# David Fincher discusses AI's role in restoring Se7en for its 30th anniversary



Director David Fincher has reached into the realm of artificial intelligence (AI) to assist in the 4K restoration of his acclaimed 1995 thriller “Se7en.” This significant undertaking coincides with the film's 30th anniversary, and Fincher addressed its implications during an interview with Entertainment Weekly (EW).

Fincher has previously restored "Se7en" for its DVD release and again for a high-definition version, but he expressed that the latest endeavour presented more challenges than anticipated. He noted that the team was unprepared for the extensive amount of work required to bring the film up to the quality expected of a 4K restoration. Speaking to EW, he remarked, “I know that there are a lot of people who tend to bag on digital, but if you could see a 30-year-old negative and what it looks like even when immaculately stored — it was an enormous amount of fixing, just digs and scratches and cinch.”

The project became a year-long labour involving the meticulous restoration of the film's visual integrity. AI technology played a pivotal role in this process, particularly in enhancing image sharpness to align the visual output with the original vision of the filmmakers. Fincher expressed an aspiration to recreating the feel of the film as it was on its opening night in 1995, stating, “We were really trying to get back to that first CCE check print that we saw 30 years ago when we were like, ‘Okay, that’s the movie. That’s the contrast of it. That’s the density of it...’”

AI was instrumental in refining certain scenes, notably one featuring Kevin Spacey’s character in the backseat of a police cruiser. “We were able to use AI and make mattes and extract the performance that was in the backseat and render it,” Fincher elaborated. He acknowledged that while the results were not perfect, they were an improvement on the original convoluted version. Additionally, he described how some footage initially deemed irretrievable was salvaged through AI, enabling the recreation of absent details and textures.

Despite his enthusiasm for certain aspects of AI, Fincher cautioned against a binary perception of the technology, suggesting that the narrative should encompass more nuance than the dichotomy of being either "for or against" AI use in film restoration. He opined that “all tools, if they do what they say they’re going to do, are good tools,” and highlighted that his concerns typically lie with tools that do not meet the claims made by their developers.

There is a noteworthy sensitivity concerning the use of AI in media restoration among audiences, as demonstrated by the mixed reactions to recent projects, such as the avoidance of AI in the Blu-ray release of “I Love Lucy.” While Fincher admitted to being sceptical about some AI applications, he recognises the strides that the technology has made since his initial reservations, acknowledging a broader movement in the industry.

The restored version of “Se7en” premiered in IMAX theatres on January 3, with the accompanying 4K Blu-ray set to hit shelves on January 7. This updated edition represents a significant moment in the confluence of classic cinema and cutting-edge technological innovations, setting a precedent for future restoration projects.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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