

MINUTES



# Nucoda

Nucoda grades hard-hitting stories for CBS News.

 CBS NEWS

*Behind the Scenes with Colourist Neal Kassner*

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 48 HOURS MY

# Television news programming has a different take on the colour grading process than its counterparts in the sitcom and drama arenas.

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With a mandate to maintain the integrity of its content, news programming offers fewer opportunities to experiment with looks and get creative with colour effects. It does, however, demand support for the most striking images in broadcast, and that is why CBS News considers colour correction to be an essential part of the post production process – so much so that it recently invested in an additional Nucoda HD from Image Systems.

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Colourist Neal Kassner has been using the company's original Nucoda HD system for the last two years on *CBS News Sunday Morning*, the 32-year old news magazine hosted by Charles Osgood. Originally, a Nucoda HD system was purchased for *60 Minutes*, which laid the groundwork for the system and its integration with the news division's Avid editorial pipeline.

A 30-year veteran of *CBS News*, Kassner spent the first 15 years of his career with the network as a video operator matching cameras in the control room of *WCBS-TV/NY* for three newscasts every day. That hands-on, tightly timed environment gave him a sense of what makes a good-looking picture. Eventually, he got the chance to move into post production. Kassner joined *48 Hours Mystery* 15 years ago and added *Sunday Morning* to his credit roster two years ago.

With the migration of primetime's single-topic *48 Hours Mystery* to HD, a second Nucoda HD was required for the series and the special-events programming that appears under its banner, such as *9/11: 10 Years Later*.

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Colourist Neal Kassner, 30-year veteran of *CBS News*

## Maintaining a sense of reality

Whether for a news magazine or investigative piece, it is Kassner's job to maintain a sense of reality – a look that's natural for both shows. "This is news; we're cognizant of not misleading the public. I'm aiming for consistency with footage that may have been shot days or weeks apart," he explains. "It's normal for *48 Hours Mystery* to have a variety of footage, shot at different times and settings. From interviews with main characters to the demands for B roll, I must keep all of them looking the same so nothing jumps off the screen or conveys an out-of-place feeling."

*48 Hours Mystery* does allow Kassner to "push the limits" a bit more than some of the other programming he has worked on. He notes, "*48 Hours* likes the picture to be a little warmer, with more saturation and contrast. It also uses colour as a story-telling element with bleach bypass looks and tints." The extensive support for interoperability with the Avid product help make the system work efficiently, keeping their tight timelines in order.

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### Colour Grading *9/11: 10 Years Later*

Recently Kassner worked on the special *9/11: 10 Years Later*, colour grading the two-hour program. Much of the program recapped the 2002 documentary by the French filmmaking brothers Jules and Gedeon Naudet, who were following a New York City probationary firefighter on a typical day when he rushed to respond to the emergency situation at the World Trade Center. Their highly regarded documentary contains what is believed to be the only video footage shot inside Ground Zero. The rest of the new program brought viewers up to date with the same characters a decade later.

“One of my first jobs on the Nucoda colour grading system was with the Naudets for their documentary, *In God’s Name*,” he recalls. His latest collaboration with the brothers was for the colour grading of the re-edited version of their 2002 documentary, which comprises the bulk of *9/11: 10 Years Later*.

“I had to get close to matching what had been done with the previous colour correction system,” he says. “In the original documentary, each brother’s camera had a separate signature look. Nucoda HD gave me the ability to control the image in ways I couldn’t have done 10 years ago.” He also colour corrected HD footage that was captured this year.

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### Nucoda HD - the perfect tool for the job

Among the Nucoda HD tools most in demand by Kassner are group grading, which enables him to select any number of shots and apply the same grade to all of them simultaneously, and the side-by-side display of the compare tool, which permits him to view a reference shot and working shot at the same time. The improved feel and functionality of the Precision panel, the new state-of-the-art control surface for Nucoda grading solutions, is also a big plus for Kassner and his colleagues.

Precision panels have been installed on both Nucoda HD systems at *CBS News*.

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The Nucoda HD system was purchased for *60 Minutes*, laying the groundwork for the system and its integration with the news division’s Avid editorial pipeline.

48 HOURS MYSTERY

Kassner uses Nucoda HD to achieve colour story-telling, with bleach bypass looks and tints