



# HOTSHOT VFX BRIEFER

POST PRODUCTION · WORKFLOW · AUTOMATION · CRAFT

WINDOWS 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, 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 which VFX shots come from the same camera original and their frame ranges.

## How It Works

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On Windows, the tool runs directly inside DaVinci Resolve as a Workspace script. When you launch it, a panel opens, scans the timeline, jumps to each VFX marker, captures a reference thumbnail, and reads the clip metadata. It then hands the data to a companion generator script that builds the Excel brief using your system Python.

Reference stills are written to a `stills` folder inside your chosen project folder, and the shot data is saved to a `markers.json` file there as well, before the spreadsheet is produced.

## Requirements

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- **DaVinci Resolve Studio**. Scripting requires the paid Studio version; the free version will not work.
- **Python 3** installed on your system (for example `C:\Program Files\Python312\`).
- Two Python libraries for the spreadsheet step: `openpyxl` and `Pillow`.

## Installation

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### 1 Install the Python libraries.

Open Command Prompt and run:

```
py -m pip install openpyxl Pillow
```

### 2 Place the generator script.

Put `Hotshot VFX Brief Generator.py` somewhere permanent, e.g. `C:\Users\<you>\Documents\Workflow_Scripts\`. Note this full path.

### 3 Install the plugin into Resolve.

Copy `Hotshot VFX Briefer.py` (and, optionally, `HotshotVFXBriefer.ico` beside it for the window/taskbar icon) into:

```
C:\ProgramData\Blackmagic Design\DaVinci Resolve\Fusion\Scripts\Comp\
```

### 4 Point the plugin at your setup.

Open `Hotshot VFX Briefer.py` in a text editor and set the two paths near the top:

```
PYTHON_EXE = r"C:\Program Files\Python312\python.exe"  
BRIEF_GENERATOR_PATH = r"C:\Users\<you>\Documents\Workflow_Scripts\Hotshot VFX Brief  
Generator.py"
```

### 5 Restart Resolve.

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

## How To Use

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### 1 Mark your VFX shots.

On your timeline, add a marker at each VFX shot with a name containing `VFX_` — for example `B2601_ARCR03_VFX_010`. The marker's notes become the shot's description in the brief.

### 2 Open the tool.

With your timeline open, go to `Workspace ► Scripts ► Comp ► Hotshot VFX Briefer`.

### 3 Choose your project folder.

Click **Browse** and select where the brief and stills should be saved.

### 4 Run it.

Click **Grab Stills + Generate Brief**. The log shows progress shot by shot. When done, your `<FolderName>_VFX_Brief.xlsx` is 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:

```
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. Confirm the plugin is in the Comp scripts folder above.
Window doesn't open	Open <code>Workspace ▶ Console</code> , switch to Py3, and check for an error. Usually a wrong path in the two settings at the top of the plugin.
"Brief generator not found"	The <code>BRIEF_GENERATOR_PATH</code> in the plugin doesn't match where you saved the generator. Fix the path.
No shots found	Marker names must contain <code>VFX_</code> . Check spelling and that markers are on the timeline.
Thumbnails missing / wrong size in sheet	Make sure <code>openpyxl</code> and <code>Pillow</code> are installed in the same Python that <code>PYTHON_EXE</code> points to.

For a custom taskbar icon, keep `HotshotVFXBriefer.ico` in the same folder as the plugin script.