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ADVANCED DECK CONTROL AND INGEST SOLUTION

# CINEDECK RX CREATES WAVES OF WORKFLOW EXCITEMENT AT BUNIM/MURRAY PRODUCTIONS

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SENIOR VP OF POST PRODUCTION



## The company: Bunim/Murray Productions

For more than two decades

Bunim/Murray Productions (BMP) has delivered groundbreaking and unforgettable entertainment to television networks and viewers across the US and worldwide. Based in Van Nuys, California, the Emmy Award-winning company is credited with creating the “reality television” genre with its hit series *The Real World* in 1992. The show is still in production and now in its 28th season on MTV. Over the years, BMP has continued to innovate, producing the first reality competition show, *Road Rules* (MTV) in 1995, the first reality sitcom, *The Simple Life* (E!), in 2003, and the first reality soap opera, *Starting Over*, in the same year. The company’s first feature documentary, *Autism: The Musical*, garnered rave reviews and won two Emmy’s in 2008.

More recently BMP has produced the hugely-popular *Keeping Up With The Kardashians* (E!), following the lives of sisters Kourtney, Kim, and Khloë Kardashian; *Project Runway* (Lifetime), hosted by super model Heidi Klum, in which aspiring fashion designers compete for a break into the industry; and the tattooist competition series *Best Ink* (Oxygen). In March 2010, the company was acquired by Banijay Group, based in Paris.

All of the shows are edited in house at BMP, using Avid Media Composer.

“We deal with hundreds of Terabytes of digital media, and have teams of editors working on many shows simultaneously,” says Mark Raudonis, senior VP post production at Bunim/Murray Productions. “A collaborative workflow is central to our creative process. With so many editors and shows going at once, we’re always trying to make our workflow more efficient and Cinedeck has been a significant part of this recently.”

In December 2012, the company used multiple Cinedeck RXs in an OB truck for the multi-cam production of *Stars In Danger: The High Dive*, a two-hour special for Fox Broadcasting Network. It was the first time BMP had used Cinedeck technology and, understandably, they were concerned about issues of reliability, compatibility, and cost.

“The post process on the show was a breeze thanks to the file management of the Cinedeck recording system,” enthuses Raudonis. “Clearly, the people that designed this product know a thing or two about production and post.”

## Cinedeck user: Mark Raudonis, Senior VP Post Production, Bunim/Murray Productions

As Senior Vice President of Post Production, Mark Raudonis oversees the editing and final finishing of all BMP shows. It’s his role to develop cost-effective workflows and post processes that help transform thousands of hours of raw footage into compelling television-viewing experiences.

Raudonis began his career as a film cameraman for PBS-TV station WMPB in Baltimore. After studying at UCLA, he worked on Robert Altman’s feature *Popeye*, followed by an number of years directing and producing magazine-style shows for KABC-TV and KCBS-TV, where he developed a keen interest in post production. In 1993 he was Emmy-nominated for his editorial work on *Rowan & Martin’s: The Laugh-In 25th Anniversary Special*. He joined BMP in 1994, during the San Francisco season of MTV’s *The Real World*, and went on to direct and edit countless Bunim-Murray shows. He received a second Emmy nomination in 2000 for his work as an editor on *The Real World: Hawaii*, and served as post producer on the series for many years.

“The continual changes in camera and editing technology have totally transformed this part of the industry over the past few years, and keeping BMP on the leading edge of those technological changes is a big part of my job,” he explains. “With the RX recorder, Cinedeck has created a production tool that makes post production smile. In fact, the Cinedeck workflow, from production through post finally makes tapeless painless. I love it!”

## The challenge: getting a two-hour network special through post on a deadline

Based on a German TV format, the two-hour special, *Stars In Danger: The High Dive* (Fox) follows a group of celebrities as they learn to dive and then compete in various Olympic-style plunges. The competing celebrities included were *Jersey Shore*’s JWOW, shark-attack survivor and surfer Bethany Hamilton, sisters Kim and Kyle Richards, NFL’s Terrell Owens, actress Alexandra Paul and actor/model Antonio Sabato Jr. The production shot in North Carolina at the end of 2012, with editorial completed at BMP in LA, and needed to be ready for broadcast in just two weeks.

## The solution: multiple Cinedeck RX systems

LA reseller Keycode Media initially demoed Cinedeck RX to BMP in November 2012. "I was immediately knocked-out by the RX's capability to record camera original media in an editable codec like DNX or ProRes. Editors love this. Even better, I saw how Cinedeck RX can create full-res and proxy files simultaneously on its internal removable SSD drives, and to external eSATA drives – a valuable feature that I noted for a future production."

Soon after this introduction to Cinedeck RX, the production of Stars In Danger appeared on Raudonis' radar. "The production manager on the show suggested we use Cinedeck RXs, and being already familiar with the technology, I was keen to put them through their paces," he says.

For the production of Stars In Danger: The High Dive, Bunim/Murray used seven dual-channel Cinedeck RXs, rented through AMV in New York, as part of a tapeless, file-based workflow. The production employed 14 HD cameras, shooting 720p, each capturing DNxHD 145 to a dedicated internal SSD sled within the Cinedecks. Due to the tight two-week turnaround, the production elected to shoot to the DNxHD 145 editorial codec, rather than create master and proxy versions. The shoot captured around 10TB of data in total. GTech hard drives were connected via eSATA to each Cinedeck channel, to record an immediate second copy of material. When the show wrapped, these drives were delivered to the editorial team in Los Angeles.

All of the material was then ingested directly into BMP's ISIS 5000 shared storage system, in just over three hours. As vital metadata from the production, including file names, cameras and take numbers, had been set-up in advance of the shoot on the Cinedeck RXs, the Avid editorial team was rapidly able to get to work on the show.

"It was a great experience for us with the Cinedecks, during both the production and post production stages," remarks Raudonis. "What I liked best about the Cinedeck workflow was that it was so simple and fast – basically cameras, Cinedeck RX, hard drives, ISIS and then Avid editorial. The process of media capture and transfer using big iron servers on an OB truck can be much more convoluted and time-consuming.

"The ease of transferring our media to the ISIS in one leave-it-alone, faster-than-realtime process was the slam dunk for me," he says, noting, "I since have heard since about productions where Cinedeck serves as a node directly connected to ISIS. That idea, of fast, automatic shared media is tremendously appealing for the future."

Raudonis also highlights the time and labor savings delivered by harnessing the Cinedeck RXs. "Mobile OB production costs thousands of dollars per hour. Normally, you would have to wait as the media is copied off a server or tape onto a hard drive, with equipment and labor costs racking up. But with Cinedeck we connected the hard drives ahead of time, and captured to the codec that we were going to edit with. Within minutes of the 'wrap' I was able to leave the truck with valid back-up copies of the media and jump on a plane to LA. Knowing the media was still secure on the Cinedeck SSDs gave me great peace-of-mind. This capability is a huge cost saver."

Raudonis also praises the Cinedeck's file-naming and file incrementing capabilities for assisting the editorial process. "The Cinedeck RX made the ingest and group clipping much easier and consistent for the editorial team. Camera ID's, incremental starts and stops, and audio configurations were all present in the files. In comparison, with videotape figuring out that information is a mess."

Speaking about the other key advantages of file-based workflow versus tape, Raudonis says, "Tape decks are expensive to rent, and transferring material is a realtime proposition. Plus, converting material between codecs can introduce a little degradation to the images. With the Cinedeck, you just don't have those worries. It's cheaper, and since you're recording in a native codec, there's no transcoding needed. When you see these processes side-by-side, you realize what a major step forward the tapeless workflow really is."

Would Raudonis use Cinedeck again or recommend it to a colleague? "In a heart-beat – an unequivocal 'yes,'" he says. "I would never recommend a product that I did not believe in – and believe me, Cinedeck is awesome."

