



Steam Tutorial

After Effects and 3d studio max

by Innanoshe Goroh

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Introduction

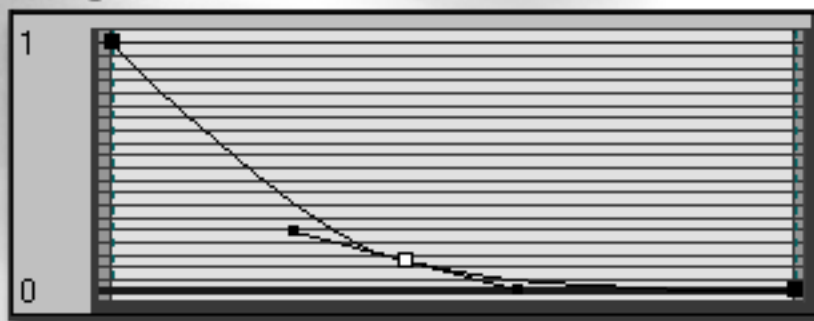
In this tutorial I will offer the 3ds max user a cheat to creating a steamy effect quickly and effectively with little rendering time. This tutorial will show you how to create the effect while the application is up to you.

level: Intermediate (must have a pretty decent command of 3ds max and after effects.)
Let's begin.

3D STUDIO MAX

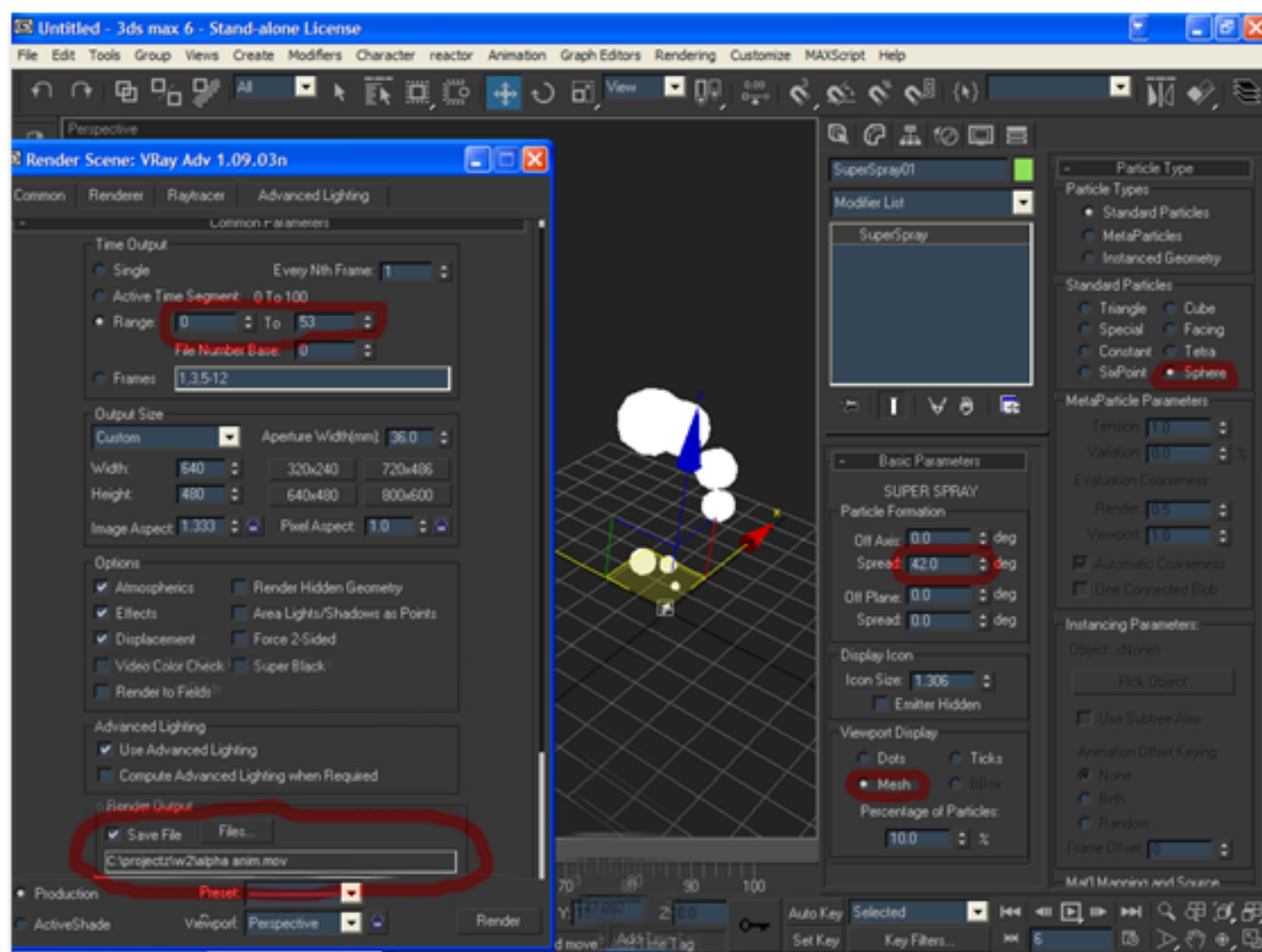
In 3ds max create a "super spray" particle system and set the "off axis spread" value to 42. Choose "sphere" as the particle type and set the particle size to 25.

Now you will create the material to be placed on to the "super spray" particles. In the material editor, select a slot and set the diffuse color to white. Next, set the self-illumination to 100. In the Opacity map slot place a "falloff map". Set the falloff curve like the image below.



Now apply the material to the "super spray" particle system. Set your environment background to black. Now render the scene from frame 0 - 53 as an animation.

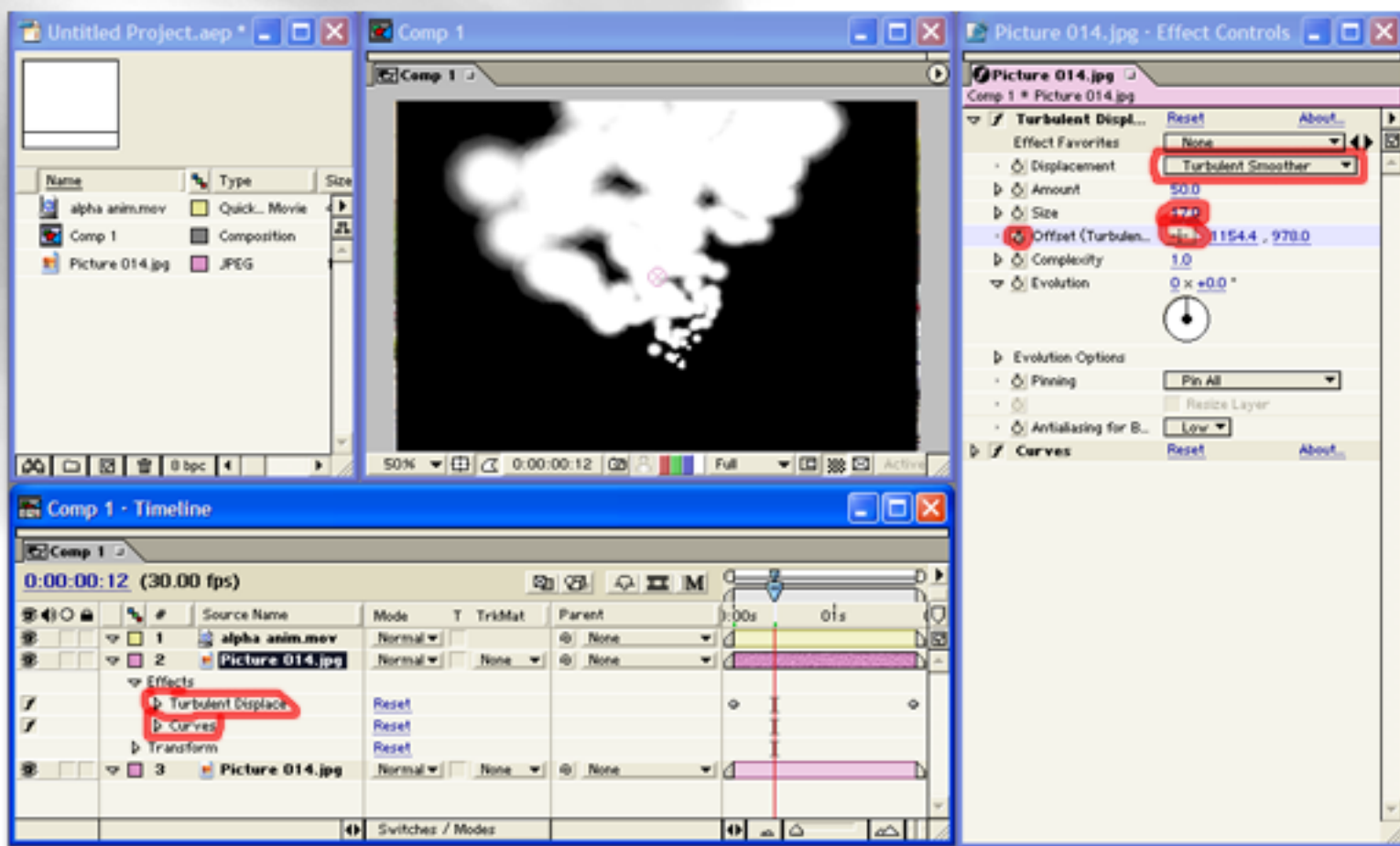
The resulting animation will be used as an alpha channel(opacity map) for the steam effect.



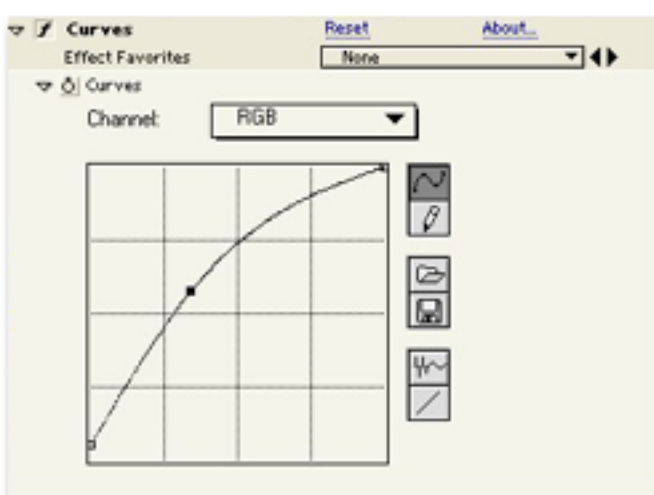
AFTER EFFECTS

Create a composition in After Effects of 720 x 480 and 0:00:01:24 duration. Import the particle animation into the composition or you can use the one that comes with this tutorial, "alpha anim.mov". Also import the footage on which you plan to add the steam effect (I'll be using a picture of a parking lot at my school). Duplicate the footage layer. To the layer, apply the following filters: "Turbulent displacement" and "Curves".

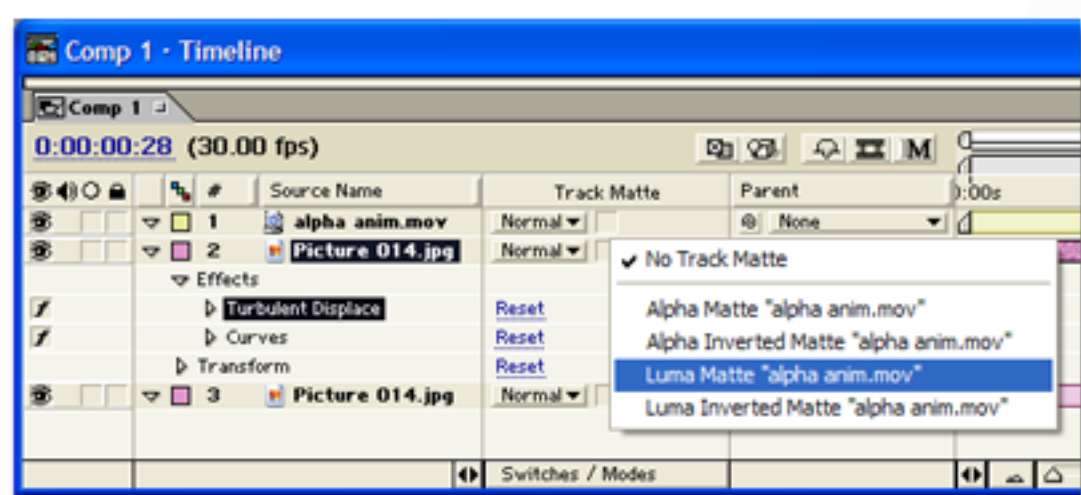
Now we will adjust the settings of the "turbulent displacement" filter. In the effects panel, change the displacement type to Turbulent Smoother and set the size to 17. We will use keys to animate the turbulence offset. Turn on the keyframe feature. At the beginning of the animation place the "offset" crosshair at the bottom of the composition and at the end of the animation place the crosshair at the top. This will cause the steam effect to translate upwards.

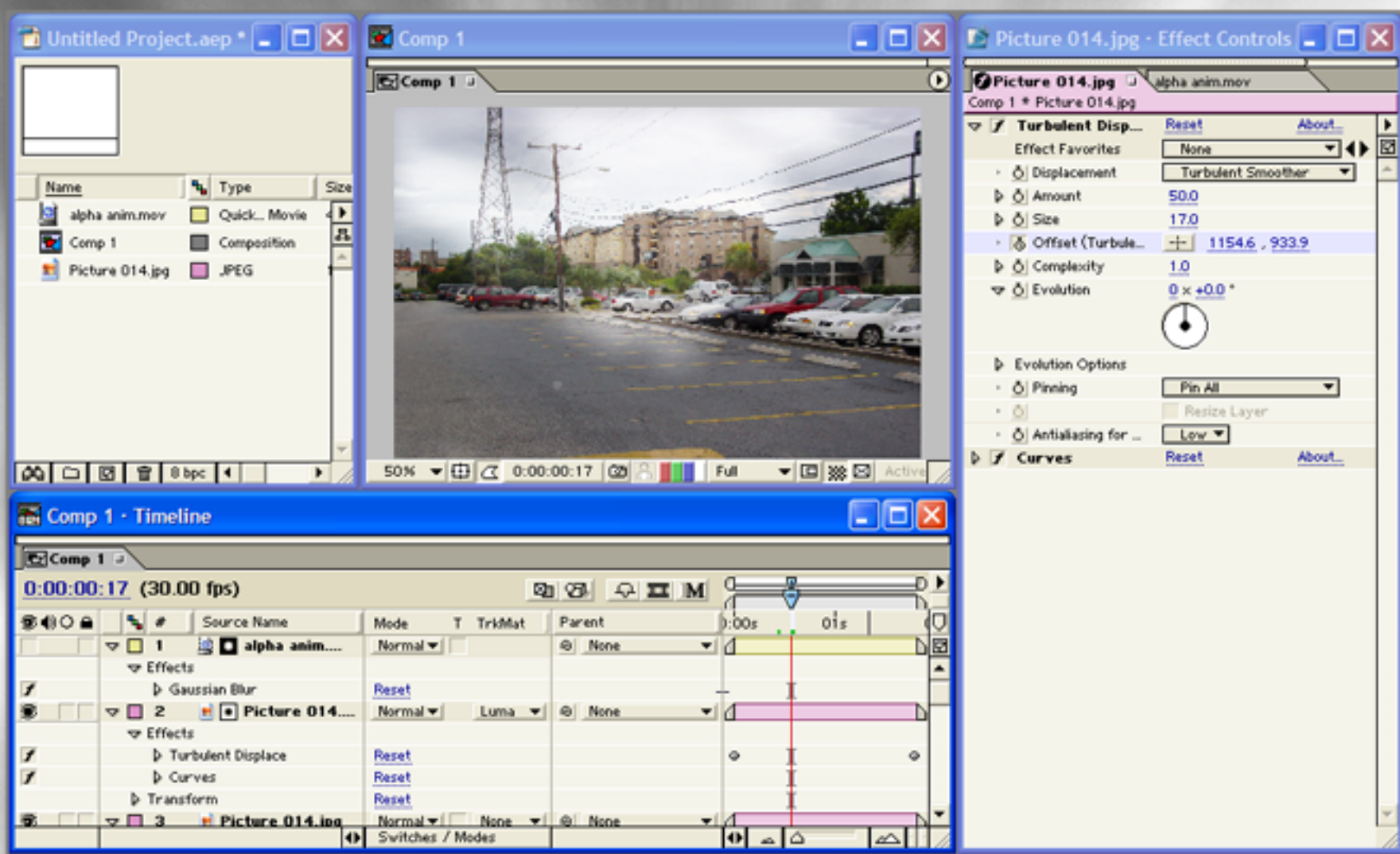


For the "curves" filter, set the curve to look like this. This will cause the steam appear a bit foggy and dense.



Now place the particle animation layer above the duplicate footage layer. Now a mask is required for the duplicate footage layer. For the track matte option choose LumaMatte like the image below. This will map the footage onto the particles.





You Might need to add a gaussian blur filter on the alpha animation layer to smooth out the particles so it is more fluid. You are now done. Render it out and view the results. Feel free to tweak the settings until you are satisfied. The footage should now have a steamy look.

Taking it further

You could also simply create a solid layer in After Effects and use the "particles" filter to simulate particles, adjusting the settings to your liking. The particles' color should be white.

In that case your duplicate layer track matte would be "Alpha matte" not "Luma Matte". You would also have to add a blur filter to the particle layer.

You will find in the an example of the possible usage of this effect in the attached video clip, "steam_test".

(note: the particles were generated in after effects)

Check out my site: <http://studentpages.scad.edu/~igoroh20>

For any questions or comments contact me at: igoroh20@student.scad.edu

"Major props to Peter Draper, 3ds max genius. www.xenomophic.co.uk"