

# Instructions for After Effects Level One

## Resource Files Needed

- CSE Background Music.WAV
- OceanView.avi
- 00237\_VideoTraxx.avi
- 00244\_VideoTraxx.avi
- 01047\_VideoTraxx.mov
- 01067\_VideoTraxx.mov
- 01189\_VideoTraxx.mov
- 01208\_VideoTraxx.mov
- 01492\_VideoTraxx.avi
- 03147\_VideoTraxx.avi
- 051\_JB\_HD2.avi
- 970\_JumpBack.avi
- windsurfer.avi
- AB\_LightEffects\_loop.mov

## The Interface

Open the sample project and let's take a look at the program interface. There are three main parts of the interface and at least one other piece that you need to be familiar with to do the basic things that AE can do.

### The Project Window

The first piece is the Project Window which, just like Premiere, is the holding place for all the source files that you use for a given project. You can create bins (folders) just like you can in Premiere. There is really not much new to learn here so just be aware that when you close this window, you are closing the project that you have open.

### The Comp Window

The second part of the interface that you need to be familiar with is the Comp window. When you put files on a timeline in AE you are creating what AE refers to as a Comp or composition. The comp window is the preview window for a composition. When you play a timeline you will be viewing its output in the comp window. Notice that there is a toolbar at the bottom of this window. There are a couple that you will probably use regularly. Notice the zoom drop down. Unless you have a huge monitor you probably won't be able to view the comp window at 100%. I usually work at 50% or less unless I have a dual monitor setup.

Find the next drop down in the comp window. This is the resolution drop down. Notice that you can view this window at 100% resolution (what the end product will look like) down to ¼ of full resolution. The reason that you would set the window to a resolution less than 100% is that this takes a lot of resources. The higher this resolution, the longer it

will take to actually be able to see the output. I usually work at 50% or even 25% just to make the work go smoother.

There are a few other tools at the bottom of this window but they are beyond the focus of our workshop today.

### **The Timeline**

The timeline is where all the action takes place in AE. This is where you assemble all the clips for your comp. This is where you set the in and out points, apply and configure effects, choose the blending mode, make a layer 3D, apply track mattes, and anything else that you can do in AE. This is the main, most important part of the interface. It works quite differently from Premiere and we will be spending a lot of time working in the timeline during the course of the workshop so we don't really need to go into a great deal of detail right now. You will learn how it works as we go.

### **Tool Palettes**

You should also see some tool palettes somewhere on your screen. If you click on the Window menu, you will see a full list of palettes that are available. They are completely customizable just like they are in Photoshop or Premiere. You can position them anywhere you want just like in other Adobe programs and you can save the positions as workspaces just like you can in other Adobe programs. There are at least two palettes that you need to have opened for the workshop today. You need to have the Tools palette and the Time Control palette open. You may close the rest of the palettes if you want to. You can also group the palettes any way you like just like to do in Photoshop.

### **RAM Preview**

When you preview a comp in AE, you are creating what is called a RAM preview. The reason that it is called a RAM preview is because all the layers and effects that have been applied in the comp are "put together" and placed into RAM. In Premiere they are stored in a file on the scratch disk. Think about the implications of that for a minute. Long term versus short term storage of the preview file.

When you RAM preview a comp, the more detail and precision you want to see, the more slowly the composition displays in standard preview and the more RAM is required for RAM Preview. You can control the amount of detail shown in either the standard or RAM Preview by changing the resolution, magnification, and preview quality of your composition.

To create a RAM Preview you simply choose the preview settings in the Time Controls palette, (resolution and frame rate) and click on the RAM Preview button. The preview will be loaded into RAM (basically rendered and stored into RAM) and then played. This is the only way that you can view a comp in real time. If you just click the play button, you will not see the clip in real time, at the actual speed at which the final clip will be rendered.

All right, without any further delay, let's get started.

Your task today is to create an intro for a new TV program that is going to be airing on national TV starting this spring. The name of the show is CSE (ESC backwards, or Crime

Scene Evaluation) Corpus Christi... CSE Corpus Christi. It has a couple of well known stars that we will use in the intro.

## **Creating Comp 1 – Police Lights**

1. Create a new project. Select File > New Project
2. Save it in a folder at the root of C in a new folder named CSE-CC
3. Name the project file CSE-CC
4. As a side note, I would normally put all the source files that I am going to use in this folder, clips, audio, stills, etc. To save time and preserve disk space, we won't do that today.
5. Now let's create some bins to keep our source files organized. Create a bins for Comps, Video, Audio, and Stills. There is nothing special about these bins, it is just the way that I like to organize my projects.
6. Click on the video bin and select File > Import > File
7. Find the file 00244\_VideoTraxx.avi, select it, and click on Open.
8. The file is placed in the video bin. Now, I already know that we are going to create a number of comps in this project and you might want to create a folder in the video bin called comp 1 and store all the comp 1 videos in that folder. Then you would do the same for all the other comps. I am not going to do that, but that is another way that you could organize the folder.
9. Now you may notice that there is not timeline to put this file on. That is because we haven't created a comp yet. Remember, a timeline is a visual representation of a comp. So let's create a comp.
10. Select the Comps bin and select Composition > New Composition.
11. Name the comp Comp 1 – Police Lights
12. On the Preset dropdown, select NTSC DV 720x480
13. Leave all the other settings the same except the last one. We are going to make this comp 5 seconds long. When you click OK, a timeline and a comp window will appear, and you should see a new item in the Comp bin.
14. Put the video on the timeline.
15. RAM preview the video. Notice that nothing happens for the first few seconds of the clip. That won't work for our intro so we want the in point for this video to be at the point where the lights start moving.
16. There are a couple of ways to accomplish that. You could move your timeline to the spot at which you want to start and then drag the beginning of the clip to that point and move the clip over to the left or you could drag the clip to the left until the desired frame is at the 00:00 marker on the timeline. (Demonstrate)

17. That looks good but we could have done that with Premiere and we are charging the client an exorbitant fee because we are After Effects Experts so let's After Effect it.
18. Click on the clip in the timeline and select Layer > New > Solid.
19. Name this solid Light Blue Solid (I used 184, 195, and 143 or B8C3F3. You can change this latter if you need to by clicking on the solid layer in the timeline and selecting Layer > Solid Settings.)
20. Click on the Make Comp Size button to make sure the solid is the same size as the video clip.
21. Change the color to a light blue and click OK.
22. Now something happened there that you need to understand. Just like in Premiere, when you place an item on a track above a track with something in it, that top track will hide the lower tracks.
23. Unlike Premiere, however, there are some really cool things you do in this situation.
24. At the bottom of the timeline you will see a button that says Switches/Modes. That is a toggle switch that toggles between two different sets of tools, the switches tools and the blending mode tools. Click on it to reveal the Mode panel.
25. For the Light Blue Solid layer, click on the mode drop down and you will see some blending modes that you may be familiar with. They are the same ones you find in Photoshop and they work the same way. Experiment around a bit with different modes and see what you can do.
26. To see the effect, choose a mode and then toggle the eyeball (far left side of the layer) on and off.
27. You can move quickly through the different modes using Shift + =.
28. Settle on Color Burn and save the comp.
29. RAM preview it and close this comp. That is all we are going to do with it for now. We will use it latter in the final comp.

## **Create Comp 2 – CSI #1**

1. Import the following files into the appropriate bins
  - a. 01492\_VideoTraxx.avi
  - b. 051\_JB\_HD2.avi
  - c. OceanView.avi
2. Create a new comp with the following settings
  - a. Comp Name "Comp 2 – CSI #1"
  - b. Comp Duration 10:00 (we will trim it later to 6:22)

3. Place 01492\_VideoTraxx.avi on layer 1. At this point we are going to adjust some of the settings for this video. We need to move it over to the left a bit. The reason will become obvious as we move through the rest of the comp.
4. Spin down the twirly on the left side of the clip. This will spin down the properties for this layer. What you find underneath that twirly is dependent on what the layer contains. Again, that will become more obvious as we continue through the project.
5. Spin down the transform property and you will see a series of properties that you can transform for this object. The one that we are interested in is the position property. (Spin everything back up and single click on the clip. Press the P key to open the position property.)
6. There are three ways to adjust this property.
  - a. You can click on the X axis number and type in the value that you want, and then repeat for the Y axis value.
  - b. You can scrub the numbers
  - c. You can click and hold on the picture in the comp window and drag the clip to the location that you want it. (Click and hold and press the Shift key to constrain the motion.)
7. Use any of those methods to get the clip to 444, 243. Again, there is method to my madness. I know that this doesn't look good right now, but it will all become clear shortly.
8. For layer 2 use 051\_JB\_HD2.avi
9. Change the mode to Multiply
10. If you RAM preview you will notice a problem. Layer 2 is far shorter than the underlying layer. In Premiere you would have to put the clip into the timeline over and over to fill up the amount of time that you need. Not with AE.
11. This clip is 2 seconds long but we need it to be 10 seconds long. Right click on the clip **in the project window**. If you right click in the timeline, this won't work.
12. Select Interpret Footage ➤ Main and change the Loop property to 5. Click OK.
13. Grab the end of the clip in the timeline and stretch it out to 10 seconds.
14. For the next layer drop in the OceanView clip. We are going to do something here that AE is famous for... we are going to add an effect to the clip.
15. Click Effects ➤ BCC Colors and Blurs ➤ BCC Tritones. (If you get an error message, just click out of it. I think it is because this version of the effect was created for an earlier version of AE. It will still work.)
16. You can play around with the Black Color, Midtone Color, and White Color to see what it will do. Play with the other settings. You can do a lot of interesting stuff with this effect. Delete it and re-apply it. Change the midtone color to 3EB3CF. (I originally arrived at that color by using the eyedropper in the water area.)

17. Don't worry about the short length of this clip. We are going to trim the timeline when we finish.
18. Now create a new white solid about 1/3 the width of the comp
  - a. Layer ➤ New ➤ Solid
  - b. Name: White Solid
  - c. Change the color to white
  - d. Set the width to 240
19. Be sure that you are looking at Comp 2 in the comp window. Move the White Solid layer to far left side of the comp window. It may be necessary to make it a little taller so that it covers up the whole left side of the comp.
20. Now go back to layer 3 and change the track matte to "Alpha Matte White Solid"
21. Move the timeline marker to 1:00 and insert a new text layer (Layer ➤ New ➤ Text)
22. In the Character Panel change the settings of the fonts to the following settings
  - a. Myriad Pro
  - b. Size 24
  - c. Bold
23. Click in the right 2/3's of the comp and type Tom Hardy.
24. Click and hold on the title and position it below the man.
25. Grab one of the corner sizing handles and resize it. Make it larger.
26. You may notice that there is a black line around the outside of the text. That is a stroke. We often like for our fonts to have a stroke, but not in this case. In the Character panel, on the Stroke Width property, you can set the stroke to .25. The font will always have a stroke, but you can make it so small that no one can see it.
27. Now we want to make this title fade in over the first 2 seconds that it appears. We can do that on the timeline. Click on the title in the timeline and type a T for transparency.
28. Make sure that the timeline marker is at the beginning of this clip.
29. Click on the Stop Watch to turn on animation for this property. That adds a key frame at the current timeline marker.
30. Change the value of the Opacity property to 0.
31. Move out 2 seconds to the 3:00.
32. Change the value to 100 and another keyframe is added. (Note that there is a set of keyframe navigators on the far left side of the timeline.)
33. Move the timeline marker to 6:22. Press the N key to shrink the work area to that length.

34. Now select all the tracks (clicking and dragging on the track heading) and press Alt ➤ ] key. That is the shortcut for setting the outpoint.
35. Save the file and RAM preview it.
36. I don't like how slowly the text fades in so I am going to change that. Click on the text layer and press the T key. Click and hold on the second keyframe and move it left to about the 2 second mark.
37. You can RAM preview again if you like, at least the portion where the text fades in.
38. Clean up the bins. You may have some resources in the wrong bin. I did.

### **Create Comp 3**

This is a very simple comp that quite frankly, we really don't need. We could just use the footage as footage in the final comp, but this is the way I put it together so this is how we will do it.

1. Import 01189Video\_Trax into the video bin
2. Place it on the timeline and fade it in over 10 frames.

### **Create Comp 4 – CSI #2**

1. Import the following files into the appropriate bins
  - a. 01067\_VideoTraxx
  - b. 01208\_VideoTrax
2. Both of these are quick time files. We are going to do the same thing here that we did in Comp 2, use a white solid as a track matte and add some text. This time the solid will be on the right side of the comp window instead of the left.
3. Create a new comp and name it Comp 4 – CSI #2
  - a. Set the duration to 6:16
4. Place 01067 on the first layer
5. Place 01208 on the second layer
6. Place the white solid that you created earlier on the 3<sup>rd</sup> layer. This time move it to the far right side of the comp.
7. Set the Track Matte property on the second track to Alpha Matte White Solid
8. Add a text layer using the same setting as in Comp 2 and type Jolene Hefferman. I like this on two lines.
9. Use a preset for the entry animation for the text.
10. Save it and RAM Preview it.

### **Create Comp 5**

1. Create a new comp with the following settings...

- a. Name = Comp 5 – Surfer Dude
  - b. Duration 6:17
2. Import 970\_JumpBack and windsurfer into the appropriate bin
3. Place windsurfer on the first layer and apply Effect >Blur and Sharpen >Fast Blur
4. Set the Blurriness to 10, Blurriness Dimensions Horizontal and Vertical, and Repeat Edge Pixels > On
5. Place 970\_JumpBack on layer 2.
6. Set the Opacity 50% and the Mode set to Overlay
7. As you can see, the underlying video begins to show through.
8. Now add the windsurfer video again on layer 3
9. Add a mask to this layer... Layer>Mask>New Mask. You should be able to see the mask outlined in yellow along the outside edge of the comp. Or you could click on the rectangle mask tool in the tool palette and draw the mask right on the layer. I like this method best.
10. We are going to shrink the mask and make it follow the surfer dude. Spin down the windsurfer clip that is on layer 3 and then spin down the Mask, and Mask 1 lines.
11. This is a little weird, I will call it un-intuitive. You have to click on the clip inside the mask in order to be able to resize the mask. Do that now and you will see 8 sizing handles on the mask. Adjust the size to fit the surfer dude.
12. Be sure that the timeline marker is at the beginning of the timeline and turn on the animation stop watch to create a keyframe at this point.
13. Move out 5 frames and position the mask in line with the surfer. Continue this process for the entire length of the clip. At some places (like at 15) you will have to adjust the size and/or shape of the mask. To do that, click on the video “behind” the mask and use the sizing handles in the comp window. You can also double click on the mask shape in the comp window and adjust the position and the shape. This is quite similar to the transform property in Photoshop. After you make the adjustment, you have to press the Enter key. To set a keyframe without changing the mask, click on the “Add/Remove Keyframe” check box.
14. Save and RAM preview
15. If you turn off the windsurfer on layer 1 and RAM preview just a bit of the clip, you will see why we use it twice. By putting the jumbpack between the two identical clips and setting the mode to overlay, you can see the clip through the Jumpback creating a pretty cool effect.
16. Let’s take this one step further. Let’s add an adjustment layer and apply the BCC Tritone effect to it. Play with the colors until you get an effect that you like. I will use 0B4AC1 for the midtone color.

17. Save it and RAM Preview if you like.

## **Comp 6 – Title**

In this comp I am going to teach you a couple of different techniques that AE gives you for animating text.

1. Create a new comp name Comp 6 – Title and make it 8 seconds long.
2. Import 03147\_VideoTraxx and place it on layer 1.
3. Place the timeline marker at 1 second.
4. Create a white solid and name it White Solid Layer 6. It should be on layer 2.
5. With the solid layer selected, select Effect > Text > Path Text
6. Type CSE, use Elephant Font, and click OK.
7. The Path Text Effect Control Panel should open. This gives you access to all the parameters that you can control with in the effect.
8. Move to the top of this window and change the Shape property to Line. (Take note of the others.)
9. Change the size up to about 120
10. Adjust the tracking to put a little space between the letters.
11. Make the alignment > center
12. Spin down the advanced spinner. This is where the real magic takes place.
13. Turn on the stop watch for the Visible Characters property. Change the value to 0. (At the beginning of the clip, show 0 visible characters.)
14. Now move out 2 seconds and change the visible characters to 3. (That is all the characters in this line.)
15. Scrub the timeline and take a look.
16. Now change the fade time to 50% and scrub the timeline.
17. One last property. Make the fill color and the stroke color white.
18. Save and RAM preview the timeline.

That's one different way to deal with text. Now we are going to use a mask to hide and control the speed at which the hidden text is revealed.

19. Move out to about 4 seconds and add a new text layer.
20. Type Corpus Christi, make it larger, change the fill and stroke to white, and position the words in the lower third of the screen.
21. Add a mask to the Corpus Christi layer. Layer > Mask > New Mask
22. If the layer is not close to size of the text block, resize it by double clicking on and grabbing a sizing handle. Make the mask a little wider than the text block on both sides. (If you don't double click you can change the shape of mask.)

23. Spin down the text layer properties, the Mask properties, and the Mask 1 properties.
24. Turn on the animation stop watch for the Mask Shape property to add a key frame at the beginning of the clip.
25. Double click on the mask again and move the right side to the left until the text disappears.
26. Move the timeline indicator out about 2 seconds and stretch the mask back out to its original size.
27. Scrub the timeline to see what it looks like.
28. Look at the mask feather property. Notice that there is a lock setting on it. That means that if you change the value of one of the properties, the other will change too. That is often a good thing, but not in this case. Unlock it and set the first value to 50 %.
29. Scrub it and see what that effect does.
30. Save the comp and RAM preview it.



## **Comp 7 – Workers**

1. Create a new comp, name it Comp 7 – Workers
2. Make it 10 seconds long.
3. Import AB\_LightEffects\_loop and 01047\_VideoTraxx
4. This clip is smaller than the comp so stretch it out.
5. Put 01047\_VideoTraxx on the timeline first and the AB\_LightEffects\_loop in second so that it is on top of the other clip.
6. Change the blending mode for the AB\_LightEffects clip to Overlay
7. Take a look at the timeline and notice that the overlaid clip is too short. Do you remember how to fix that?
  - a. In the Project window find the clip, right click on it, and select Interpret Footage ➤ Main
  - b. We need to loop it about 4 times and click OK
  - c. Stretch it out in the timeline.
8. Save the comp and RAM preview it. You might want to turn the eyeball for the top layer on and off to see the effect that the overlaid clip is having on the final results.
9. If you think the overlay is too dark you can try some of the other blending modes, change the opacity of the layer, or you could try an adjustment layer and play around with different effects applied to that layer. If you choose to look at this method, you will find that you have a lot of control over the final results. I applied the Layers (Individual Controls) and got some interesting results.

10. You can also add multiple effects to this layer. I added a Gaussian blur set to 4.0 with a nice result.

## **Assembling the Final Comp**

You have now created all the comps that we need to create the final composition... the one that we will show to the client.

1. Create a new comp, name it Final Comp, and make it 45 seconds long.
2. Import CSE Background Music and 00237\_VideoTraxx into the appropriate bins
3. Put the audio file in the timeline. We are going to synchronize all of our comps in this final comp to events in the audio file. The best way to do that is to place a marker on the clip at the events in the audio file that mark places you want to change the scene. Here's how you do it.
  - a. In the Time Controls window, click the Audio button  and then click the RAM preview button .
  - b. At the points in time where you want to add a marker, press the multiply key (\*) on the numeric keypad to create a layer marker.
  - c. When previewing is complete, double-click a marker you just created, type a descriptive label in the Comment box (such as a word being spoken at that time), and click OK. Repeat for any other markers you added.
  - d. You can snap items (including clips and the timeline marker) to markers when you drag them in the Timeline window by holding down Shift as you drag.
4. Now we are ready to assemble all the comps that we have worked on so far into a final comp. Find Comp 3 and put it in the timeline at the beginning of the timeline.
5. RAM preview it.
6. Insert 00237\_VideoTraxx at 2 seconds. We aren't going to use all of it but we will get to that in a minute.
7. Comp 1 is next, but there are some frames at the beginning that we don't want to use. I want you to put it in at about 1:15 then trim the beginning over to about 3:15.
8. Now trim Comp 3 to where it ends somewhere in the middle of 00237.
9. At the first marker (which should be about 6:15) insert the Comp 2.
10. At marker 2 (13:03) put in comp 4. Trim comp 2 down to the beginning of comp 4.
11. Comp 5 begins at the third marker (19:18) and ends at the 4<sup>th</sup> marker.
12. Put Comp 7 at the next marker (26:05). It should end at the next marker (29:12)
13. Put comp 6 at the next to the last marker (29:12)

14. Save and RAM preview the project
15. I don't like the way the second line of the title comes in. It doesn't match the music. I want it to pop right on that heavy beat. So, open Comp 6 from the project window.
16. Delete the mask on the Corpus Christi title.
17. Go back to the final comp and play it. It still not quite right. I need to move the title over to the left. I will do that in Comp 6. It looks like I need to move it over 20 frames.
18. That worked! Now it pops right on that beat. You might add an entry animation to the title, just be sure that the pop happens right on that big last beat.
19. Trim the end of the clip to the end of the music and then adjust the end of the work area.
20. Save it, RAM preview, and now we will talk about rendering.

There is another really cool feature that I find very useful. Go to File ➤ Collect Files ➤ and click on Generate Report Only. Click on Save and AE will create a really nice report in the root of your project folder that has a lot of pertinent information.

If you don't check the report only option, AE does something really cool. It will move all the source files for this project into a folder of your choosing and remap all the files in the project to the new location. So if, during the course of making your project, you used files from multiple locations, AE will move them all into a single folder for you. Cool.