Getting Started with Compressor 3.5

Compressor is the one application that most Final Cut editors spend little time getting to know. Let me just say this now, you need to know Compressor. In todays Post Production world it may be the very thing that gets you that job.

Compressor is how you deliver your program to the masses. Almost everything you create inside of *Final Cut Studio* will at some point run through *Compressor*. In fact you may have all ready been using it without even knowing it. If you've used the Share feature in *Final Cut Pro 7* it ties into Compressor's Presets. A process called Transcoding is the direct digital-to-digtal conversion of one encoding to another. *(ex. REDCODE to ProRes 4444)*

Compression in general isn't the sexy side of your day but it's the one that pays the bills!

Compressor allows us the resize, crop, save our compression settings to use again for future **Batches**. We also have the ability to create *Droplets* and *AppleScripts*. The list goes on and on its your one stop shop to get you program out to the multiple distribution outlets.

Before we take a look at the Compressor interface we need to turn you on to the terminology used in conjunction with Compressor.

***Batch** is the heart of the transcode process. It contains one or more source media files, which are the files you want to convert, or transcode, to another format. Each source media file creates its own **job**. This means that a batch can contain multiple jobs, with each job based on its own source media file. Each job also has at least one target. The **Targets** define what sort of output file should be created by the transcoding process and where it should be placed. You can have multiple targets assigned to a job, which means that you can easily create multiple output files, each with a different format.*

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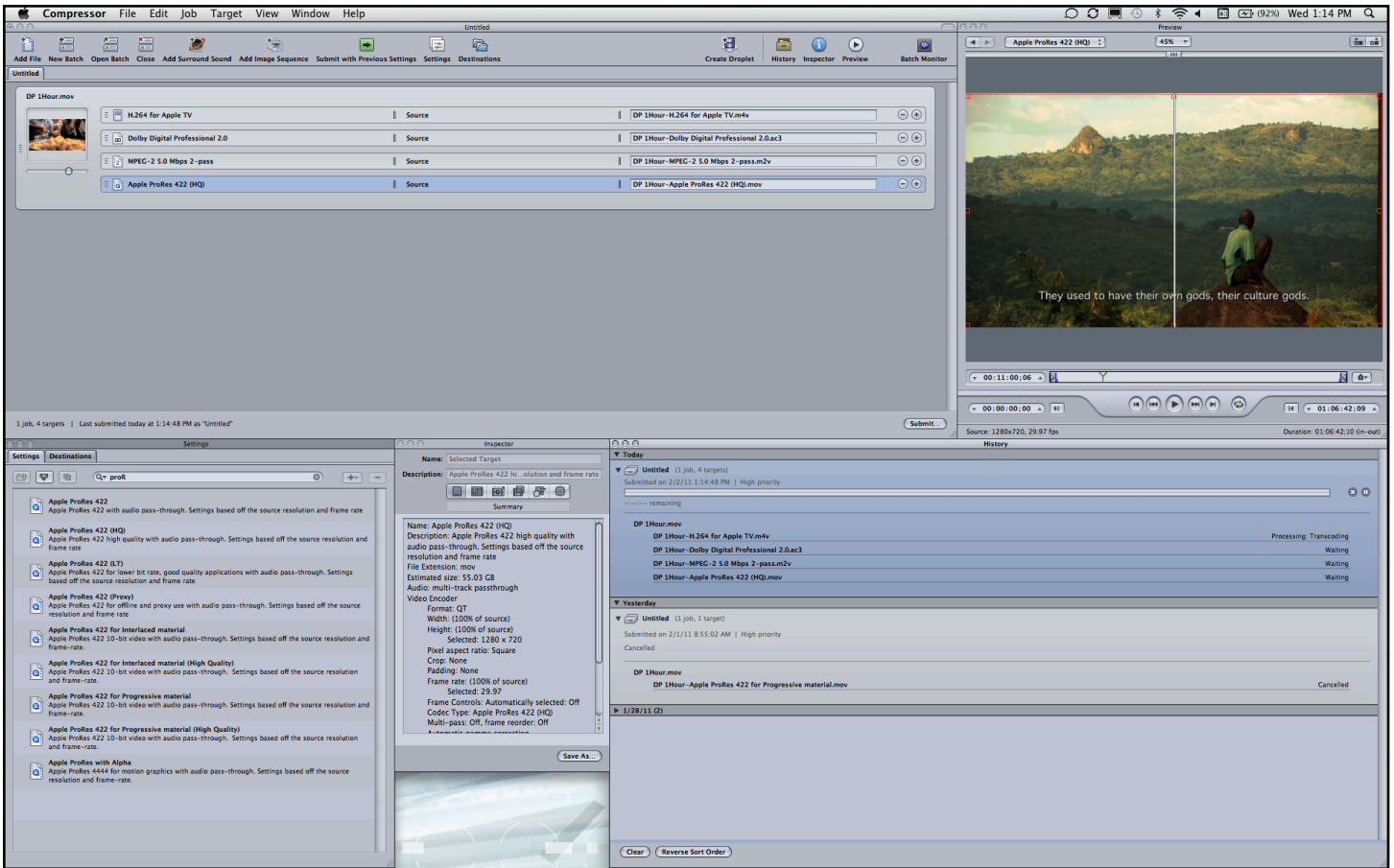
Compressor 3.5 Interface

It all starts with your completed program in Final Cut Pro, there are a lot of options inside of Final Cut to get your program out. First we'll explore the "Send To" command. Select Compressor.
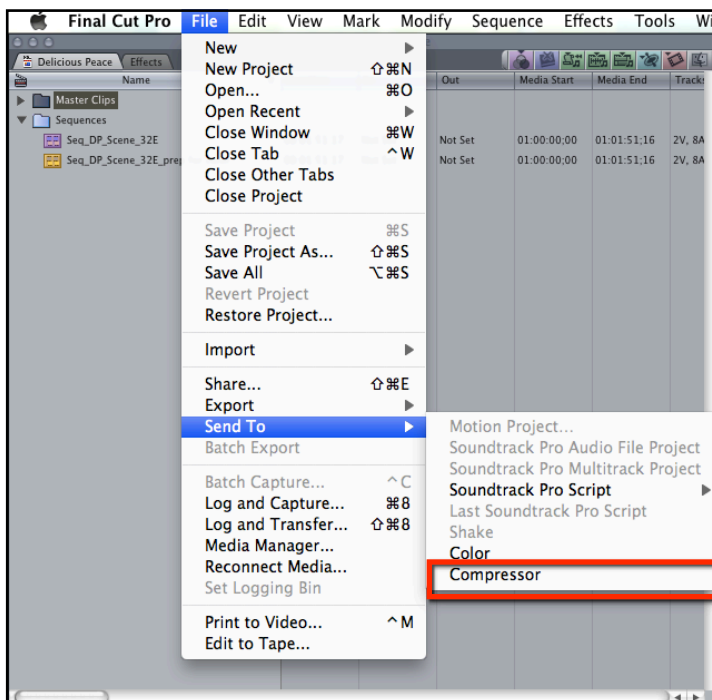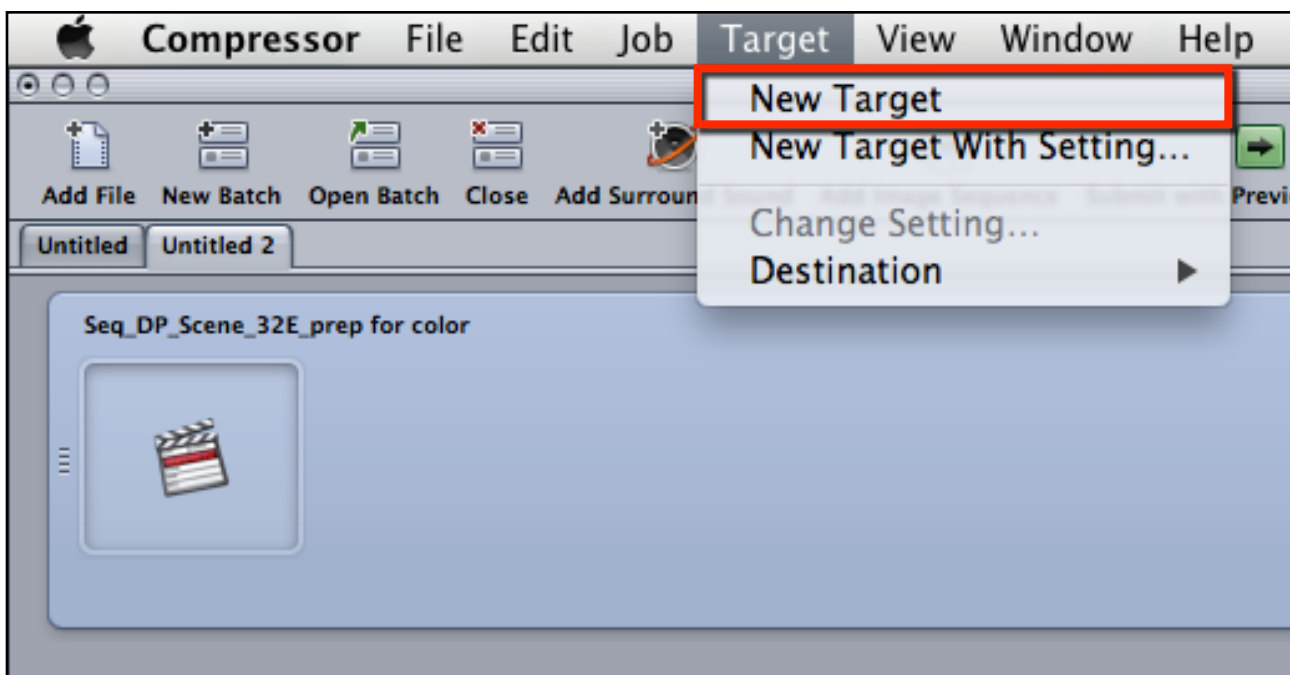
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Compressor opens, the Window in to the top left is called the **Batch Window.** The Batch window gives us the ability to import source media files, add settings, destinations and name the batch.
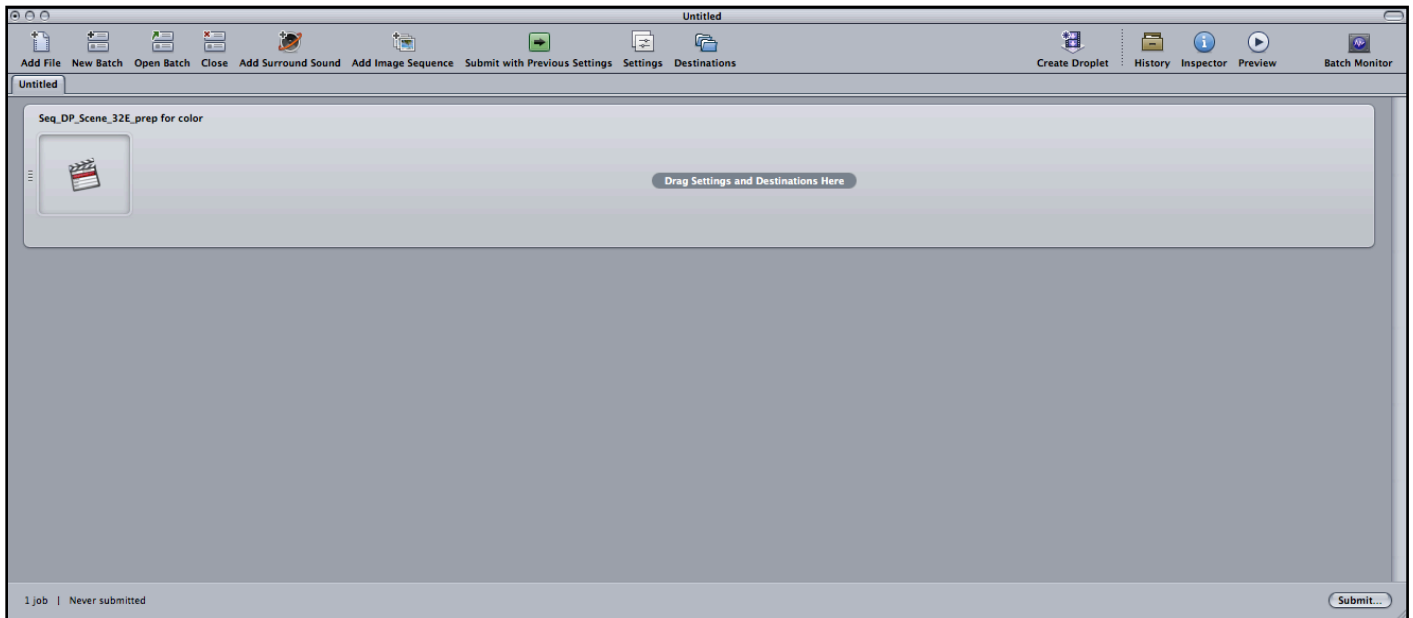
As you can see from the image above my sequence I sent from Final Cut Pro is loaded into the Batch window and is the current Job.
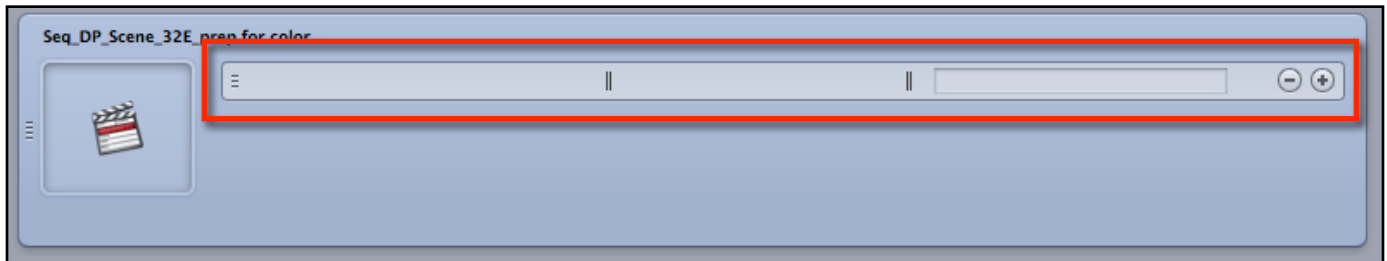
Our next step is we need to add our Targets to the Job. A Target contains three things the *Settings*, the *Destination*, the *Output file Name.*

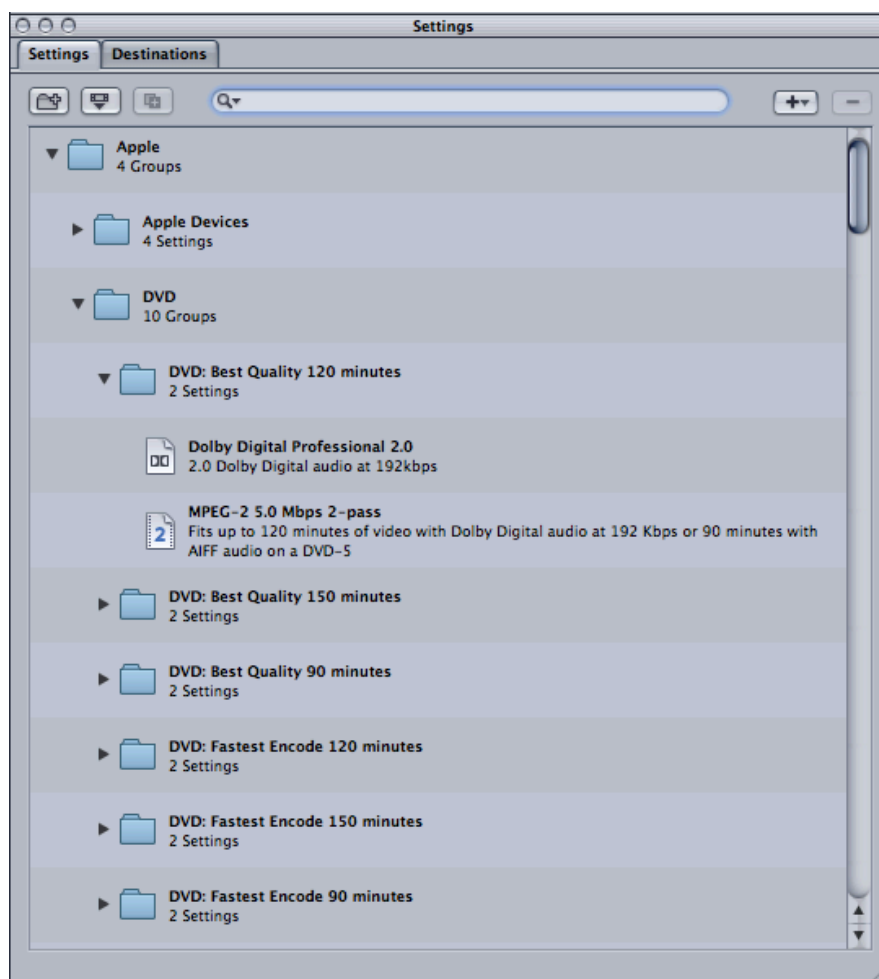From the *Target Menu* select *New Target...*

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A empty *Target* is applied to the job in the *batch window*. Our next step is to add our settings to the target.

Empty Target

From the setting Tab the window in the bottom left of the Compressor interface.

I am going to compress of DVD, I am going to use the **DVD: Best Quality 120 minutes** settings. As seen in the image above to settings are in the folder. One for the Video (MPEG-2) and one for the Audio (Dolby Digital Pro 2.0)

NOTE: MPEG-2 files DO NOT contain Audio

Drag the MPEG-2 Setting from the Settings tab to the empty Target. Then do the same for the Audio.
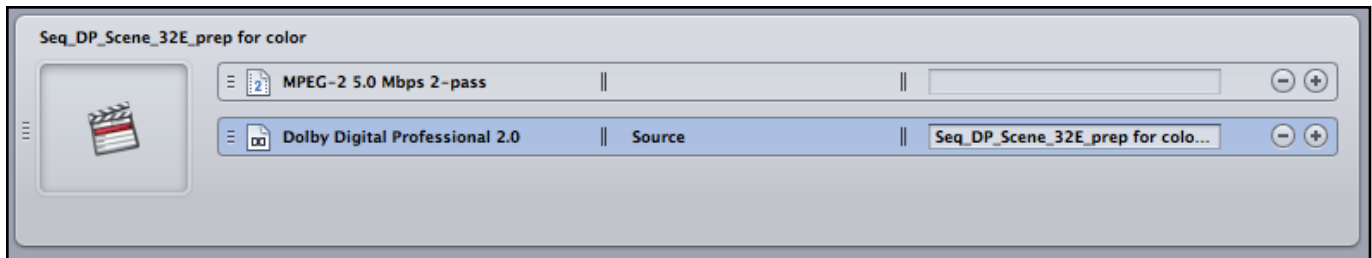
Once you have added your settings we need to set the Designation. As you may have notices our Audio took a default designation of "Source", this means it will export to the location it came from. Lets set our designation to the desktop. From the Destination tab select click the discloser triangle next to the Apple folder. Then select the Desktop and added it to the targets.
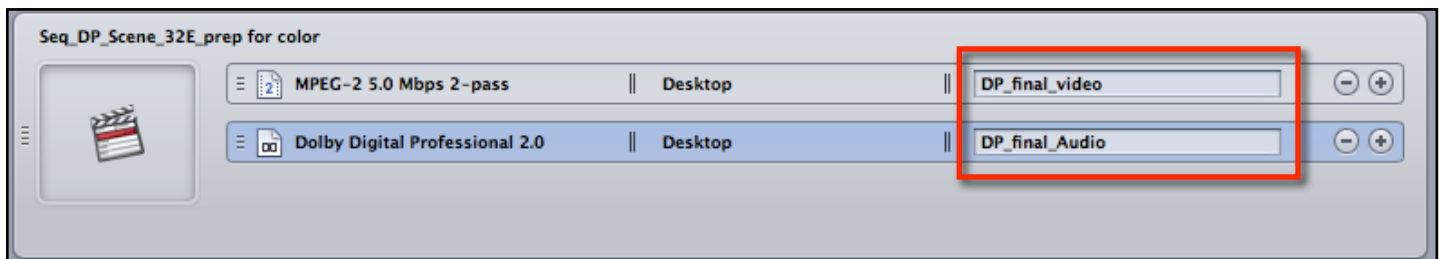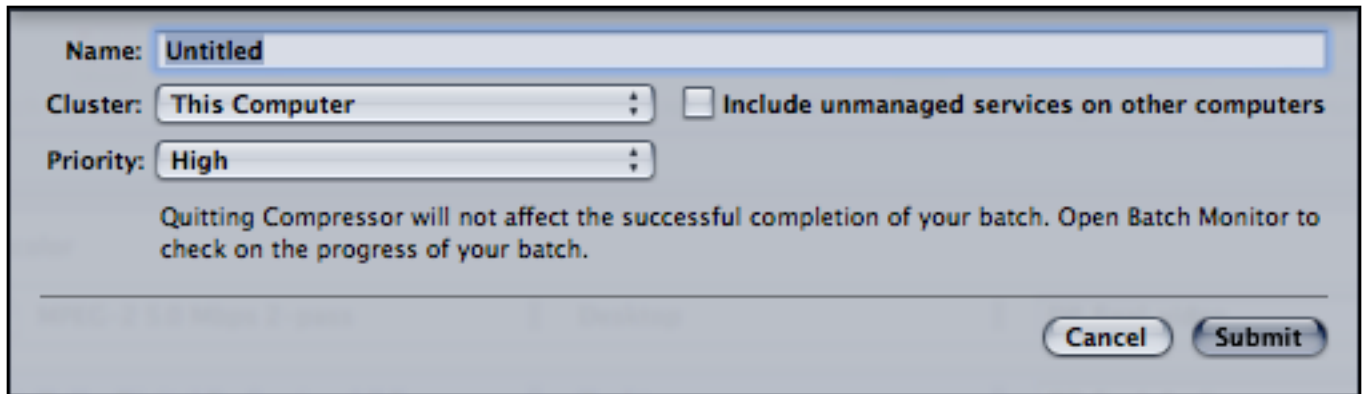

From here all we need to do is Name the files.

From the bottom of the Batch window click the **Submit button.**

A drop down window will appear asking us to name the *Batch*. If you have multiple Macs setup for a render farm you can use *Apple Qmaster* to create a **Cluster** for distributed rendering. Setup is beyond the scope of this intro so for now keep it set to "This Computer"

Click Submit again and your Mac will go to work!