

# Cooke Anamorphic/i S35 SF Lenses Bring Continuity to Panic! At The Disco's New Album

By The Cooke Team · 6 min read



For [Panic! At The Disco's](#) music videos for its new album Viva Las Vengeance, cinematographer Eric Bader and director Brendan Walter took up the task creating the music videos that would make up the different acts of this rock opera. With 12 songs on the album and a tight deadline for the videos for Panic! At The Disco, Bader and Brendan would pair their part of the project to a more manageable six videos, five of which were shot with [Cooke Optics Anamorphic/i S35 Special Flair](#) (SF) lenses on a Sony VENICE camera, according to Bader.

"Brendon [Urie] sent the entire album to Brendan [Walter] in January, and they pitched ideas back and forth, and created an overall treatment and look book for the videos," said Bader. "All of us wanted to create a loose narrative that could carry through all the videos, but each video needed to stand on its own. So, while every video has its own voice and captures the song in the way it serves that particular song, there's a central theme throughout the videos: creative burnout – a main theme of the album – along with a loose love story that carries from the first video to the last."



"For five of the six videos, I wanted the same set of lenses – the Cooke Anamorphic/i S35 Special Flair primes," said Bader. "We would shoot using different aspect ratios and different sizes of the sensor. That gave us completely different looks, but the lenses tie those looks together, even with different locations and styles. That all comes from a uniform lens set and sensor."

Bader and Walter have been collaborating for years on a variety of projects, with their first being a low budget video for Panic! At The Disco eight years ago. "Brendan and I have done a lot of projects together: three other videos for Panic, a feature, some shorts and plenty of music videos for other bands," said Bader. "We have similar tastes and like to work on similar projects, and we are always looking to include as many varied influences as possible. For this project, it was a race to see who had the most ideas for the six videos and squeeze them all in. Each video was planned to a T, but we were always open to new ideas on-set."

Bader had used the Cooke Anamorphic/i S35 SF lenses before, even thinking that he might have used the exact same set for this project. "Cooke lenses are always flattering and reliable," said Bader. "We knew we would go with the Cooke anamorphics, but we debated between the 2x S35 – my tried and true anamorphics – and the 1.8x full frame. I looked up the overall coverage circle and proper projection coverage for full frame on the Sony Venice, and I also had done some experimenting on a previous project. In the end, even though the lenses weren't designed for full frame, I loved the idea that they could take on a different life by pushing their coverage limits on some of the videos, as each video needed to have its own life. So the S35 it was."

Picking the Cooke Anamorphic/i S35 SF lenses, Bader had the 25mm, 32mm, 40mm, 50mm, 65mm MACRO, 75mm and 100mm, provided by Shadowcast Pictures of Van Nuys, California, which also provided the Sony VENICE. He would use the 65mm MACRO primarily as a macro lens, which can be seen in Don't Let the Light Go Out, with his go to lens being the 40mm.

"On the anamorphic side, you can really see the dreamier effect you can get in Do it to Death," said Bader. "And I just love the special flair lenses with the extra character they add. I don't find the SF too heavy or sci-fi like, which is a concern with a flaring lens. The Cooke Special Flair gives more of a vintage and natural flare. I always like them when you put them up against a broader source like a bright window, like in Sad Clown, you get great halation and a softer flare."



Watching through the videos of the album, a viewer will notice two things almost immediately: they all look different, but they don't seem to "look" like video. Both of those are by design.

"We shot in a bunch of different ways," explains Bader. "We used different sensor sizes and aspect ratios to pull off different looks. We go from super clean and perfect traditional 2.39 [Middle of a Breakup], 4:3 [Viva Las Vengeance], 6k with the full sensor for extra funk and falloff – which you can see in Do It To Death, and Sad Clown, while having an optimized centre, with that soft dreamy effect on the top and bottom – we couldn't have gotten that without the special flare lenses."

The reason that these videos don't "look" like videos is because they all went through a film in/out beta process at FotoKem called SHIFTai (analogue intermediate). "After editing, everything was printed to film and then back to digital," said Bader. We did 35mm, Super 35mm, and sometimes windowed our output down to Super 16mm for more pronounced grain and even Super 8mm for a newsreel effect. Originally, we were thinking of shooting everything in Super 16mm, but we couldn't do that with a 2-1/2 week delivery window for the first video. But FotoKem could do this process in two days. This gave us a similar patina despite very different styles."

Bader's use of the 40mm Cooke Anamorphic/i S35 SF would make the shots in Sugar Soaker possible. "These were mostly Steadicam ones that were cut up in post, adding rhythmic edits to what started as an unbroken take. We open on Brendon getting out of his car and follow him into a house party, iris racking indoors and out, and going from T8.5 to fully open in the house and then back to an 8.5 in the backyard. All of this was possible because of the performance of the lens."

For Do It To Death, Bader also relied on the 40mm lens to make all the shots look good. "We're handheld backstage at a club and we're doing a walk-through that eventually lands on Brendon getting ready for the show. But all through that one, we're moving through different lighting environments, with many colours, visible sources, and differing contrasts, and we're wide open for an overall look with a more extreme focus falloff that ends with Brendon in a beautiful shot. We relied on one lens to do that and make it all look good."



In the end, Bader sums up using the Cooke Anamorphic/i S35 Special Flair primes this way: "It's a lot to go through, five videos. I'm always happy with those lenses. If you're going to rely on one set across an entire suite of videos...that says it all."

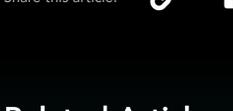
The new album's supporting music videos for Viva Las Vengeance is available on Panic! At The Disco's official YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@panicatthedisco>. The playlist for the album mirrors the order of the songs on the album.

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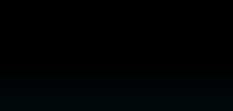
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