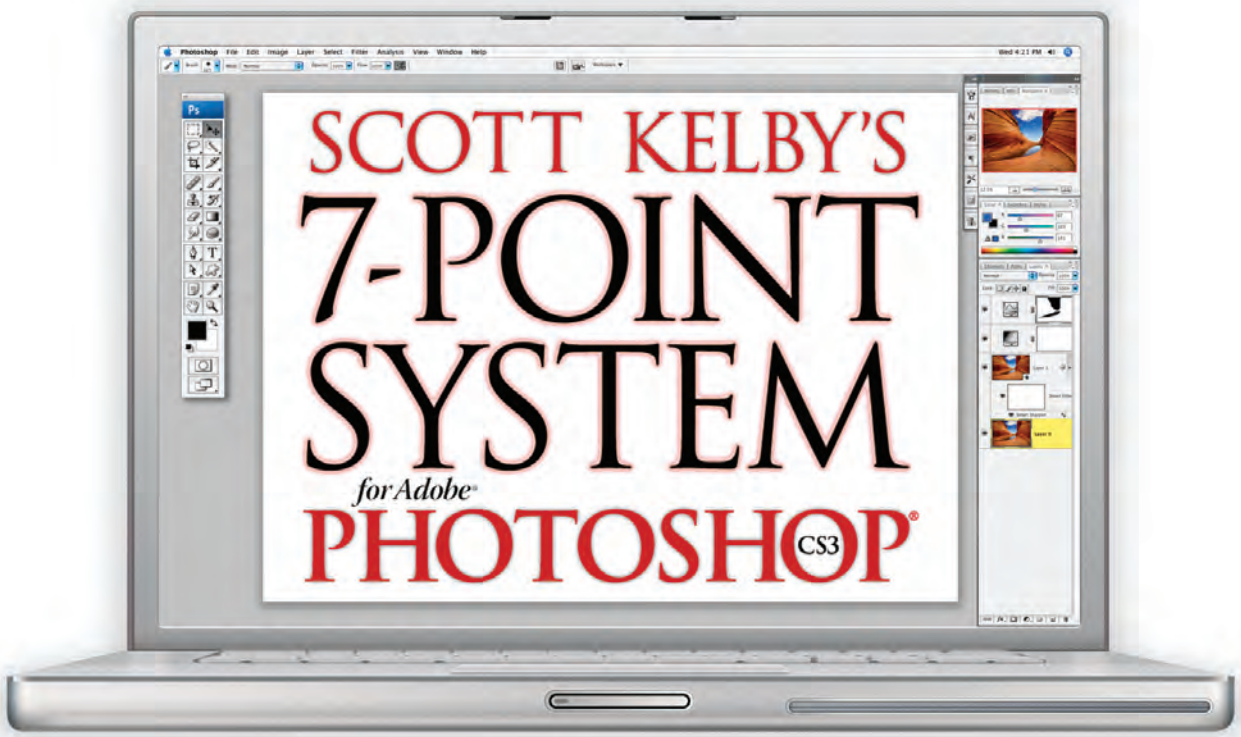

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For
my buddies:
Dave, Marvin, Mike,
Dave C., Matt, Corey,
RC, Roddy, Jeff R.,
Bill, Larry, Terry,
Felix, Tony, Scotty,
Jim, and Vanelli;

my family:
Jordan, Kira, and Jeff;

…and the love of my life,
Kalebra.

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OTHER BOOKS BY SCOTT KELBY

The Lightroom Book for Digital Photographers

The Photoshop CS3 Book for Digital Photographers

The Photoshop Channels Book

Photoshop Down & Dirty Tricks

Photoshop Killer Tips

Photoshop Classic Effects

The iPod Book

InDesign Killer Tips

The Digital Photography Book

Mac OS X Killer Tips

Getting Started with Your Mac and Mac OS X Tiger

The Photoshop Elements 5 Book for Digital Photographers

The iPhone Book

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Scott Kelby

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For more information on Scott, visit his daily blog at www.scottkelby.com.

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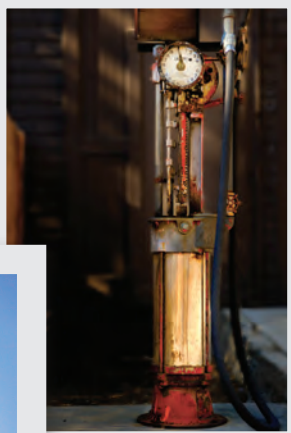

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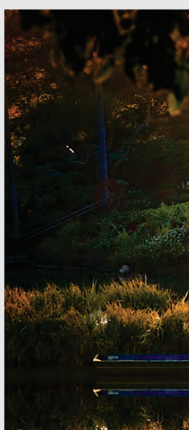

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THE SEVEN POINTS ARE REVEALED RIGHT HERE!

How the 7-Point System Works:

Sorry for that *National Enquirer*-style headline up there, and I know you probably want to jump right over to Lesson 1 and start fixing photos, but if you do that (jump over there and skip this quick section where I reveal the seven points), you're going to wish you had read this (not now, but about halfway into Lesson 2, you're going to start saying things like, "Hey…" and "What the heck…?" and other stuff with three dots after it). But if you spend two minutes with me now, and let me explain the system so it makes sense, I promise you, you'll get much more out of the book. You'll totally "get" what we're trying to accomplish (and why I wrote it the way I did), and then the system will be a success for you.

I'll do this in a quick Q&A-style format, which is ideal for people with the attention span of a hamster. (Not you, mind you. Other people.) Here we go:

Q. So how is this 7- Point System going to help me?

A. Hey, first can we lose the attitude?

Q. Oh, sorry. It's been a really hectic day.

A. That's okay. Well, this book addresses what I've learned are the three biggest problems people have with editing their photos in Photoshop:

(1) They open a photo, and they know it looks bad, but they have no idea where to begin to fix it. They don't know what to fix first, what to fix next, or even how.

(2) If they already have a book on Photoshop (including one of mine), and they read about using something like Curves or Camera Raw, they can somewhat fix their photos while the book is open in front of them, but if they come back to Photoshop after their next shoot (which might be three days—or three weeks—later), they've pretty much forgotten what they learned three weeks ago, and now they're back to reading the book again, so things are moving really slowly, and that's very frustrating for them. What they learned doesn't "stick."

(3) They know Photoshop can fix their problem—they know it can not only make their photos look at least as good as it looked when they originally took the shot, it can make them look even better—they're just not sure which buttons and sliders will get them there.

Q. So this book is going to fix all three of those problems?

A. You betcha! We'll start with the first problem (they know it looks bad, but have no idea where to begin to fix it). You're going to do 21 lessons (they're like chapters, but they don't have chapter titles because they share a common theme, as you'll learn in a minute). Each lesson starts off with the original boring, flat, lifeless image as it came out of the camera. You download the exact same photos I used here in the book (even the RAW files), so you can follow right along with me every step of the way as I take you through the entire process—leaving nothing out—of going from flat to fantastic in just minutes.

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Q. How is this different?

A. Well, think about it. Most Photoshop books show you how to do one thing per section, or one thing per chapter. For example, they might have a chapter on sharpening, or a chapter on Curves, or Levels, and they'll have you open a photo and perform, say, a Curves correction on a photo, and you're done. That's great, but here's the thing: as you've learned—that's not real life. You don't just open a photo, apply a quick single Curves adjustment, and then save the photo because it now looks amazing. In real life, that Curves adjustment only fixes one thing in a photo that needs 10 things fixed. Once again—you're stuck.

Hey, I'm not casting aspersions on other authors—my own books are guilty of this same thing, too. My best-selling book, *The Photoshop CS3 Book for Digital Photographers*, has a chapter on color correction, and it shows you step-by-step how to color correct a photo using Curves, and Levels, and Hue/Saturation, and a bunch of other color correction tools. But which one will fix the problem you have right now? Which do you use first? Second? Last? Which one is most effective? Which ones should you avoid? What's the proper order? See, there's something missing in the way we teach Photoshop—something that makes it stick. That's why I felt I had to write this book, and change the way we teach Photoshop.

Q. So this was all your idea?

A. Actually, it wasn't my idea—it was my brother Jeff's idea. I was showing him a slide show from a recent shoot, and there was one photo that really caught his eye. So I said, "Want to see the original?" and I popped open the original image in Photoshop, and his jaw just dropped. The original photo was this flat, lifeless, throwaway shot, but after my tweaks in Photoshop, the final image in my slide show looked pretty sweet (well, at least he thought so, but he is my brother after all, which in most cases would make him an easy audience, but he's a photographer, too, so he's pretty tough on my photography. And then there's that whole sibling rivalry thing, and well…I'm surprised he even sat through my slide show. Especially since Mom always liked him best. But I digress).

Anyway, he asked me if I'd show him how I did it, so he sat there and watched me take this dull, lifeless image through a series of steps that turned it into something that looked pretty darn good when I was done. Now, he's seen me use Photoshop for years, and he was still amazed, because although he uses Photoshop from time to time on his own images, he suffers from the same three problems I outlined earlier. Then he said something that made this book a reality. He said, "You need to write a book like that—a book where you start with a really crappy image [his words], and show people the exact steps, in order, you need to take to get it to there" (and he pointed to my screen, at the non-crappy finished photo that made his jaw drop earlier).

I told him, "I already do that in my books," but the more we talked about it, the more I realized that I really don't. Yes, all my stuff is step-by-step (that's what I always do), but I don't take it all the way from the raw, ugly original to final finished piece—every step of the way from start to finish. Instead, I would open a nicely corrected photo and show how to sharpen it. Or open a flat image, and show how to add contrast. Or a photo that was too red, and show how to remove the red—but not the whole thing—not the full monty of taking it from flat to fantastic. But I do now—in this book. Twenty-one times in a row. Twenty-one "crappy" photos to 21 finished pieces, and you're right there with me every step of the way—editing the images in Photoshop the same way I do in my own studio, on my own images.

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Q. So, where did the seven points come in?

A. Well, about a year ago I started collecting "crappy" photos for this book (mostly my own, but some from friends who asked me to fix their photos), and I would do what it took (in Photoshop) to take them from boring to beautiful, and I'd record my steps along the way. It wasn't long before I realized that I was using the same adjustments, the same tools, and the same techniques over and over again. I also thought I wasn't using everything in Photoshop's arsenal, when in fact, I was using the same basic seven techniques again and again, no matter which image I was trying to fix. Just seven things. Not 70. Seven! Plus, for the most part I was using them in a particular order (with some small variance).

That's when I realized two things: (1) if I can distill this down to just these seven techniques, these "7 Points," then anybody would be able to learn this stuff (after all, learning everything about Photoshop is really daunting, but learning just seven things in Photoshop—that's a piece of cake!), and (2) if it's just seven things, I can have them repeat them again and again, so it finally, actually, really sticks. It's the repetition that's missing. That's why, when you come back two or three weeks later, you can't remember what to do first. ("Am I supposed to use Levels first? No, wait, did I change to Lab color first, then sharpen? No, wait, wasn't I supposed to create a new layer before I did that?") Does any of this sound familiar? If it does—this is the book for you, my friend. (By the way, even if it doesn't sound familiar—this is still the book for you. Just ask my publisher.) ;-)

Q. So I'm going to be doing the same thing over and over again?

A. Well, yeah. But that's the beauty of this book—you'll get really, really good at this stuff, because you'll do it over and over and over again. Luckily, each project is different—each image is different—but you still use the same seven adjustments in pretty much the same way, in pretty much in the same order. At some point, later in the book, you're going to go to do one of those seven points, and you're going to say to yourself, "Aw, this again? I already know this. I've done it a dozen times now." Bingo! That's it—that's the book at work. That's what it's all about. The whole idea is that you do this stuff again and again until it becomes second nature. You do it until my workflow becomes your workflow, and these seven points become just "stuff you already know how to do," so when you hear yourself say, "I already know this," you need to smile that I-already-know-this smile. You're "getting the system." The cool thing is—the system works. You're going to be a Photoshop shark in no time, because there's not a photo you're not going to be able to fix using this 7-Point System. Okay, technically, you might come across some crazy-crappy photo that it won't save, but you'll be able to kick the butt of almost any image you see (and certainly any image you shoot). (*Note:* I'm trademarking "crazy-crappy." It would make a great name for a band.)

Q. Okay, I get it. But can you please tell me the seven points before I burst an artery?

A. Okay, you've waited long enough. But before I tell you, just know this: you're not going to be blown away when I list them here (after all, they're all features already in Photoshop, probably ones you've used before. I'm not going to name some hidden feature that Adobe buried deep in the program that you have to unlock with a secret code). The secret to this system isn't the name of the techniques, it's how you use them, and that's what you learn through each lesson—putting this to work, in order, for you, and only using what you need to use. So, here are the seven points, starting with the first one:

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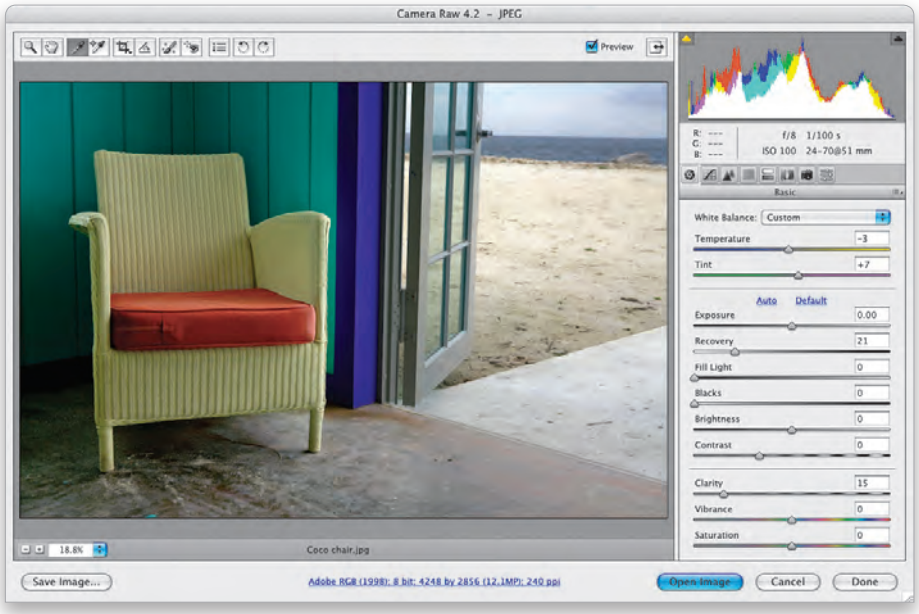

SCOTT KELBY

1 Adobe Camera Raw Processing

We always start by processing our photos (JPEGs, TIFFs, or RAW images) right within Photoshop's Adobe Camera Raw plug-in, as seen above, where we've opened a JPEG image there for editing (only Photoshop CS3 lets you open JPEGs and TIFFs in Camera Raw). This processing in Camera Raw is the key component of our 7-Point System for a number of reasons, including that editing the tone and color of your images using Camera Raw is much faster and dramatically easier than doing it in Photoshop itself, where it's much more complex, and significantly slower.

We're only going to concentrate on the most essential parts of Camera Raw in this process, so even though there are eight different panels within the Camera Raw interface (and a whole row of tools), we're only going to work in three of those panels, with only about 30% of Camera Raw's overall features—we don't need the rest for what we need to do, and that makes it even easier. So, to sum this first point up: Camera Raw has lots of bells of whistles and specialized features that you're not going to need to learn to master "The System."

ADOBE LIGHTROOM USERS: If you use Lightroom as part of your digital photography workflow, rather than using Camera Raw, you'll do the exact same steps I show in the book for Camera Raw, but you'll do them in Lightroom's Develop module instead. Lightroom's Develop module is based on Camera Raw, so by design it has the same sliders and functionality as Camera Raw, so don't let the black interface throw you—all the same sliders are there, in the same order. In the book, when I write, "Open your image in Camera Raw," instead you'll click on the photo in the Library module, jump over to the Develop module, and make your changes there.

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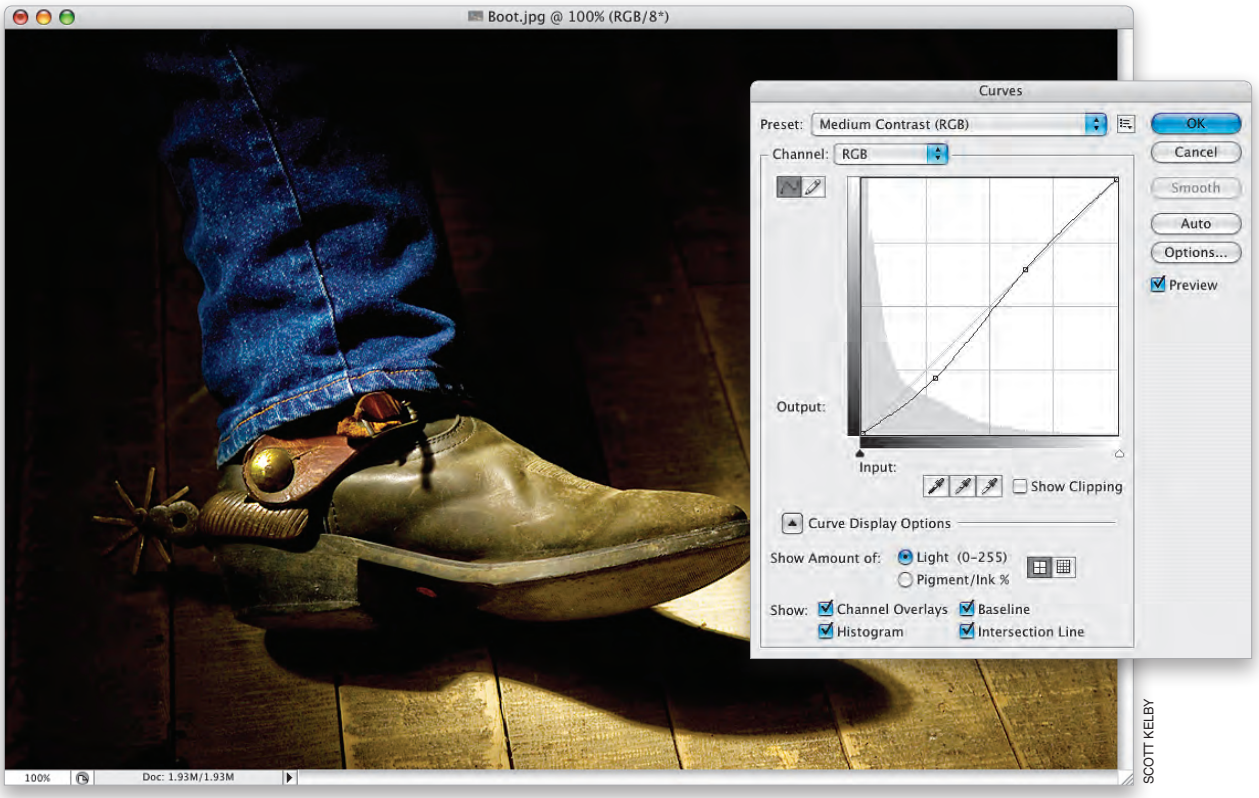

2 Curves Adjustments

Since we create most of our contrast and do most of our color correction right in Camera Raw, we can get away with doing very little in Curves (where, without Camera Raw, you'd have to pretty much become a Curves expert, which for many people is a daunting task). But don't worry—even if you've never used Curves before, you'll be able to do the simple edits I'm going to show you in the book—the very first time. You don't need to become a pro at Curves, you just have to get good at the few things we'll be doing with Curves, and trust me, after 21 lessons of doing pretty much the same thing, you'll do it standing on your head.

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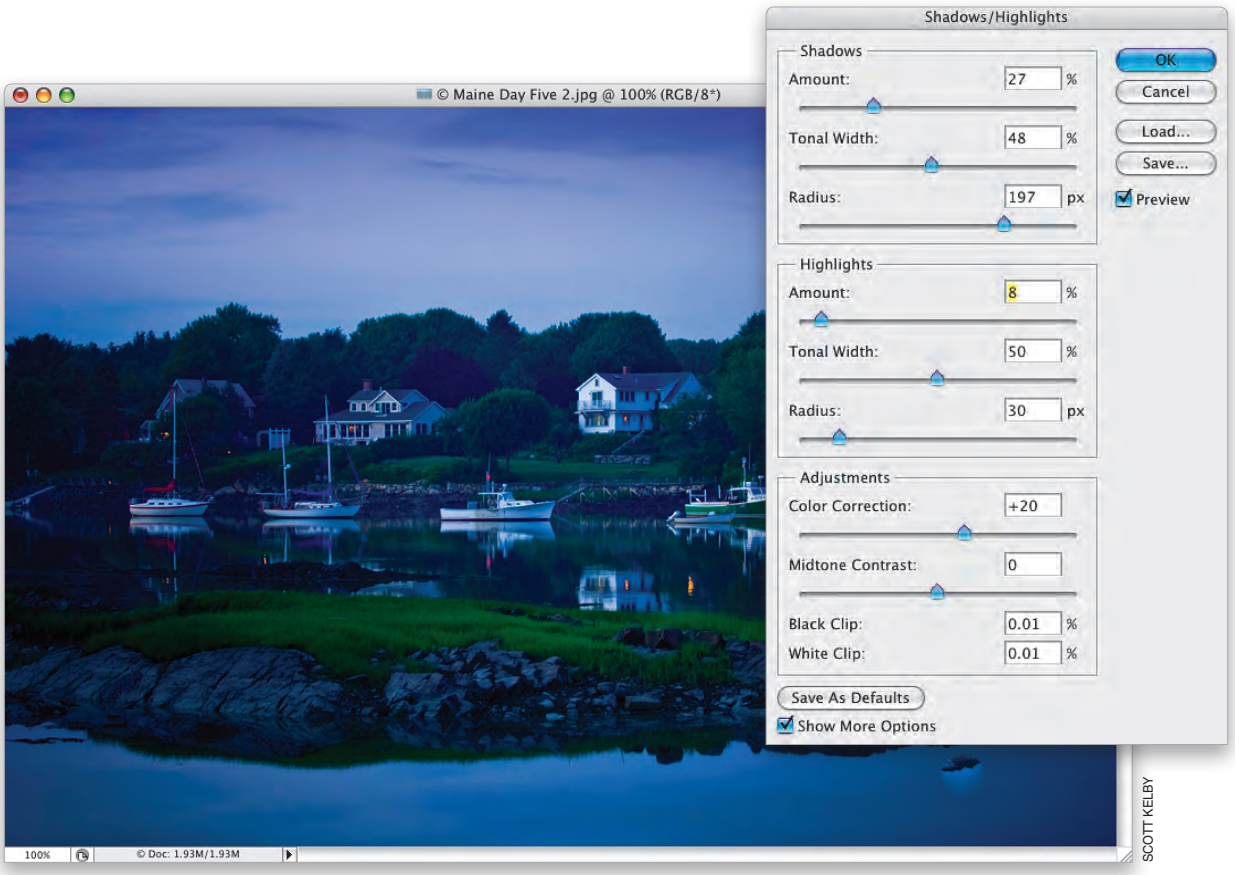

3 Shadow/Highlight

Since we're going to pretty much eliminate highlight clipping problems back in Camera Raw (in the first point of the 7-Point System), if you have tonal problems in your photo after that, they're probably going to be in the shadow areas. That's where Photoshop's Shadow/Highlight control comes in, but we're going to use it in a more advanced way that gives you better results. Don't let that word "advanced" throw you—I didn't say, "We're going to use it in a complex or hard way." In fact, the method is really quite simple. It's just that we need better results than the default way of using this control will bring us, and as you get farther into the book, you'll see exactly why.

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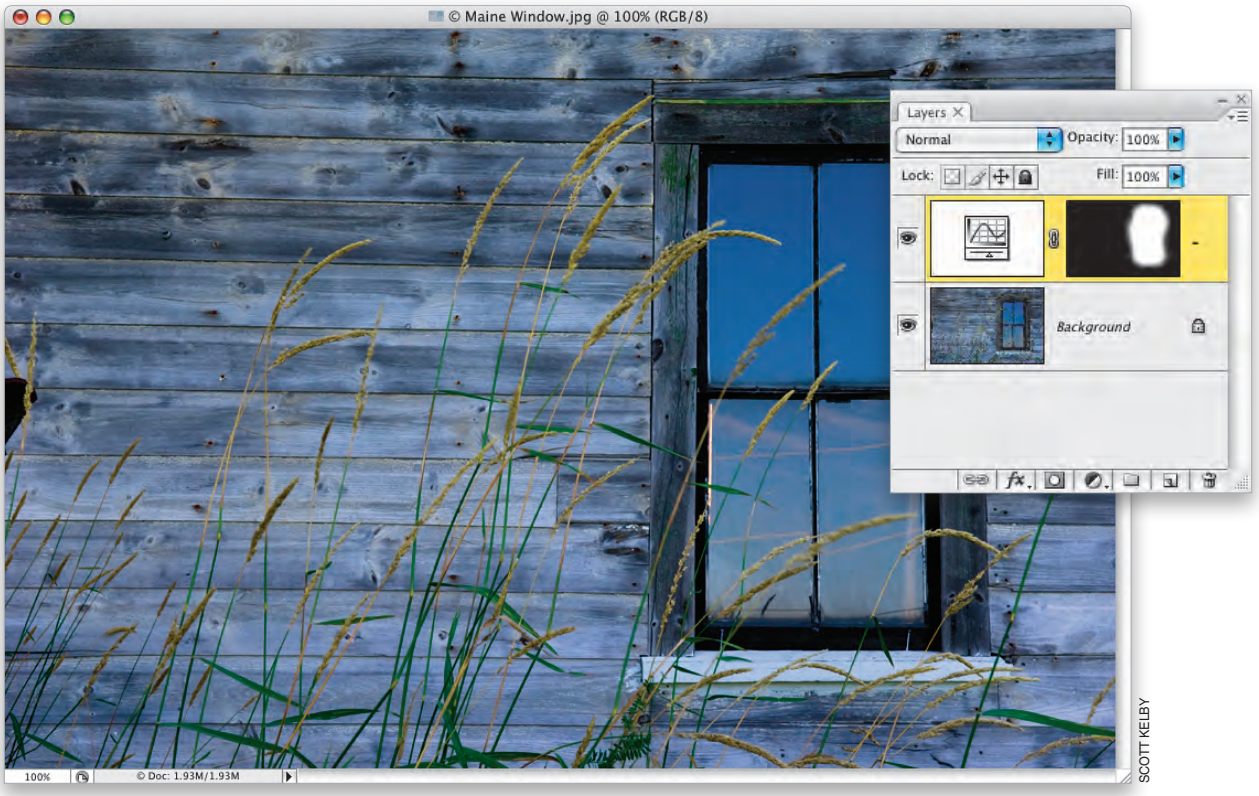

4 Painting with Light

The ability to control the light in your image gives you incredible control, but more than using this as a special effect (which is probably how most people think of "painting with light"), we're going to use it to fix exposure problems and bring out detail in areas that would have been lost otherwise.

This is one of the easiest, yet most powerful ways to get your photos looking like you wish they did, and once you do it a few times (putting light right where you want it, but in a much better way than simply dodging and burning), the light bulb is going to come on for you in a big way, and this alone will change the way you edit your images from here on out.

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5 Channels Adjustments

This sounds like something that would be complicated, but it isn't. In fact, it's so simple that you'll be able to do it the very first time you try it, and every time thereafter, without breaking a sweat. We're using Lab color channels as a creative tool, and you're going to fall in love with this right off the bat, because basically it's going to show you three different versions of your photo (all three of which have more color vibrancy and color contrast), and all you have to do is choose the one you like best. It doesn't get much easier than that.

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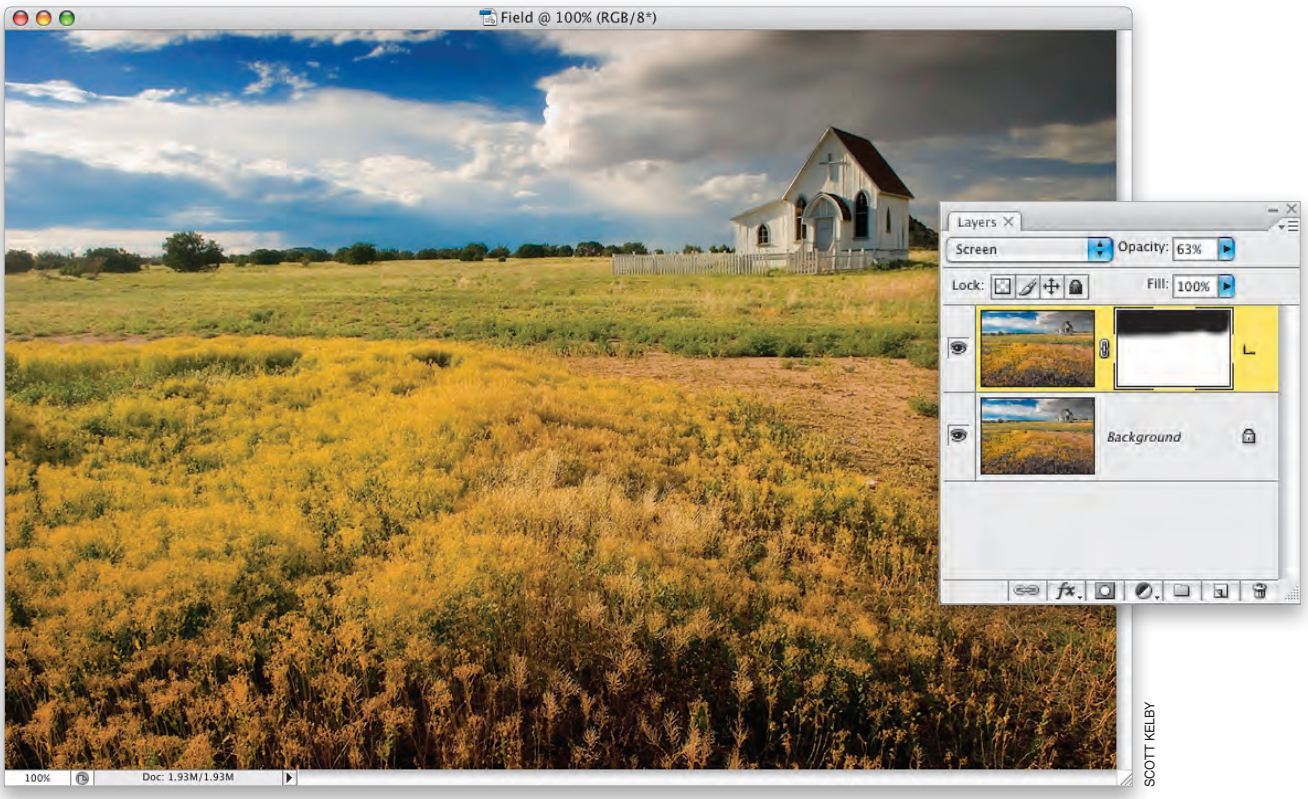

6 Layer Blend Modes & Layer Masks

You'll already know part of this technique because of the "painting with light" technique you'll have already learned. But, once again, this is one of those easy, yet surprisingly powerful, techniques that, when used the way I'll share in the book, becomes another key tool in your "I'm a Photoshop Shark" toolbox. What I like best about this part is it's really fun (and isn't fun the best thing to have?).

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SCOTT KELBY

7 Sharpening Techniques

We sharpen every single image, usually twice: once at the very beginning, right within Camera Raw (which is called input sharpening), and once before we save the file (called output sharpening), where we sharpen based on whether you'll be sending your photo to the Web or if you're making a print (the amount is also based on the subject matter of your photo). We use Photoshop's Unsharp Mask filter for our sharpening, but then we add one extra little step that lets us apply more sharpening without damaging our photo. Besides which, you're going to learn how to add some one-click automation that lets you apply your sharpening like a pro by just pressing one button. Sweet!

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So, those are the techniques that make up my 7-Point System, but don't let just the names of these techniques fool you, this is very powerful stuff. When it's applied the way I'm going to show you, in the order I'm going to show you, it comes together to give you a real plan—a real course of action that lets you know where to start, what to do next, and how to finish your photos so they look the way you want them to.

Q. So, will I use all seven points on every photo?

A. Nope. Thankfully, not every photo looks so bad that you'll need to apply all seven points every time. Most need at least four or five of the points, but don't worry—you'll get plenty of practice with all of them. Also, different photos use different points, so again—you'll get plenty of practice at determining which photos need what. Also, at the beginning of each lesson, in the top-left corner of the page, you'll see a list of which of the seven points are going to be used in that particular lesson, but even if you're already getting very comfortable with the seven points, you need to do every single lesson anyway.

Q. How come?

A. Along the way, I tossed in all kinds of other little tricks of the trade that aren't necessarily one of the seven points, but they made that particular photo look better, so if you do every lesson, you'll pick up more than just the 7-Point System—you'll learn some slick bonus tricks, as well.

Q. I love slick bonus tricks!

A. We all do. It's what separates us from the animals. That and satellite radio.

Q. So, do I have to start at Lesson 1?

A. Yeah, I'm afraid so. You need to start with Lesson 1, because in that lesson I have you create some sharpening actions that you not only use in each lesson, you'll use these in your own work after you're done with the book.

Q. So, is the book the same all the way through?

A. Actually, toward the end it starts to change as you start to change. By the time you get to last four or five lessons, you're going to know this stuff pretty darn well, so I stop spelling every little thing out, like I did in the earlier lessons. For example, in Lesson 6, when I need you to create a new layer, I might write an instruction like, "Create a new layer by clicking on the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel—it's the second icon from the right." But in those last four or five lessons, I figure you've been around the block a bit, so I talk like I would to a colleague. At that point, when I need you to create a new layer, I just write, "Create a new layer," and that's it. I figure, if you don't know to create a new layer by the time you get to Lesson 18 or 19, you need to go back and start over—you're just not payin' attention (perhaps it's a drinking problem?).

Q. Is there anything the 7-Point System can't fix?

A. Absolutely. It can't fix bad photography. Here's what I mean: if you've got a good photo (it's reasonably sharp and well-composed), you can use The System to take this good photo and make it a great photo, but I can tell you this—it won't take a bad photo and make it a good photo. Believe me, I know. I've tried. The System just won't make a bad photo good. It'll make a decent photo better, a good photo great, and a great photo outrageous, but it can't fix bad composition, an out-of-focus

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image, or a bad concept. You're always better off getting it right in the camera. That way, you can spend less time fixing it in Photoshop, and spend more time finishing it in Photoshop, which is infinitely more fun (and I've included many of my favorite finishing techniques right here in the book, so you'll pick those up, too).

Q. What's the deal on the "Refresher Course" lesson at the end?

A. A friend of mine came up with the idea, because sometimes he goes long periods of time between shoots (sometimes weeks, sometimes a month or more), and when he gets back, he said, since he's read the book once, he doesn't want to have to re-read the entire book again. He asked if I would include a quick refresher course that will quickly bring it all back. So, Chapter 21 is just that—a quick refresher course you can come back to if you take a long break from Photoshop (I call it "Mike's Refresher Course," but feel free to insert your own name). This refresher keeps you from having to relearn things you already learned when you first read the book. There's just enough info there to really jog your memory and get you back on track fast.

Q. So where are the photos we can download?

A. You can download the same photos I used in the book from the book's companion website at www.kelbytraining.com/7pointphotos. Of course, the whole idea is that once you're done with this book, you'll be applying my 7-Point System to your own photos, but for now, you should practice along with mine. See, I care.

Q. Some of the original photos in the lessons look pretty, well…crappy (to quote your brother).

A. Yeah, I know. Once I started putting the book together, I soon realized why other photographers hadn't done this original-photo-to-finished-product thing. It's because normally you only see a photographer's very best finished work—you don't see their misfires, or rejects, their "before" photos that would otherwise never see the light of day. But, to do a book like this, you have to let people see some of your crappy photos, too, and I can tell you from doing that here myself, it stinks (and that's not the word I wanted to use). But without these crappy originals, the book just wouldn't work, so I had to do it. (Of course, in retrospect, I could have just made up fake names for the photo credits beside each image, rather than identifying them as my own. I guess I should have thought of that before I sent the lessons to the publisher. Did I just say all that out loud?)

Q. Any final tidbits or advice?

A. Just remember that repetition is a key part of this program—there are literally hundreds of Photoshop books that teach you every single feature in the program, but this book isn't designed to do that. It's designed to teach you just the most important parts of just seven features, and have you apply them again and again and again, until they become second nature. Until they become your workflow. Until you become a Photoshop shark, which only happens when you're no longer scared of any photo. When you open a photo in Photoshop and right away know which adjustment to use, when to use it, which settings to use, and how to take your photos from flat to fabulous in no time.

I genuinely hope this book will give you a plan—a road map to follow—and help you finally get the results you've always wanted from your photography and Photoshop. My hope is that this learning methodology, with it's simplicity and repetition, will ultimately help you spend less time in front of Photoshop, and more time doing what you probably love best: taking photos and enjoying your final images or prints. Okay, now you can turn to Lesson 1 and dig right in.

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