



# HOTSHOT VFX BRIEFER

POST PRODUCTION · WORKFLOW · AUTOMATION · CRAFT

MACOS EDITION · USER MANUAL

## What It Does

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Hotshot VFX Briefer turns the VFX markers on your DaVinci Resolve timeline into a finished, formatted VFX brief spreadsheet, automatically. It scans your timeline for markers whose names contain `VFX_`, grabs a reference still for each one from the Color page, pulls the clip and camera metadata, and builds an Excel workbook ready to send to your VFX artists.

The generated spreadsheet has three sheets:

- **VFX Brief** — a reference thumbnail for every shot alongside its shot code, VFX type, description, priority, assigned artist, status dropdown, and notes.
- **Clip Metadata** — per-shot clip and camera data: clip name, scene, take, source in/out frames and timecodes, duration, plus any camera fields the source media carries (ISO, shutter, white point, lens, and so on).
- **Consolidated Clip Info** — shots grouped by their source clip, so you can see at a glance which VFX shots come from the same camera original and their frame ranges.

## How It Works

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On macOS, the tool runs as a small external application that talks to Resolve over its scripting connection, rather than from inside Resolve itself. This is deliberate: it keeps Resolve's interface responsive and avoids a known issue where certain Color-page operations can freeze when run from inside the application. A launcher in Resolve's menu starts the app; the app connects back to Resolve, does the work, and writes the results.

Stills are grabbed into a dedicated gallery album the tool creates and manages (named "Hotshot VFX Briefer"). **It never touches your other gallery albums**, so your colour-correction reference stills are safe. The album is restored to whatever you had open when the run finishes.

## Requirements

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- **DaVinci Resolve Studio**. Scripting requires the paid Studio version; the free version will not work.
- **macOS** with an internet connection for the first install (to fetch dependencies).
- The installer will set up **Python 3** and the needed libraries for you if they are not already present.

# Installation

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## 1 Enable scripting in Resolve.

Open DaVinci Resolve and go to `Preferences ▶ System ▶ General`. Turn on external scripting (the "Local" option is sufficient). Quit Resolve.

## 2 Run the installer.

Unzip the download, then double-click `install.command`. If macOS blocks it, right-click the file, choose **Open**, then **Open** again (a one-time security prompt), or allow it under `System Settings ▶ Privacy & Security`.

## 3 Follow the prompts.

The installer checks for Python and offers to install it if missing (this asks for your password). It then creates a private environment, installs the dependencies, copies the scripts into place, and adds the launcher to Resolve's menu.

## 4 Restart Resolve.

The tool will appear at `Workspace ▶ Scripts ▶ Comp ▶ Hotshot VFX Briefer`.

The installer places everything in `~/Library/Application Support/Hotshot VFX Briefer/` and adds one launcher file to Resolve's Comp scripts folder. It does not require administrator rights unless it has to install Python for you.

# How To Use

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## 1 Mark your VFX shots.

On your timeline, add a marker at each VFX shot and give the marker a name containing `VFX_` — for example `B2601_ARCR03_VFX_010`. Anything you type in the marker's notes field becomes the shot's description in the brief.

## 2 Open the tool.

With your timeline open, go to `Workspace ▶ Scripts ▶ Comp ▶ Hotshot VFX Briefer`. The app window opens with the status showing whether Resolve is connected.

## 3 Choose your project folder.

Click **Browse** and select the folder where you want the brief and stills saved. A `stills` subfolder and the spreadsheet will be created there.

#### 4 Run it.

Click **Grab Stills + Generate Brief**. The log shows progress shot by shot. When it finishes, your `<FolderName>_VFX_Brief.xlsx` is waiting in the project folder.

### Structuring marker notes (optional)

The brief recognises simple `Key: Value` lines in a marker's notes and sorts them into the matching columns. For example:

```
Type: Sky Replacement
Description: Replace overcast sky with sunset
Priority: High
Artist: Dave
```

Any plain text without a recognised key lands in the Description column. Priority values of High, Medium, or Low are colour-coded automatically.

## Troubleshooting

Symptom	Likely cause & fix
Tool isn't in the menu	Restart Resolve after installing. Confirm you ran the installer fully.
"Could not connect to Resolve"	Resolve must be open with a project and timeline loaded, and external scripting must be enabled in Preferences.
No shots found	Marker names must contain <code>VFX_</code> . Check spelling and that markers are on the timeline, not on clips.
Thumbnails missing in the sheet	The brief generator needs the Pillow library; the installer handles this. If you skipped it, re-run the installer.
Two shots show the same frame	Rare. The tool detects and retries duplicates automatically; if it persists, the Color page may be rendering slowly — run again.

The tool's Dock icon shows the standard Python icon while running; this is expected for the current build. The crosshair appears as the window icon.