting police units in action, tackling road traffic incidents and criminals.

Traditionally, *Road Wars* has been shot on the HVR-Z1E HDV camcorder — until Sky announced it wanted the 20-part series shot on a higher quality HD format as it sought to raise the benchmark of its HD broadcasts.

Executive producer, Steve Warr, turned to XDCAM EX. "The technical specification looked fine to us and so it proved," says Warr, who bought three PMW-EX1s from Sony Specialist Dealer, Mitcorp. "At 2.4 kg, it's light and compact — like the HVR-Z1E — and is robust enough to stand up to rough treatment," says Warr. "It has been picked up and put down hard, karate kicked, banged against the roofs of cars and it still seems to carry on shooting with stunning results," he declares.

Raw Cut editor Toby Clarkson describes how



Road Wars

he designed the workflow for *Road Wars*, which involves a combination of Final Cut Pro and Avid. "Each camera team was given three SxS PRO cards, a MacBook Pro and a G-Raid Raid 1 mirrored storage solution," recalls Clarkson. "They downloaded everything onto the G-Raid drive, which provides a back-up onto two different drives."

Using XDCAM transfer software, the series was imported and edited in Final Cut Pro 6.0.2 before finishing on the Avid DS Nitris. "Our best solution was to line up four Final Cut Pros and then finish everything on the Avid," he says.

The final task was to make a master on HDCAM SR. "We stripped out an HDCAM SR master, making every effort to remove as many layers of compression as possible to maintain the highest picture quality."



Sony has announced the launch of a portable hard disk unit, the PHU-60K, offering an alternative high reliability recording and playback unit. The PHU-60K has recording times of 200 minutes at 35Mb/s and 260 minutes at 25Mb/s. It has direct high-speed connection to EX camcorders, plus USB2 connectivity, and works up to 10-hours with one BP-U30 battery. Sony has also announced the launch of the PMW-EX30 compact memory recorder, which allows full 35Mb/s and 25Mb/s HD recordings with two SxS PRO memory card slots. It has a built-in 3.5-inch colour LCD monitor, HD-SDI input/output and i.Link HDV and DV output, plus HDMI output.

New recording options



PHU-60K

PMW-EX30

EX 9

Solid solution

The short recording time of solid state is a thing of the past thanks to Sony SxS PRO media. With new solid state ExpressCards, offering near instantaneous read write and fast transfer speeds, film-makers can store up to an hour of HD digital video at a time, as Adrian Pennington reports

Designed for the latest XDCAM EX camcorder, SxS PRO media is set to change the way professional HD video is captured and edited. These solid state ExpressCards provide near instantaneous read and write performance with transfer speeds of up to 800Mb/s.

According to Sony's SxS PRO European product manager, Nadege Poncet, "For professional videographers and broadcasters requiring faster turnaround times and more efficient high definition digital video workflows, SxS PRO is the ideal solution."

Jamie Allan, broadcast consultant at Sony Specialist Dealer, Jigsaw Systems Ltd, adds, "The broadcast and IT industries have become more and more intertwined in the past five years. Now with the expanded XDCAM EX platform, Sony are on top of this integration technology and making it accessible to a wide range of broadcast and production companies."

The SxS PRO memory cards, developed with SanDisk, comply with the ExpressCard industry standard adopted worldwide by PC manufacturers to replace the legacy PC Card format. All computer manufacturers are expected to adopt the ExpressCard technology in the near future. The cards are half the size and 40 per cent lighter than standard PC cards.

"Producers who have tried solid state like the fact that the methodology is akin to shooting film," says Owen Tyler, operations director at Soho post house Evolutions. "It forces them to be more disciplined about what they are shooting. With DV, people bring in hundreds of hours of media — taking up costly and unnecessary amounts of time and storage. Solid state means being a bit more cerebral in terms of what you record."

For example, after recording 50 minutes of 35Mb/s, users can review clips in the camcorder or when plugged into a laptop and either delete clips or select the best takes to transfer using the PMW-EX1's clip browse software.

"The editorial decision-making process begins in the field," notes Tyler.

The PMW-EX1 is equipped with two card slots allowing an operator to take 2x16GB cards and achieve over two hours of recording time.

"Or you can continually swap



SxS PRO ExpressCard media

Sony SxS PRO media changes the way professional HD video is captured and edited. They provide near instantaneous read and write performance with transfer speeds of up to 800Mb/s.

A higher capacity 32GB SxS PRO ExpressCard solid state memory card will be available from autumn 2008, which records 100 minutes of HD at 35Mb/s or 140 minutes HD at 25Mb/s.

For professional videographers and broadcasters requiring faster turnaround times and more efficient high definition digital video workflows, SxS PRO is the ideal solution.

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The editorial decision-making process begins in the field

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cards around,” explains Dennis Lennie of Sony Specialist Dealer, Mitcorp. “You still have to move the footage from the card after a day on location, but this can be done on a laptop with an ExpressCard slot or by using a card reader in the evening. Since the camcorder is file-based, you can review footage and, if you wish, only transfer the good takes.”

While other ExpressCard flash memory cards use a USB2 interface, SxS PRO uses the high-speed PCI Express Interface, which can transfer data at up to twice the speed of USB2.

The cards are more robust than tape, notably more resistant to dust and can be used and reused to rewrite data several thousand times.



Into the void

The Antarctic ranks as one of the most hostile shooting locations on the planet says South African film-maker Damon Foster, who has just returned from a three-month trip to Antarctica documenting an international research project at the South Pole.

“I don’t know a harsher environment to work in, with the light so ‘glarey’ and the temperatures so low,” says Foster, who decided that the PMW-EX1, supplied by Sony Specialist Dealer, Visual Impact, through hire company True Spirit, was the camcorder best suited to the job.

“Budgets were limited and we wanted something that we could shoot with a small crew and compile and edit footage as we went along. It was quite clear that there was really only one option – Sony’s tapeless XDCAM range,” says Foster.

“We were shooting down dangerous crevasses, on top of mountains and were being transferred from place to place on helicopters, so we had to be quite mobile,” he explains. Shooting 1080/50i at 35Mb/s using the system’s 16GB SxS PRO cards, his first impression of the camcorder was that it felt solid and well-built. “That always gives you confidence in a new piece of kit,” he says.

Foster admits that, given that this was his first solid state shoot, the thought of working without tape “scared the hell” out of him.

But in practice, the kit worked perfectly. “In the field, the EX1 was rock solid... the ease of shooting to cards and copying across to mirrored drives vastly exceeded my expectations.” Taking a Raid storage system and a Mac Book Pro equipped with Final Cut Pro, Foster declares that the workflow was “simple, efficient and worked very well”.

“Now I look at tapes and think; ‘Gosh, I’m not sure I’ll never use them again’.”





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