



Panasonic

CASE STUDY: DP JOE CALLAHAN

Shooting Wildlife Documentary under Punishing Conditions with AU-EVA1

Challenge

Director of Photography Joe Callahan was tasked with shooting a feature-length documentary about wildlife rescue and rehabilitation in India. He knew he would be facing extreme challenges in terms of weather and the environment, not to mention physical danger while filming criminal animal poachers.

Solution

Callahan's company, the Cinematic Media Group, purchased a pair of Panasonic AU-EVA1 5.7K cinema cameras for the production, which has completed principal photography. The documentary (working title, "Where the Wild Things Aren't") profiles the pioneering work of Wildlife SOS, a worldwide organization dedicated to protecting and conserving India's natural heritage, forest and wildlife wealth.

Having purchased the EVA1s specifically for the wildlife project, Callahan has gone on to utilize the cameras for many high-profile commercial spots for GEICO, Alfa Romeo, Tide, Black & Decker, LensCrafters and Alaska Airlines, among others.

Customizing the Solution

"When producer Erik Oberholtzer and I met with Nikki Sharp, who heads up Wildlife SOS' U.S. office, and discussed the organization's plans for upcoming animal rescues, we both felt this was a story that had to be told," Callahan said.

"I needed exactly the right cameras for what I knew would be an incredibly taxing shoot," the DP continued. "What I look for in a camera is reliability, usability and image quality. The EVA1 is one of the top cameras I've ever evaluated in terms of color science and dynamic range, and I chose it over much more expensive options."



Joe Callahan found the EVA1 to be "insanely reliable" shooting in India's extreme heat and terrains.

"In terms of usability, the form factor is so versatile. I can rig it up at will (for instance, on car rigs and gimbals in India) or break it down quickly and work handheld, as I did to sneak around and get shots while tracking tiger poachers," he said.

The majority of location work on the documentary took place last June all across India—jungles, deserts and the teeming cities of Jodhpur, Delhi and Agra. "The EVA1 proved itself to be insanely reliable," Callahan recounted. "India beat the hell out of the cameras: we shot 12 hours a day in 120 degree heat. There was constant ash in the air, to the extent that we couldn't see any blue sky. At one point it was so hot that a metal plate on the build-out burned my face. We never had a camera failure of any kind."

The DP said he shot in 4K, recording ProRes HQ externally to an Atomos Shogun Inferno, with internal back-up to the EVA1's SD cards. (ProRes HQ was chosen to avoid transcoding and make the footage direct-to-edit.) For lensing, he chose Tamron 24-70 and 70-200 G2 zooms, as well as a set of primes.

Callahan usually shot at ISO800, with occasional use of ISO2500. "There were times in India where ISO2500 saved me a bunch, letting me use much smaller LED lights, realizing significant cost-efficiencies."

Summary

The EVA1 is now the DP's camera of choice for his extensive commercial work. He typically shoots in 4K, again outboard recording to a Shogun Inferno and backing-up on the EVA1's SD cards. "The EVA1 is beautifully complemented by vintage lenses, and I've used a range of them—Leica Rs, Super-Takumar and older Zeiss models, for instance," he noted. "The images consistently look great."

To view examples of Callahan's EVA1 work, visit www.cinematicgroup.com/ourwork/. For more information on Wildlife SOS, visit wildlifesos.org/usa/.

For more information about the AU-EVA1, visit us.panasonic.com/EVA1 or contact Panasonic at 877-803-8492.

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Joe Callahan takes a break from shooting all across India.

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– Director of Photography Joe Callahan



Screen grab from Alfa Romeo Giulia commercial, shot by DP Joe Callahan with the EVA1.