

# ARRI NEWS

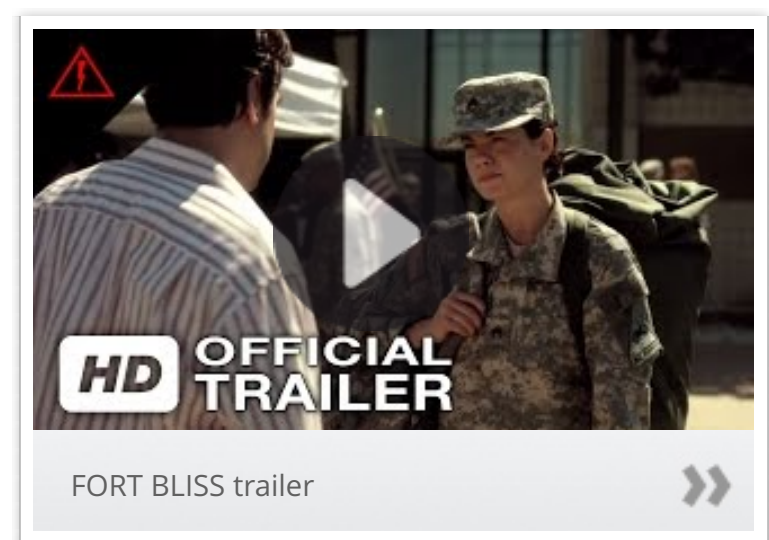


## Spotlight on colorist Paul Sage

From commercials to action flicks, character-driven dramas and award-winning documentaries, colorist Paul Sage of Light Iron has put his touch on a variety of productions. Recent credits include JOHN WICK, FORT BLISS, THE SHORT GAME, and SWEET MICKEY FOR PRESIDENT (recent winner of Slamdance Jury and Audience Awards for Best Documentary). His role in shaping the final look of a film allows a unique perspective on how images are rendered from different cameras and formats. JOHN WICK, shot by DP Jonathan Sela, maximized image quality by capturing ARRIRAW in anamorphic for a 4K delivery. In contrast, the USC graduate also served as colorist on two military-themed projects -- FORT BLISS and AS YOU WERE -- which both shot on ALEXA ProRes.

He says, "I am a big fan of the image quality of the ALEXA. The dynamic range and smooth highlights remind me of what it is like to color film. The ALEXA really excels in multiple tonal ranges, which not all cameras can do. Most notably, skin tones are beautiful with the ALEXA. This camera's images make my job easier. I can spend less time doing technical fixes and instead devote more of my day to creative grading."

Working with the cinematographer, Sage manipulates the picture with color, contrast and other factors to enhance the visuals. AS YOU WERE is set in the near future, where a soldier named Johnner (played by Trey Holland) is enhanced with robotic prosthetic limbs to replace an arm and leg lost in war. Sage describes the look of AS YOU WERE: "...as a very cool and drab color palette for a majority of the film. The coolness and limited saturation reinforce to the audience the main character's disconnect with his family and home life after being wounded at war and coming home."





In the film, Johnner is hired to work in an electronic wasteland nicknamed “The Hot Spot.” Filmed at an actual working e-waste facility in Los Angeles, the scene called for further adjustment by director Trevin Matcek and DP Pablo Berron to enhance the dangerous environment. Describes Sage, “The filmmakers wanted the contents of this facility to look metallic and less organic. I ended up keying any material in the junk piles that had any brown or green tones, de-saturating and cooling them to look more metallic. The final look worked really well and gave the facility a cold, mechanical feel. Keying well-shot ALEXA material is very easy, even the compressed ProRes capture gives me plenty of color depth to work with in post.”

In FORT BLISS, Michelle Monaghan plays Maggie, an army medic returning home from Afghanistan who struggles to reconnect with her young son. “Director Claudia Myers and Producer Adam Silver wanted to separate the two worlds that Maggie lives in. She feels more in her element when on deployment than she does at home. Her home life is more subdued in regards to saturated colors, contrast and luminance. Memories and dreams of her time in Iraq are the opposite. For these scenes, the saturation, warmth and contrast pop, making the images more present, alive and vibrant.”

Sage is especially pleased with a twilight scene in the film. “One of the scenes I enjoyed working on takes place at the end of the film after Maggie has been re-deployed,” he explains. “It takes place outside a small hut, just after sunset and the skies that were captured by the ALEXA look amazing. Keeping the luminance level low, we saturated the pink and orange tones in the sky and cooled the foreground mids along with the shadows a bit, giving the frame a nice contrast between the background sky and the foreground buildings and characters.”



### Related Links >>

- [ALEXA XT on JOHN WICK](#)
- [Futuristic Filmmaking on AS YOU WERE](#)
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