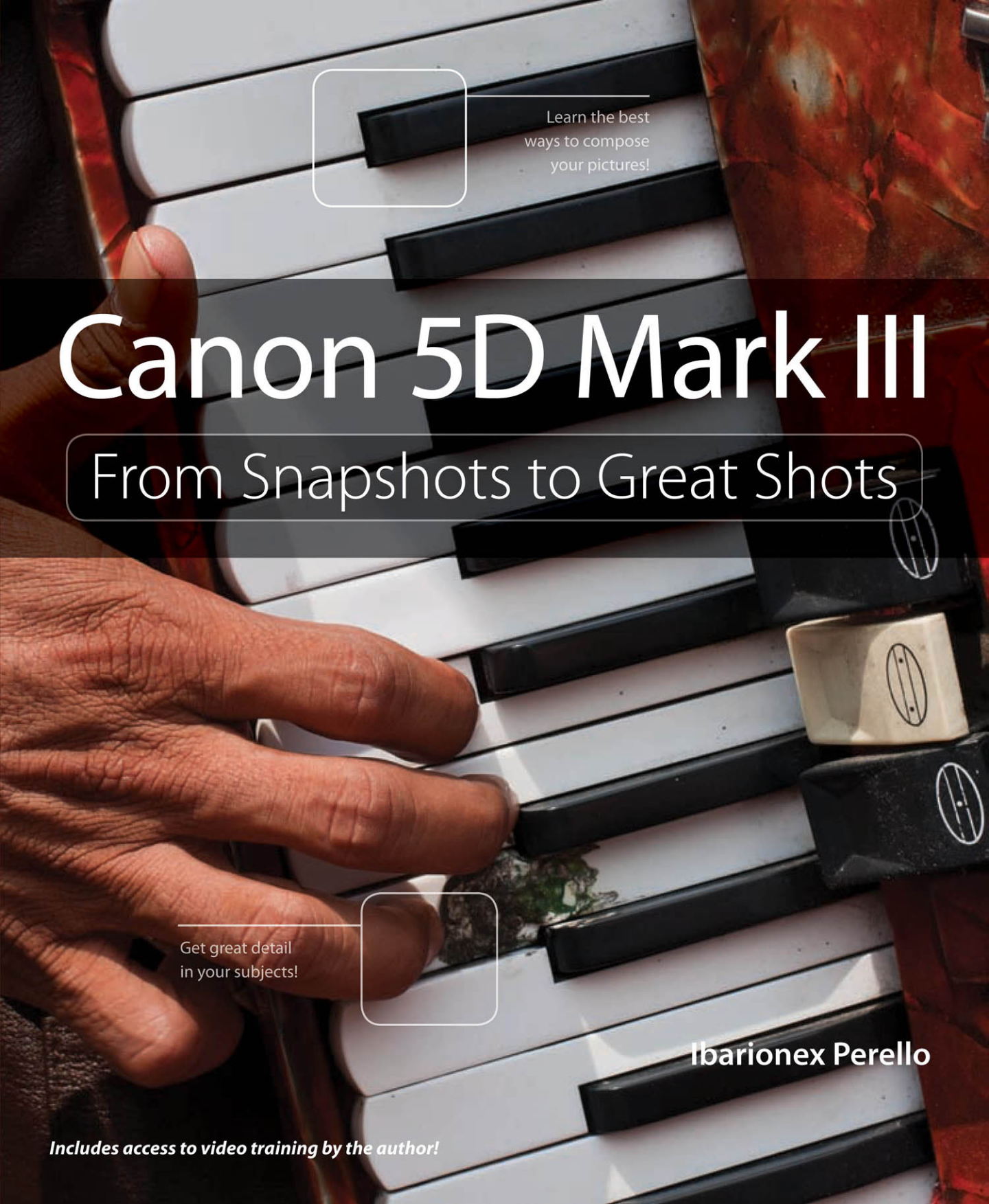
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Canon 5D Mark III: From Snapshots to Great Shots

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DEDICATION

Para Raquel, Pablo y Margarita. Te quiero con todo mi corazon.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I consider myself very blessed to make a living practicing something I love. Photography has been in my blood since Mike Cohen of the Boys Club of Hollywood introduced me to it. From the moment that I saw an image reveal itself in a developing tray, I have been captivated by the possibilities that photography promises and often delivers.

My journey has been the result of being able to take advantage of opportunities as opposed to some well thought-out plan. As I result, I consider myself very lucky to be able to make a living from using a camera and putting words on a page. But I'm under no illusion that I've achieved this on my own. It's clear to me that any achievements that I may lay claim to are the result of the many people who have supported and encouraged me, even when I wasn't sure I was deserving of it.

There are many people to thank for helping me walk this path, not least of whom is my wife, whose continued support and love is invaluable to me, though I may not always acknowledge it. She is my rock.

I'm very grateful to my family, particularly my parents, whose sacrifices I've appreciated even more as I've gotten older. It's their hope for a better life that has helped make my accomplishments, such as this book, possible.

My friends continue to be important in my journey as a photographer. From them I continue to derive inspiration and the pleasure of their company. People including Martin Bailey, Emilio and Elena Banuelos, Dana Barsuhn, RC Concepcion, Jeff Curto, Tony DiZinno, Charlie Holland, Seth Joel, Dennis Keeley, Eric Kim, Tony Luna, Chris Marquardt, Martin Taylor, Marco Torres, and Everard William have been gifts to my life, and I thank them for their continued friendship.

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Introduction

Buying a new camera is always exciting. Of course, you get the thrill of holding a new piece of photographic equipment and appreciating its styling and functionality. But the real excitement comes from the promise that it offers to your photography. It's how this new tool will help you to fulfill your vision that makes such an investment truly worthwhile.

This book on the Canon EOS 5D Mark III aims to tell you much more than just how to set a particular control on your camera. Instead, I share the when, why, and how to help you make the most of this exciting DSLR. I think there is no better way to do that than by sharing with you how *I* use the camera and how it makes a difference in my own photography.

This book is not a comprehensive and exhaustive guide to every feature that the 5D Mark III offers—you have the user's manual for that. Instead, I focus my attention on those controls and features that I believe make the biggest difference in my photography and, hopefully, in yours. Regardless of whether you shoot portraits, travel, landscapes, sports, or still life, the words and images that I share in this book will help you gain confidence in how to make great photographs.

Whether this is your first DSLR or you're upgrading from a previous model, this book will provide you a valuable context for the many features found on the 5D Mark III. But before I delve into the meat of things, I want to answer some common questions that I believe will help you to make the most of what this book has to offer.

WHAT DOES THIS BOOK COVER THAT I WON'T FIND IN THE USER'S MANUAL?

The user's manual provides concise information on how to enable or change a particular control or function, but it's often lacking a sense of when and why you would want to use a specific feature. Though the manual may give some general examples of when you might want to use evaluative metering versus center-weighted metering or Auto White Balance versus a custom white balance, it isn't really rooted in the kinds of images that people like you and me make every time we bring the camera to our eyes. This is what you'll find in this book.

Because I'm writing much of what I share based on my own personal experience with the 5D Mark III, you'll find a point of view that you'd never find in a user's manual. It's the kind of information that I'd provide you if we were out together shooting together.

As such, it's important to remember that although this is the way *I* use the camera, it isn't necessarily the way *you* should use it. Every photographer is different. However, I think you'll find that my discussion of the camera and its features and how it impacts my photography will make the camera more accessible to you. This will eventually evolve into a level of confidence that will allow you to handle and use the camera in a way that's unique to you and the way you make images.

DOES THIS BOOK COVER EVERY FEATURE OF THE CAMERA?

No, but what it does emphasize are those features and controls that will have the biggest impact on the quality of your photographs. Not only do I go into detail on what I consider the key features of the camera that will impact almost every photograph you make, but I also delve into controls that you'll periodically use to handle difficult and challenging shooting conditions.

As you shoot, you'll use certain features over and over again, regardless of the subject matter of your photos. These features are the ones that I help you to understand and eventually master. As you gain this understanding, the importance (or lack of importance) of other features will become clearer to you.

So, instead of someone else telling you what's best, you'll be making informed decisions on these controls based on your own images and what you need as a photographer.

SHOULD I READ THE BOOK STRAIGHT THROUGH OR CAN I JUMP AROUND AND USE IT AS A REFERENCE?

You can use it in both ways, but I encourage you to at least read the first few chapters, even if you believe it's information that you're already familiar with. As I said earlier, I'm sharing my own perspective on the camera and its key features, so these chapters are written from a point of view that may provide you fresh insight to a familiar feature or control.

I suggest that you approach the information in this book at a modest pace. I know you're eager to get out and shoot and produce some amazing photographs, but don't pressure yourself to master this camera overnight. If you buy a Steinway piano today, you won't be ready to perform at Carnegie Hall tomorrow. As with anything, mastering your 5D Mark III will take practice—but the good news is, practice can be fun!

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS AT THE END OF EACH CHAPTER?

The assignments can make a big difference. Regardless of how clear the chapters are, you won't really understand what you're reading until you put it into practice. It's only when you put down the book, grab your camera, and start making photographs that you'll take the information and tips found here and make it something of your own.

All the manuals and videos in the world, though informative and entertaining, won't make you or me a better photographer. If that were the case, we'd all be world-famous by now.

Instead, it's the act of going out and making images that makes us better photographers. And it's practicing with specific goals and assignments in mind that provides us the opportunity to learn those small but important lessons that help us not only master a new camera, but also make better photographs.

In other words, we stop *taking* photographs and we start *making* them.

HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF THIS BOOK AND MY CAMERA?

Slow down. Impatience has likely produced more bad photography than any cheap camera or poorly written instruction manual.

We're all eager to make better photographs, especially when we hold brand-new cameras in our hands, but there's something to be said for practicing patience. Patience is valuable not only as you're trying to understand a new tool, such as the 5D Mark III, but especially when it comes time to making photographs.

When I'm patient and thoughtful about what I'm doing with my camera, I'm much more consistent with the images I produce. When I'm impatient and rushing, the only thing I do consistently is make lackluster photographs or, worse yet, ruin great photographs with poor technique.

The joy of photography comes from making photographs that complete my vision of the person, the scene, and the moment. And I can repeatedly do that by knowing my instrument, practicing, and remembering to have fun.

I hope that this book helps you to discover that joy for yourself.

Share your results with this book's Flickr group!

Join the group here: www.flickr.com/groups/Canon5DMarkIIIFromSnapshotstoGreatShots

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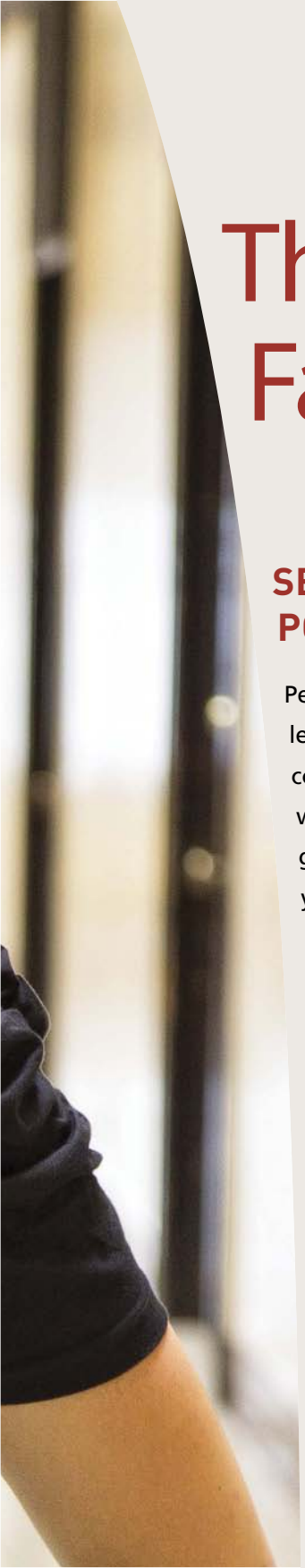
4

ISO 1000
1/320 sec.
f/2.8
24–105mm lens



That Wonderful Face

SETTINGS AND FEATURES TO MAKE GREAT PORTRAITS

People are the most-often photographed subject with any camera, and no less so with the 5D Mark III. This camera offers a range of versatility and control that you might not have enjoyed with your previous camera, which should make photographing people easier and more fun. Getting good portraits is about much more than having the correct settings on your camera. It's also about being aware of your subject, the background, and the lighting. In this chapter, I tell you how to consider all those factors in order to make great photographs of people—whether they're family, friends, or a great subject you meet on the street.

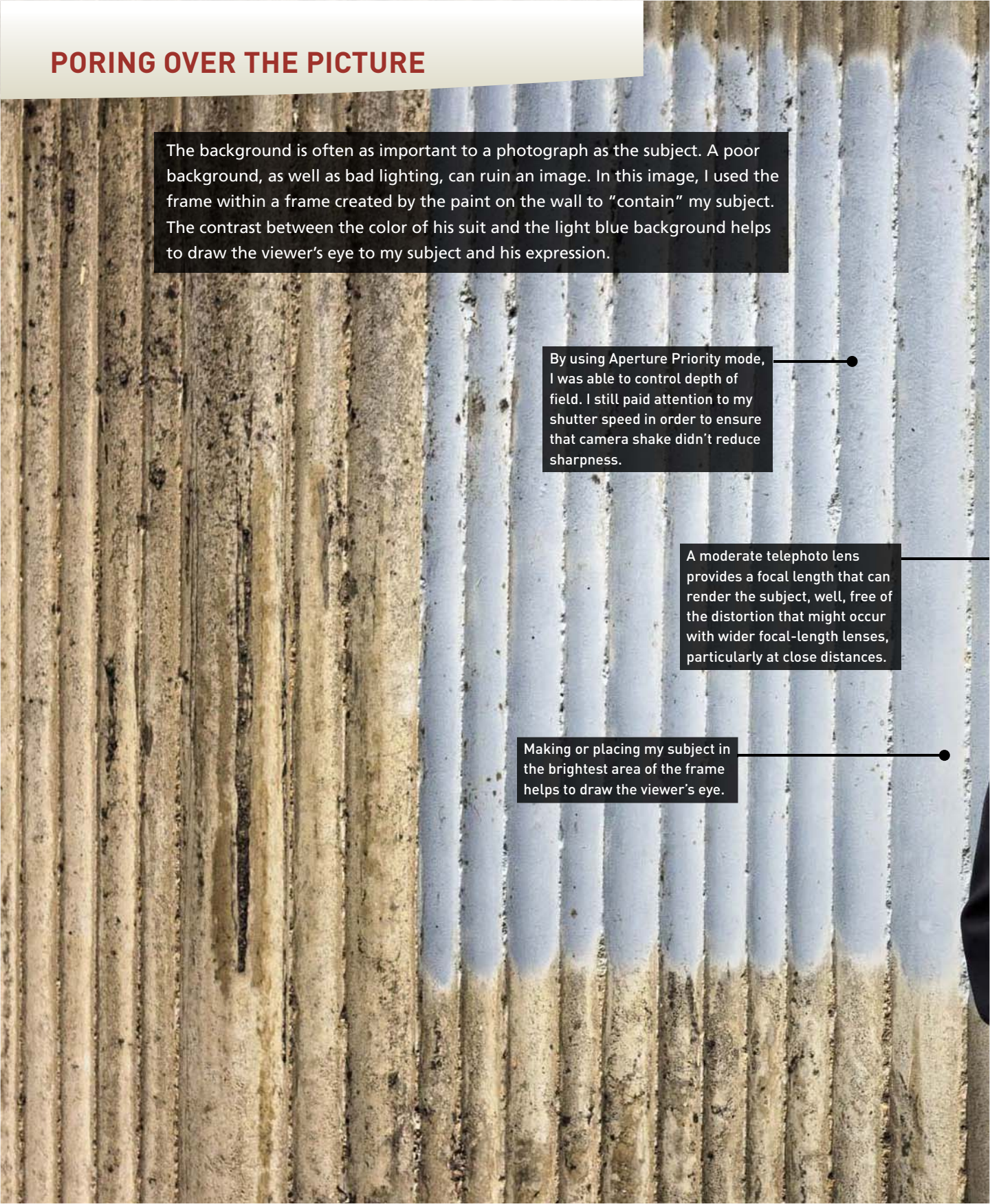
PORING OVER THE PICTURE

ISO 320
1/400 sec.
f/4
24–105mm lens

To emphasize my subject, Lance, I moved in close and used a limited depth of field to blur the foreground and background. By focusing on his eyes, I was able to ensure critical sharpness there, in addition to making them the anchor of the image.

By positioning myself at an angle to the brick wall, I was able to use the lines of the surface to help guide the viewer's eye to my subject.

PORING OVER THE PICTURE



The background is often as important to a photograph as the subject. A poor background, as well as bad lighting, can ruin an image. In this image, I used the frame within a frame created by the paint on the wall to "contain" my subject. The contrast between the color of his suit and the light blue background helps to draw the viewer's eye to my subject and his expression.

By using Aperture Priority mode, I was able to control depth of field. I still paid attention to my shutter speed in order to ensure that camera shake didn't reduce sharpness.

A moderate telephoto lens provides a focal length that can render the subject, well, free of the distortion that might occur with wider focal-length lenses, particularly at close distances.

Making or placing my subject in the brightest area of the frame helps to draw the viewer's eye.

I often look for interesting backgrounds when scouting a location even before I begin posing my subject.
ISO 400
1/1250 sec.
f/2.8
85mm lens

APERTURE PRIORITY MODE

Of the exposure modes mentioned in the previous chapter, Aperture Priority will most often be the best choice for creating portraits. Because it provides you complete control over depth of field, Aperture Priority mode allows you to control the look of your image, whether it's a tightly framed headshot or an environmental portrait, such as this image of a parking attendant (**Figure 4.1**). The choice of aperture will either allow you to throw the background dramatically out of focus or render much of the frame acceptably sharp. The choice of aperture achieves more than simply a good exposure; it also becomes the means by which you begin to creatively control the look of your photograph.

Now, don't think that you have to use a crazy-fast lens (such as an f/1.2 or f/2.8) to achieve great results and get a blurry background. Often an f-stop of f/4 or f/5.6 will be sufficient, and you might even find that having an extremely wide-open aperture gives you too little depth of field for a portrait, since you want most of the face to appear sharp.

I often shoot my portraits with a working aperture of f/4 or f/5.6 in order to get most of the face tack sharp. Though I sometimes use lenses with wider apertures for portraits, it's often only when I'm seeking that unique look provided by such a shallow depth of field.

GO WIDE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PORTRAITS

Portraits can be about more than simply creating a headshot. A great portrait can be as much about the space that a subject inhabits as it is about the subject itself. For such images, a wide focal length and a moderate aperture such as f/5.6 or smaller can provide the kind of depth of field needed to reveal the details of the subject and the space that he or she inhabits.

A wide-angle lens can be any focal length from 35mm or wider. Such lenses not only include more in the frame, but they also provide a more generous depth of field than telephoto lenses do. A wide-angle lens can be especially beneficial when you're working in a very tight, enclosed environment.

However, be careful about using a wide-angle lens very close to your subject, because it can lead to some distortion. Keep your subject away from the edge of the frame. This will reduce the distortion, especially with very wide-angle lenses.

FIGURE 4.1
A 50mm lens and the choice to place my subject off-center allowed me to include this personalized booth of a parking attendant.

LIGHTING AND BACKGROUND

Whenever I make a portrait, the two biggest considerations revolve around lighting and background. Even before I've exposed a single frame, I'm thinking about the quality of light that I have to work with and where I'm going to place my subject. When I don't consider these two factors carefully, the result is often a lackluster portrait. Even if I have the most beautiful subject in the world in front of my lens, bad lighting and a distracting background will reduce the impact of the photograph.

Though I produce portraits using a wide variety of lighting, including direct sunlight, I often look for an area of open shade. Open shade is an area where shade is being produced by a building or a tree. I look for a spot where the direct sunlight is transitioning into an area of shade. Then I place my subject just at the cusp of that shaded area so that the subject has the benefit of some of the reflected light; this creates an image that is both bright and contrasty. Such lighting often eliminates the harsh, distracting shadows commonly found in photographs made using direct sunlight, particularly during the middle of the day.

The other big consideration I make is with respect to the background. Many great portraits are ruined by distracting elements in the background, such as tree branches, cars, or other brightly colorful elements. Such elements can pull the viewer's attention away from the subject and to the background, thus diminishing the impact of the portrait. So, I often try to choose as simple and as clean a background as I can find. This often calls for me to move my subject into a better location. I won't hesitate to ask my subject to move if it means I'll be able to make a better photograph (**Figure 4.2**).

WHITE BALANCE AND ISO

When shooting in open shade, I often set my white balance to the Shade preset. This adjusts the white balance to maintain a flattering look to the skin. Otherwise, if the white balance is left on the AWB or Sunny preset, the subject will look a tad blue, because the area of shade naturally has a bluish colorcast. By setting my white balance for the Shade preset, a little warmth is added to compensate for that coolness in the quality of light.

I also increase my ISO. It may increase to 200 to 400, depending on the quantity of light and what's happening with my shutter speed. If I'm using the lens and a wide aperture, such as f/4 or wider, I may only need to increase my ISO to 200 in order to achieve a reasonable shutter speed. However, I won't hesitate to increase it to

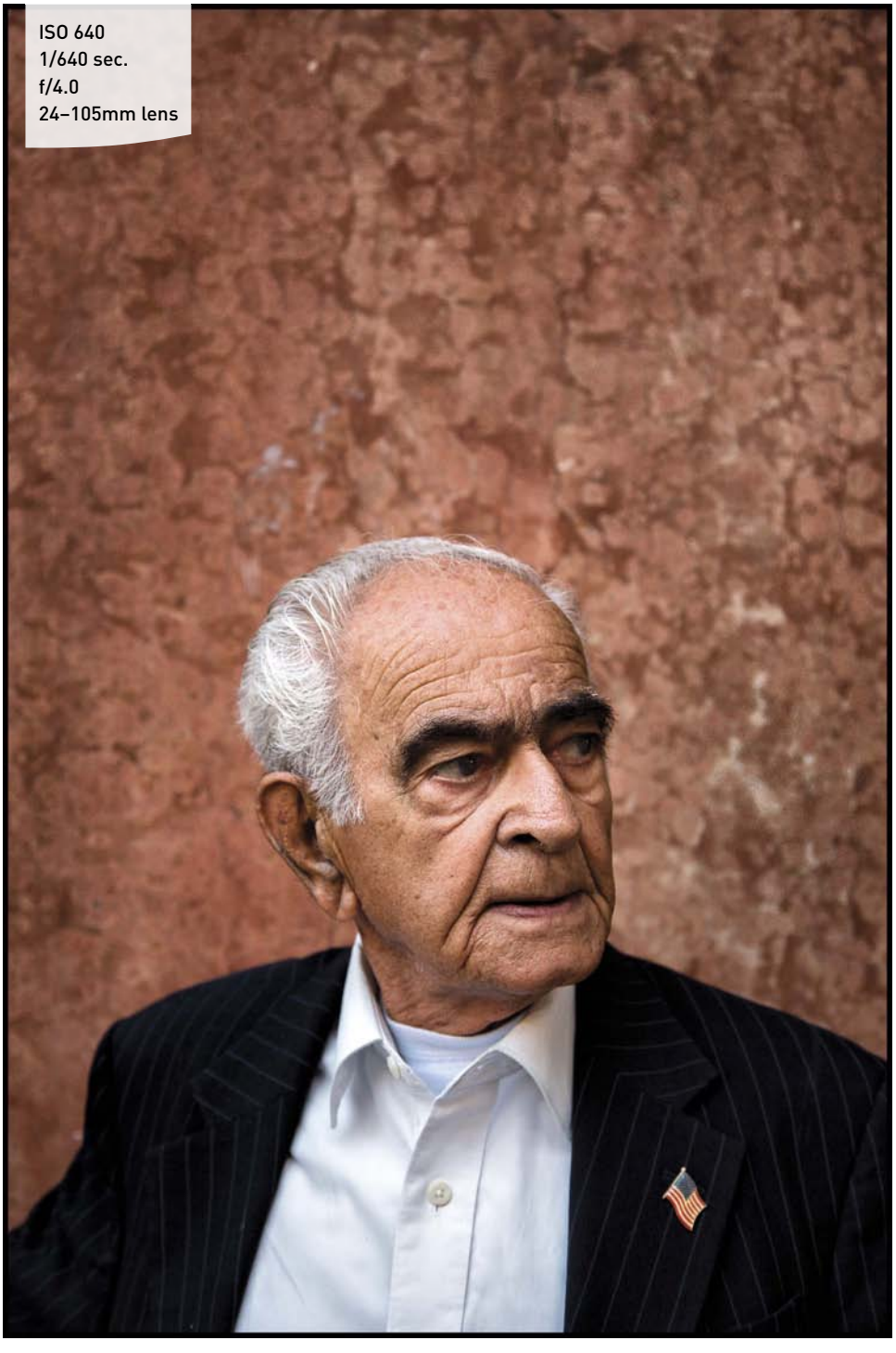


FIGURE 4.2
I moved this subject from an area of open shade but with a cluttered background. I repositioned him against this wall that served as a better background, free of distractions.

ISO 400 or even higher if it means that I can use a reasonable shutter speed in order to ensure sharpness. If I fail to increase the ISO, which I unfortunately do forget to do on occasion, the shutter speed will be too slow and there will be a drop in sharpness. It may not be immediately evident when I'm shooting the images, but it will be painfully obvious when I enlarge the image on my computer screen.

If I move the subject into an area of direct sunlight, I set the white balance to the Daylight preset (**Figure 4.3**) and I may decrease my ISO to 100 or 200. When we move indoors where the illumination is primarily tungsten light bulbs, I'll change my white balance to the Tungsten light preset and increase my ISO to at least 800. In each situation, I'm evaluating the light that I have to work with, and adjusting the ISO and the white balance accordingly. From there, I can adjust my aperture, making sure that my shutter speed isn't too slow. If it is, I'll open up my aperture and/or increase the ISO.

With these considerations made, I'm free to focus on my composition and on building a rapport with my subject.

FIGURE 4.3
By presetting my white balance for the Daylight preset, I was able to achieve accurate color using late afternoon light when photographing these young girls.

PORTRAIT METERING

The 5D Mark III offers four different metering modes by which the light of the scene can be measured to help you achieve an accurate exposure. Evaluative metering does much of the heavy lifting for my photography. Even in relatively complicated lighting situations, I've found that evaluative metering does a great job in giving me accurate exposures. When I don't like the result it's giving me, I often use the exposure compensation feature to increase or decrease the exposure and achieve the look that I'm going for. However, I sometimes use the partial, center-weighted average (**Figure 4.4**), or spot meter when I want to emphasize my subject for the basis of my exposure.

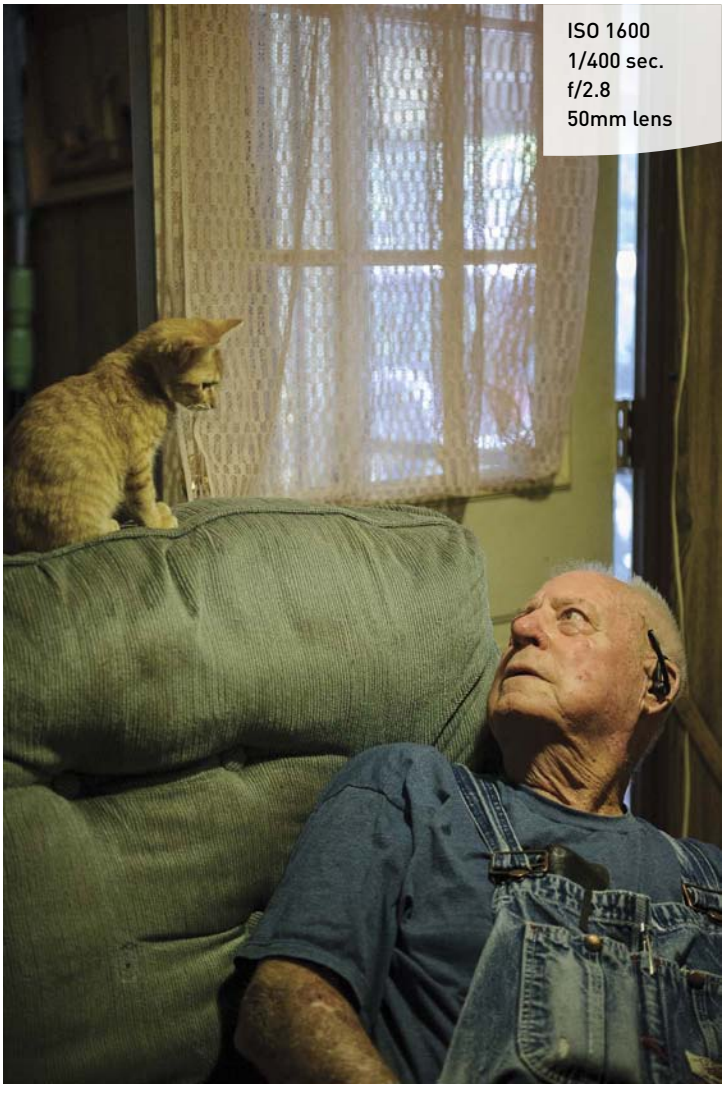


FIGURE 4.4
This low-light scene was illuminated by a few lamps and called for metering the scene using center-weighted average metering to ensure a good exposure for this interaction between man and cat.

If I have a severely backlit subject, which means the area behind the subject is considerably brighter, I may use the partial, center-weighted average, or spot mode to isolate the exposure on my subject. This may result in the background being blown out or overexposed, but if the background is of little importance, I'll be okay with that. I want to make sure that my subject is well exposed in order to retain the important details of the face.

THE AE LOCK FEATURE

One of the available options is the ability to lock your exposure. You can lock the setting in your camera temporarily if you want to recompose your image—for example, if you're in an environment where there is sufficient lighting on your subject, but the background is significantly brighter or darker (**Figure 4.5**). The metering in your camera is continuous, meaning it will change depending on where the center of the viewfinder is pointed. If you compose the image so the person is off-center, the camera will meter the wrong part of the scene.

To correct this, you can meter for one part of the image (in your subject), lock those settings down so that they don't change, and then recompose the scene and take your photo.

For more on how to use the AE lock feature, turn to Chapter 3.

FOCUS: THE EYES HAVE IT

In a portrait, nothing is more important than the eyes. They eyes are the very first place we look when looking at an image of a person. As a result, the eyes need to be one of the sharpest elements in the frame. If the eyes aren't in focus, the viewer's experience of the photograph can be diminished. It's important to be very much in control of where the camera is focusing, because despite how sophisticated the autofocus technology of the camera is, it doesn't guarantee that the eyes of the subject will always be the sharpest element in the frame.

When it comes to making a portrait, this is a perfect time to control how many of the AF sensors are used for focus detection. For example, choosing the single-point AF mode would be a good choice for a portrait because it would allow you to choose a single focus point that would focus on the eyes of the subject. I did this for this

FIGURE 4.5
Because so much of the scene includes shadows, it was important to lock the exposure based on the highlights in order to ensure that they weren't overexposed.

portrait of a Passion play actress (**Figure 4.6**). Controlling which AF sensors are used is particularly important if you're using a wide aperture that can result in a very narrow depth of field. Otherwise, the camera could focus on the nose or the shirt, which could result in the eyes being slightly soft, which you always want to avoid.

If you're making candid portraits or if the subject is moving, you may be best served by a more moderate aperture, such as f/5.6 or f/8, which will provide you a more generous depth of field. This may require you to increase your ISO in order to maintain a reasonable shutter speed, but it will help ensure that your subject is sharp.

TIP

As you change the composition of your photograph, the focus point may need to be changed accordingly. If the subject is slightly turned away from the camera, it's best to focus on the eye closest to the camera.

TO SET UP FOR ONE-SHOT FOCUSING MODE, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Press the AF mode selection/Drive mode selection button.
2. Rotate the Main Dial to change the focusing mode to One Shot.

TO SET UP FOR SINGLE-POINT AF MODE, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Press the AF point selection button.
2. While looking through the viewfinder, repeatedly press the AF area selection mode/Multi-function button to cycle through the AF area selection modes, and choose the single-point AF mode.

TIP

I typically use the single-point AF for focus selection. I find it easier to place that point directly on the location where my critical focus should be established and then recompose the shot. Even though the single point can be selected from any of the focus points, it typically takes longer to figure out where that point should be in relation to my subject. By using the center point, I can quickly establish focus and get on with my shooting. If I have the benefit of a great depth of field, such as when I'm photographing a group, I choose zone AF or the AF point expansion mode for focus detection.

FIGURE 4.6
The use of a telephoto lens combined with a wide aperture resulted in a shallow depth of field. So, I made sure to detect and lock the focus on the eyes in order to produce this portrait of a Passion play actress.

TO SET YOUR FOCUS TO A SINGLE POINT AND SHOOT, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Press the AF point selection button.
2. Using the multi-controller, choose your active autofocus sensor. You also can use the Main Dial and Quick Control Dial to move to an active sensor.
3. To shoot using this focus point, place that point on your subject's eye, and press the shutter button halfway, until the focus point flashes and you hear the chirp.
4. While still holding down the shutter button halfway, recompose and take your shot.

ORIENTATION-LINKED AF POINT

You can designate separate focus points based on whether you're holding the camera vertically or horizontally. This helps reduce time having to change the AF point for your subject. It's a great help when you're frequently changing camera orientation during a shoot.

To set up an orientation-linked AF point, follow these steps:

1. Press the Menu button and, using the Main Dial, select the AF 4 menu screen.
2. Using the Quick Control Dial, select Orientation linked to AF Point, and press the Setting button.
3. Using the Quick Control Dial, select Select Separate AF points, and push the Setting button.

FOCUS LOCK

Locking focus is one of the most important things to learn with an autofocus camera, especially when making portraits. Locking focus ensures that your subject remains the point of focus as you refine your composition, compose with your subject off-center, or change camera orientation. It's an important tool to prevent another part of the subject or the background from being in focus, such as the fence that served as a background in this portrait (**Figure 4.7**).

You can lock focus by either holding down the shutter button halfway or pressing and holding the AF start button. If you've been using autofocus DSLRs for years, you'll likely be used to holding down the shutter button halfway. If you find it difficult to do without taking a photograph, the AF start button is a welcome alternative. Not only will it allow you to lock focus, but it also will allow you to engage focus without unintentionally making a photograph.

You can completely separate any autofocus function from the shutter button, which many photographers, especially sports photographers, prefer to do. When you do this, autofocus is activated only when the AF start button is pressed. Locking the focus becomes as simple as releasing pressure on the AF start button. Autofocus will only resume when you reapply pressure to the AF start button. You can then assign the shutter button to meter the scene only when it's depressed halfway.

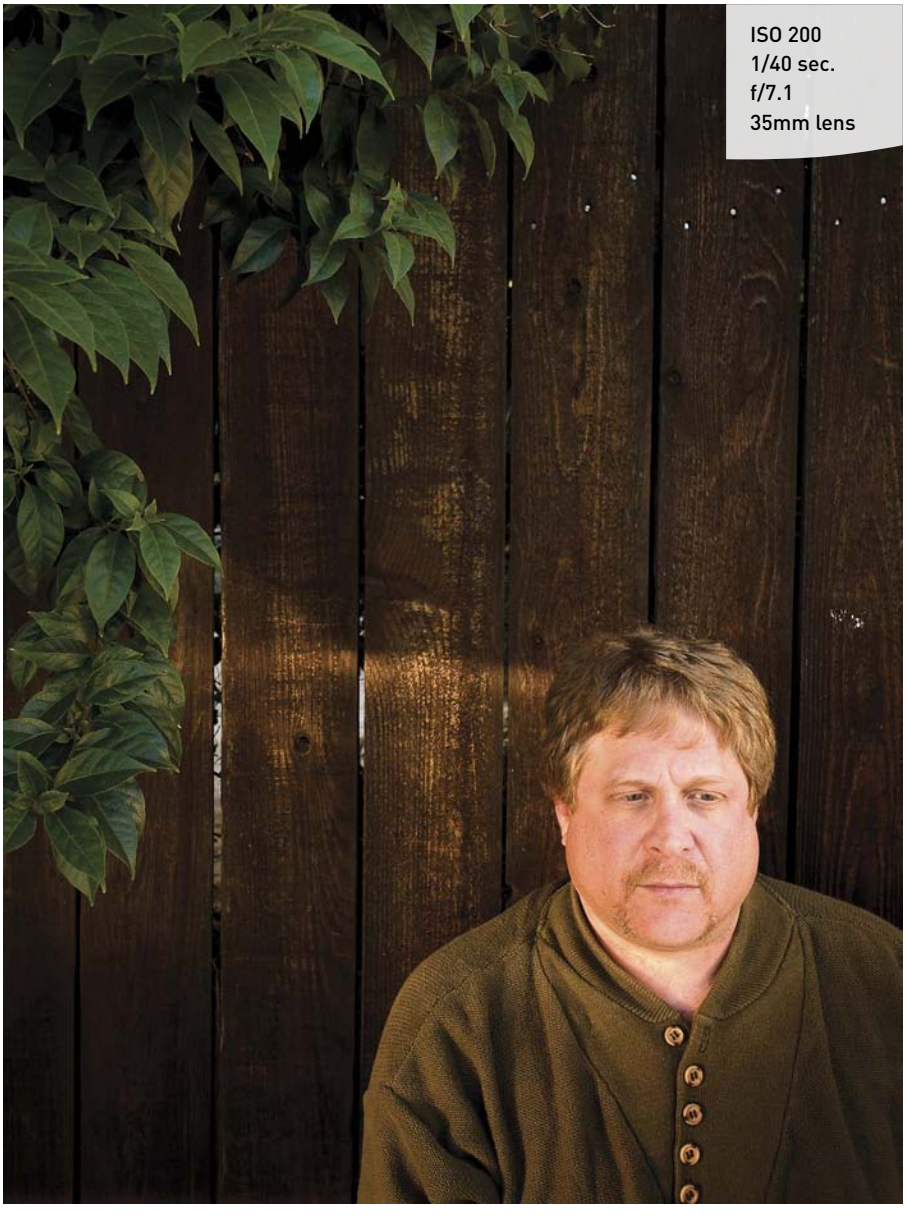


FIGURE 4.7
To create a more interesting composition, I posed my subject off-center and used the foliage to balance the entire composition. I focused on him, locked the focus, and recomposed the shot in order to keep him as sharp as possible.

TO CUSTOMIZE FOCUS ACTIVATION, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Press the Menu button and, using the Main Dial, select the Customer Function 2: Display/Operation menu screen.
2. Using the Quick Control Dial, select Custom Controls, and push the Setting button.
3. Using the Quick Control Dial, select AF-On, and push the Setting button.
4. Select the AF icons on the far left, and press the Setting button.
5. Using the Quick Control Dial, select the shutter button icon, and press the Setting button.
6. Choose the Metering icon, which appears in the center, and press the Setting button.

TIP

If you aren't accustomed to working this way, I highly recommend that you practice before shooting something important. It's easy to forget that you've disabled autofocus from the shutter button, which can result in a lot of out-of-focus photographs.

HOW TO BUILD A COMPOSITION

Now, that I've chosen a location that provides the best lighting and background and I've sent my white balance, ISO, shutter speed, and my focus points appropriately, I can focus more on my composition. All the technical considerations have been made, so I don't have to be distracted by them. The only time I need to reconsider the technical details is if the lighting changes or I move my subject into a different area. Otherwise, I can just focus on the subtle differences in my subject's expression or body language, which can give me that special something that results in a great portrait.

Though most of our portraits may simply involve a composition where the subject is put in the very center of the frame, we actually have a lot of choices. You can put the subject in the center of the frame, off-center, or sometimes even at the extreme edges of the frame. The placement of your subject within the frame and the perspective from which you shoot your subject can make or break an image. For example, when I want to make the environment as important as my subject, I'll position the subject off-center to include more of the background in the composition (**Figure 4.8**).

FIGURE 4.8
I wanted to create a composition that provided a sense of place for this portrait of my friend Paul. By orienting the camera vertically and including the vineyard and sky, I produced a sense of where we were during this great day of shooting.

Here are a few tips to help you create some amazing portrait compositions.

THE RULE OF THIRDS

One of the most basic rules of composition, the "rule of thirds," is a very good principle to work with when photographing people. Imagine a tic-tac-toe board, with two lines spaced evenly down the center of the frame both horizontally and vertically. Your goal is to place the subject, or part of your subject, on one of the intersecting lines. You're basically trying to keep the person off-center without pushing him or her too close to the edge of the frame.

This same rule can be used quite effectively when making a tightly framed photograph of the face, where you place each eye at one of those intersecting points in order to help create a balanced composition, as I did for this portrait of master photographer Joel Meyerowitz (**Figure 4.9**).

The great thing about the 5D Mark III is that you can add a grid overlay to your viewfinder and LCD (when shooting in Live View) to help you with composition. You'll need to set up the appearance of the grid lines for the viewfinder and the LCD monitor separately. The latter is enabled when you're using the camera in Live View mode (in which you're using the LCD monitor to compose your photograph).

TO SET UP THE GRID DISPLAY IN YOUR VIEWFINDER, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Press the Menu button and turn the Main Dial to access the Set-up 2 menu screen.
2. Use the Quick Control Dial to scroll down to VF grid display. Press the Setting button.
3. Use the Quick Control Dial to enable the VF grid display. Press the Setting button.

TO SET UP THE GRID DISPLAY FOR LIVE VIEW, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Press the Menu button and turn the Main Dial to access the Shoot 4: LV menu screen.
2. Use the Quick Control Dial to scroll down to Grid Display. Press the Setting button.
3. Use the Quick Control Dial to select the 3x3 or other grid pattern. Press the Setting button.

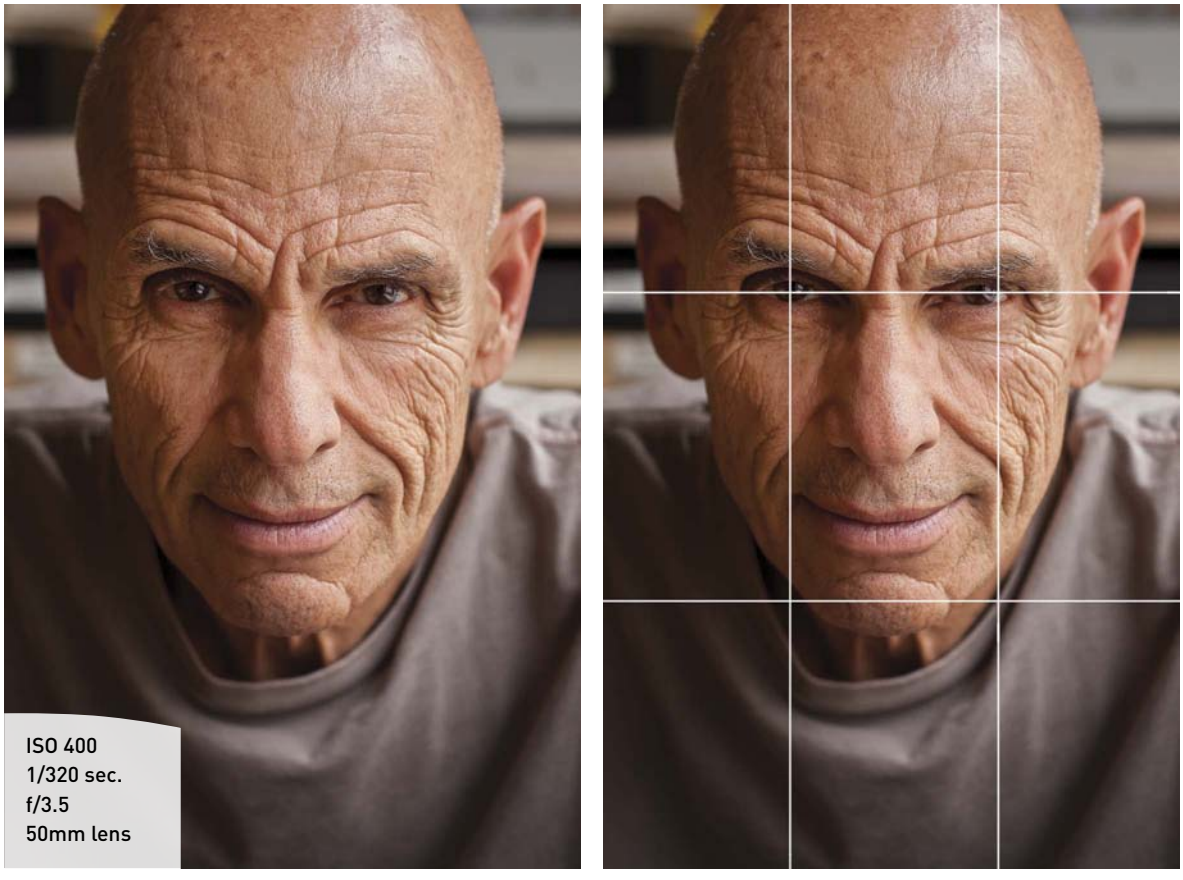


FIGURE 4.9
For my photograph of master photographer Joel Meyerowitz, I used the rule of thirds to build the composition and placed his eyes in the top third of the frame.

REMEMBER

The rule of thirds is a "rule," not a "law." Don't think that every photograph you make has to adhere to the rule of thirds. It's a great tool to use to build a composition, but sometimes breaking the rules can result in a better photograph.

PERSPECTIVE

Perspective, the position from which the photographer chooses to make a photograph, is important for any image, but especially when making a portrait. The point of view from which you choose to make the photograph is the very point of view that will impact the way the viewer experiences the photograph and the subject.

Photographers often make photographs from their own eye level, but it's important when making a portrait to consider the eye level of the subject, especially when you're photographing children (**Figure 4.10**). Try photographing the subject at his or her own eye level. This creates a sense of equality between the viewer and the subject, which can help create a sense of intimacy. If you want to give the subject a sense of power and authority, position the camera below the subject's eye level and shoot up slightly.

FIGURE 4.10
Getting down to the child's eye level allowed me to create a photograph that was more intimate than what would have been created by looking down on him.

BREAK THE RULES

When it comes to portraits, you'll hear a lot of hard and fast rules in terms of what you should and shouldn't do. But I think it's important to be willing to play and experiment, even with unusual perspectives. Once I've gotten an image that I'm satisfied with, one that follows all the traditional rules, I begin experimenting with extremes in composition or even exposure to see what I get. Taking risks sometimes results in pleasant surprises.

CAMERA ORIENTATION

Camera orientation is another consideration to make when making a portrait. It can dramatically change how the viewer experiences the photograph and the environment the subject is in. A horizontal orientation can be good if you want to include a good amount of the environment in the scene, even if the background is thrown out of focus. It not only can provide a sense of place, but also can help to draw the viewers' attention to the subject.

A vertical composition can help emphasize the subject more by eliminating areas of the background. This can help emphasize the face and the expression, while eliminating distracting elements in the background that might pull the viewers' attention away from the person.

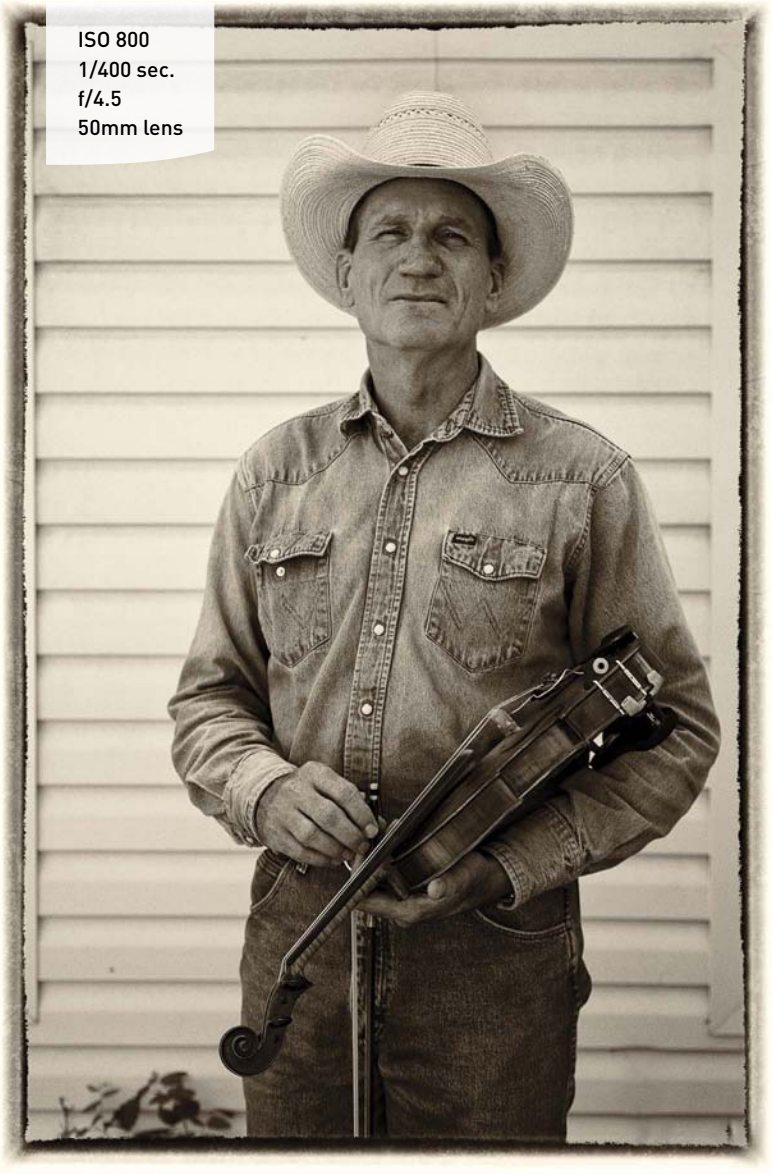
CLASSIC BLACK-AND-WHITE PORTRAITS

There is a certain classic look to black-and-white portraiture (**Figure 4.11**). By eliminating color in emphasizing dark and light tones, we can experience a portrait subject in a very different way than we do with a traditional color photograph.

Though I preferred to shoot color images and then later convert the images to black and white, the 5D Mark III allows you to see the captured image as a black-and-white image on your camera's LCD monitor when you shoot in the Monochrome picture style. If you're shooting JPEGs, the saved file will be a black-and-white image. If you're shooting raw, the original raw file will still be in color, allowing you to convert the shot into black and white using your favorite photo-editing application.

Whether you shoot and capture raw files or JPEGs, setting the display for black and white can be a great educational tool to begin to learn to see the world in black and white.

FIGURE 4.11
Though most of my images are made in color, some images look best rendered as black and white. In this image, I added a slight sepia tint to provide a classic look to the portrait of a fiddler.



TO SET YOUR PICTURE STYLE TO MONOCHROME, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Press the Creative Photo/Comparative playback (Two-image display)/Direct print button, and use the Main Dial to select the Picture Style mode. Press the Setting button.
2. Use the Quick Control Dial to select Monochrome Picture Style. Press the Setting button.

Your camera will continue to shoot with the Monochrome picture style until you change it to another setting.

TO CUSTOMIZE THE PICTURE STYLE SETTINGS, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. When you're in the Picture Style section of the menu where you selected Monochrome, press the Info button located to the left of your viewfinder.
2. Use the multi-controller to highlight the setting you want to change, and press the Setting button.
3. Use the multi-controller to move the cursor to a new position on the scale (the default setting will remain marked with a gray arrow) or to select a different filter, and press the Setting button.
4. Perform the same process for the other options. Then press the Menu button to return to the regular menu screen. You can now start shooting with your new settings.

TIPS FOR SHOOTING BETTER PORTRAITS

Before we get to the assignments for this chapter, I thought it might be a good idea to leave you with a few extra pointers on shooting portraits that don't necessarily have anything specific to do with your camera. Entire books cover subjects like portrait lighting, posing, and so on, but here are a few pointers that will make your people pictures look a lot better:

- **Choose a good quality of light.** I often prefer an area of open shade. However, one way to determine whether you're shooting your subject in bad light is simply to pay attention to what's happening with the shadows. If you see dark and harsh shadows appearing on the subject's face, particularly beneath the brow, chin, or nose, you're likely working with high-contrast light, which is rarely flattering for a subject. If you find yourself in such a lighting situation, move your subject into an area of open shade where the lighting will be much more flattering and pleasing.
- **Find a clean and simple background.** A common mistake is to photograph a subject but not pay attention to what's happening in the background. Such images can include huge distractions, which compete with the subject for the viewer's attention. Look for clean and simple backgrounds that are free of clutter. This will help the viewer focus completely on the subject.

Continued ➤

TIPS FOR SHOOTING BETTER PORTRAITS *CONTINUED*

- **Choose an appropriate focal length.** Though you can use virtually any focal length for a portrait, I often prefer to use a focal length between 50mm and 135mm for most of the portraits that I make. I find that this focal length range renders the subject well, free of the distortion that might be found with a wider focal length. With longer telephoto lenses, I can throw the background out of focus and use the limited depth of field to emphasize my subject.
- **Pay attention to camera orientation.** Make images with the camera oriented both vertically and horizontally. Carefully consider what you include in the frame. If you believe that an element in the background is distracting, find a way to eliminate it. Remember that if anything in the frame doesn't serve the subject, you need to get rid of it.
- **Keep your eyes on the shutter speed.** You must be constantly vigilant with respect to your shutter speed. Many great portraits are ruined because of camera shake. So, whenever you're shooting in a lighting situation other than direct sunlight, make it a point to note your shutter speed and, if necessary, increase your ISO so that you can shoot with a fast-enough shutter speed to ensure a sharp photograph.
- **Don't ask people to smile.** Most people will put on a forced smile when the camera is pointed at them. Some smiles are very sincere and natural, but others look forced and uncomfortable. If they're the latter, don't hesitate to suggest that the subject not smile; tell the subject to relax and look directly into the camera's lens. This can result in a good portrait, which renders the subject in a very natural and sincere way.
- **Get down to the subject's eye level.** When photographing children, I always try to get down to their eye level. Moving from the adult point of view to a kid's point of view can make a remarkable difference in a photograph. Such images provide a level of intimacy that can't happen otherwise. So, don't hesitate to get on the floor with the kids, which will dramatically change the dynamic between you and them and, consequently, the photographs.
- **Photograph when they aren't looking.** Candid moments can be just as revealing as images where the subject is looking directly at the camera. Using a photojournalistic approach, a photographer can reveal the dynamics of relationships between people that are often missing in more traditional photographs. Being a fly on the wall and capturing images where people are interacting and reacting with each other can reveal more about the relationships than any other kind of image.

Chapter 4 Assignments

Experiment with Depth of Field

Using the longest focal length that you have available (for example, a 70mm focal length or longer), create a portrait. Try to find an area of open shade that has a simple and clean background. Set your camera to Aperture Priority mode and the white balance to the Shade preset. Choose the widest aperture available on your lens. Remember to observe your shutter speed and increase your ISO until you can achieve a shutter speed at which you can reliably handhold. Make a few photographs, and then shoot at a more moderate aperture, such as f/5.6, and compare the results. Again, stay aware of your shutter speed so that the image doesn't suffer from camera shake.

Observe the Quality of Light

Photograph your subject under a variety of lighting conditions: under direct sunlight, open shade, indoors using artificial light, and with window light. Observe the differences not only with respect to your exposure and white balance, but also the presence of shadows and how they fall on the subject and on the overall scene.

Learn to Handle Exposure Extremes

Position a subject in front of a bright window. Photograph your subject using all four metering modes: evaluative, partial, spot, and center-weighted average. Compare the images to see which of the metering modes provides you a better exposure under this extreme kind of lighting situation.

Create Creative Compositions

Create a series of portraits in which you position your subject in different areas of the frame. Create images with the subject in the very center of the frame, as well as images using the rule of thirds. Also, experiment with positioning your subject at the extreme edges of the frame, as well as shooting from different perspectives, both above and below the subject.

Shoot in Black and White

Enable the Monochrome picture style and create a series of black-and-white portraits. Photograph your subject in a variety of lighting conditions and see how the contrast changes as a result of your choice of lighting.

Share your results with this book's Flickr group!

Join the group here: www.flickr.com/groups/Canon5DMarkIIIFromSnapshotstoGreatShots

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