

*Don Giannatti Presents*  
**LIGHTING ESSENTIALS**  
LIGHTING BOOK NUMBER ONE



(A COMPILATION OF LIGHTING  
TUTORIALS FROM LIGHTING ESSENTIALS)



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These tutorials all ran in previously in Lighting Essentials. I hope you enjoy them.

First couple of things:

Some of these techniques were very popular a few years ago and may not be popular today... That doesn't matter. What matters is that the techniques and skills the tutorials offer are important at any time as a photographer needs technical skills to improve.

Take these ideas and make them your own.

A big shout out to all of the models, MUA's, wardrobe stylists and of course the wonderful models and talent that I was privileged to work with all those years ago.

A special shout out to Briana who was a great friend and always ready to shoot and make photographs.

I hope you find something you like or triggers an 'AHA' moment for you.

*Visit my websites at:*

**Lighting-Essentials** ([www.lighting-essentials.com](http://www.lighting-essentials.com))

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My photography website.





# ONE STROBE, A DIFFUSER AND A TOUCH OF NATURAL LIGHT



These shots were taken on location in a dance studio. There was a lot of light bouncing around in there, but not enough for pretty headshots. I set up the shower curtain hanging from a boom. Since the client was my wife, it was fine to use these materials without a more cosmetically 'professional' presentation.

I wanted you all to see how easy it is to adapt the lighting ideas in the DVD to strobe. I used the natural light coming in from above and behind as a hair light (shutter speed 1/50) and the strobe behind the diffuser as a main. I brought the fill in very tight for a nearly even lighting scheme. You can see the 430EX I had started to use as a backlight before settling on the natural light. It was so harsh and the natural light was so pretty.

One of the things you will notice about this setup is that it is a large group and it is shot with small, camera-mount type strobes. Hey, light is light. I was lucky to get some natural light for the headshots, but I wanted to make sure that the medium shutter speed wouldn't allow for too much blur. I did a few tests and determined that I was OK.



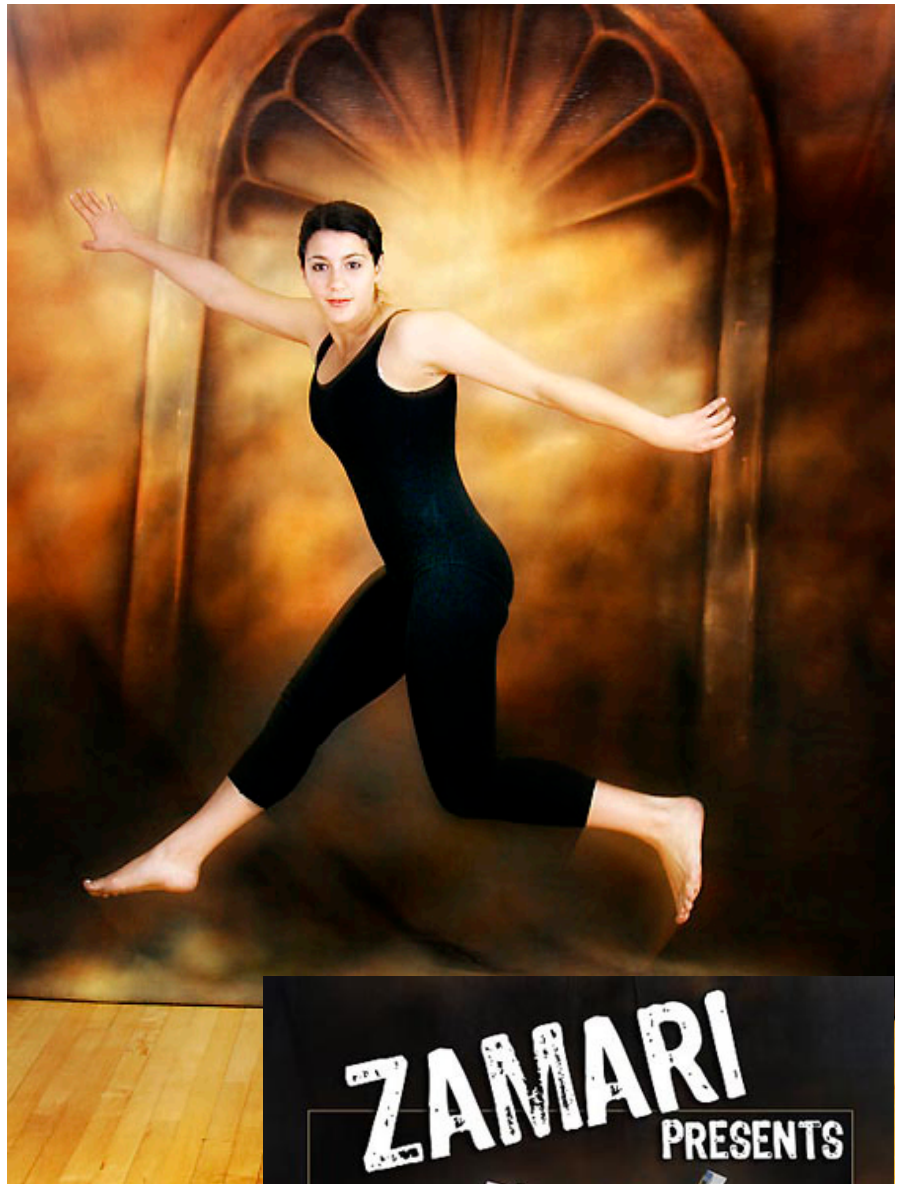


I also shot some action shots. With a slightly lower shutter speed, I was able to catch the action, but extremities had a little motion (feet, hair and hands) as they were moving the fastest.

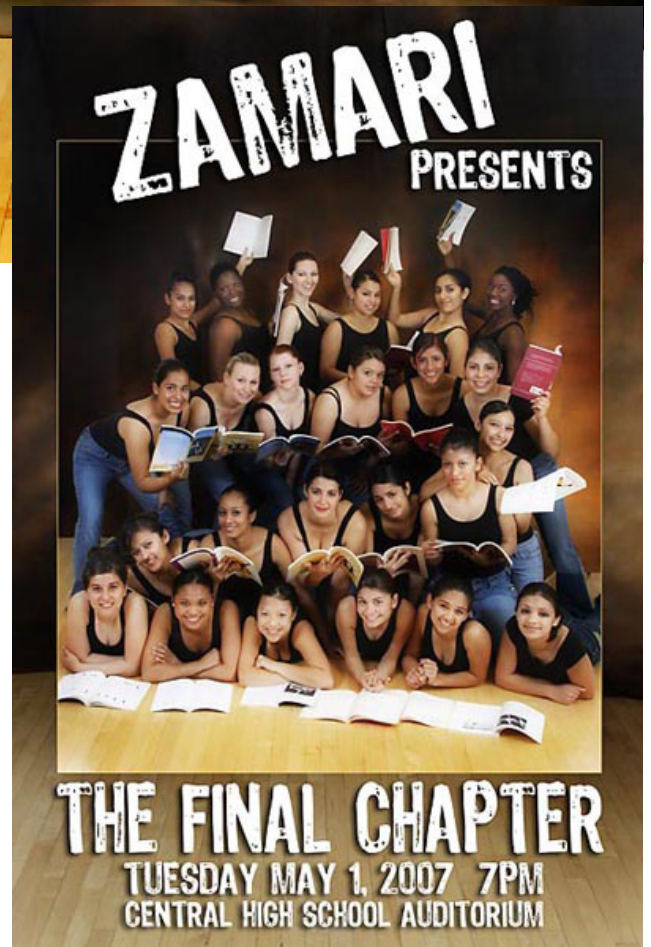
I preferred the blur since it added motion and a nice feeling of the dance.

My last shot involved shooting the whole cast of this dance company. It was to be my wife's last concert as a dance teacher (retired now... writing and managing) and so the title was "The Final Chapter."

It was a challenge to keep the dancers in the light and not behind the books, but taking time and not getting frazzled is the key. This is the shot as it is going up. Important to notice the fill card that is extending down from the umbrella on camera left. Without it the light would not have been even and would have dropped off on the ladies on the floor. The diffuser worked well. However to get that kind of 'spread' on the left side of the image, I had to work in a bit more fill to extend to the ground.



All in all, a simple shoot with a fun group and they love their images. Oh, and here is the Final Chapter Image as it was reproduced for posters and presentations.





# A FEW FROM THE ARCHIVES OF YESTERYEAR... HEH



I thought it would be good to discuss a few images from the past. You can tell by the hair and makeup that these are not recent images, but I thought I would share a few interesting lighting schemes that are easy and fun to deploy.

The goal for the lighting for me is to provide a vehicle for the beauty of the woman to come through. To do this, I would practice with lots of different lighting schemes and tools. Here you see five of the ones I really liked.

The last image (smoking) was shot on a 4x5 on Polaroid Type 55 and printed on silver gelatin paper.

## Headshot – Two Umbrellas

This was a variation on the single light glamour that I do these days. It is a matched pair of small umbrellas, little 20” ones from a shop I found in New York. I had seen another shooter using 4 of these little guys and thought I would give it a shot. As you can see in the eyes, the umbrellas are down right on the camera and I am shooting from between them. You can see the reflections in the shiny board in the eye as well. Model is sitting on the floor and holding the flowers. I am using a small white umbrella for hair light and it is 1 stop brighter than the light in front. This would be a great lighting scheme for speedlights as well. Very close fill boards on each side.



## Large Umbrella Glamour

A very large single umbrella very close to the model with me shooting from below it. It is a 54” white umbrella and there are strong fill cards on both sides. You can also see the bright bottom fill card in the eyes as well.

I ‘dumped’ a few heads\* into another room to get the light to be as small as possible, and was able to shoot at f-4 for limited DoF. The hairlight is a beauty dish at equal power to the front light. As you can plainly see, this light is quite beautiful and easy to replicate.

\* “Dumping” a head means taking a head from the pack and putting it somewhere not on the set. With older packs the heads determined the power. For instance, if you had a 400WS pack with four heads, the power would be distributed by head. One head into the pack was 400WS. Two heads would be 200WS each. So if I wanted 200 WS I would have to take a second head and “dump it in the other room giving me 200WS in the lamp I was using.



### **Giant Softbox**

This shot was for a client and we wanted to feature the colors of the scarf and hat. I used a studio built softbox that was 7feet high and 4 feet wide for the main light. It had three heads in it and was double scrimmed. Dang it was gorgeous light... and it weighed a freaking ton. Had it on wheels to move around, but this was before the collapsible softboxes we are all so used to these days. You can see the huge soft highlight in her eyes. I knew that a strong side light was needed to keep the light under the brim and provide a strong, soft light for the face – and the scarf. The image ran full page.

### **Movie Lights**

I owned a few movie lights in the late 80's and loved to use them. This shot uses 2 Mole Richardsons – one in the front and one in the back. The back one is 1/2 stop brighter than the front light. I cut window panes out a large piece of fume core and placed it in front of the forward Mole Richardson. I believe these were my 2K lights, so I had 4000 watts of light going on here. Hot? You betcha they were hot. I have the model looking straight into the light and I am standing on a ladder to shoot down toward her.



### **Hot Lights and Shallow DoF**

Shooting with super shallow depth of field can be a really exciting experience – or it can be miserable. This model made it the former as she could hold her position after focusing for what seemed like long minutes. Light was a single 2K Mole Richardson with a very sheer 'scrim curtain' in front of it. There was a large fill card to camera right and I adjusted it to give me a rather defined shadow exposure.

And before I get a bunch of 'flames' for encouraging smoking, I don't. It was shot for a specific client showing the antique hat. The smoking was very popular amongst the Hollywood actresses of the time this 'look' tries to capture.



# TWO LIGHT WORKSHOP ONE, PART ONE



This is a series of two light shots we did using hats as the theme, and a clean, simple studio background as the setting. For this set of shots we only used one umbrella and one beauty dish. There will be instructions on how to do this with your equipment as well.

I wanted a strong feeling of light for this shoot, so I chose the bright and very 'poppy' beauty dish and a rarity for me, my Silver and White Zebra umbrella. I usually don't use the Zebra as a main, but for this set of images I wanted to try something new. (A Zebra umbrella has alternating panels... mine are silver and white and they also make gold and white.)

This particular image has a unique type of hat as it has no brim, therefore we aren't concerned with lighting up underneath it or not. I did want to have a lot of light on Briana and have that light be bright in the highlights and drop off into the shadows quickly. Shiny umbrellas and beauty dishes do just that... so away we went.

Placing the umbrella over camera gave me a very strong main, head on light. It would have worked pretty cool as it was, but I wanted to add a 'kick' to the image with the second light, a beauty dish. At first I placed it as a clamshell light... putting it straight under the umbrella. But that light seemed wrong to me and I had done it many times before. This time I wanted something different.

I moved it to the side of the umbrella and down to where it was simply to the side of the camera. This added a bright, kicker to the whole of the image and let the fall off be dramatic and fast. It is that dramatic falloff on her left side that I was seeking.

You can see the lights in her eyes in this closeup shot.



The dramatic light caused very slight and delicate shadows on the background. I kept Briana close to the background to help keep the shadows. This shot shows another take from this set. It is from a bit farther back and shows how the two lights work to create a nice look to the skin, some very nice toning to the body and the little, subtle shadow on the background. I didn't want the totally white background – floater – look to the image, and that little shadow does give it some context.

Here is setup shot number one. You can get an idea of how close they are, remembering that this is shot with a wide angle lens. The lights are actually only a little more than 6 feet from her. You can also see how close she is to the background.

**Small Strobes Setup:**  
To do this with speedlights, try using silver umbrellas and two matched speedlights. I think that two of them on 1/4 power would be very easy to do, and give you plenty of light. Two matched shoot-thru umbrellas could be a change up from this set as well. Remember to try it without fill cards and then add a few to see what else you can do with it.

Give this a try when you get a chance. And let us see what you come up with. It is so simple to do and requires very few pieces of equipment.



## TWO LIGHT WORKSHOP ONE, PART TWO



The Two Light Workshop rolls on with this cowboy hat look on “Miss Briana.” We shot some with a western shirt and some with bare shoulders... both are represented here. One of the things I wanted to do was to create a bright light on her face and a quick drop-off. I also wanted to make sure there was a dark shadow under the hat to give it drama. In the shot featured here, the shadow is well defined and gives the drama I wanted.

I did have a third light going here, but it is totally optional for a back light. The model is still lit with only two lights: a Zebra umbrella and a Beauty Dish. I added a shiny fill for under her chin so that the light would be dramatic under the hat, but not too much under the chin and in the neck area.

In this shot you can see how the lights, which are very close, create a soft look to the skin while providing a dramatic shadow area where the light does fall off. You can see how fast it falls off on her left side on the cheek into the hair.

The light from the Beauty Dish is metered at f13 and the light from the umbrella is metered at f12. So it is only 1/3 less than the beauty dish... and that is OK with me because the object that light is hitting is the brightly colored hat and I don't want to run any risk of blowing out the highlights. Using the Canon 100MM USM 2.8 lens at f13, I was able to move in very close to her to get the shot cropped any way I wanted. When I was back farther, I had to watch for the beauty dish to make sure that it wouldn't slip into the frame... that is how low it was to the shoot angle. BTW, I use ISO 100 in the studio whenever possible.

Here is a set shot from the shoot:





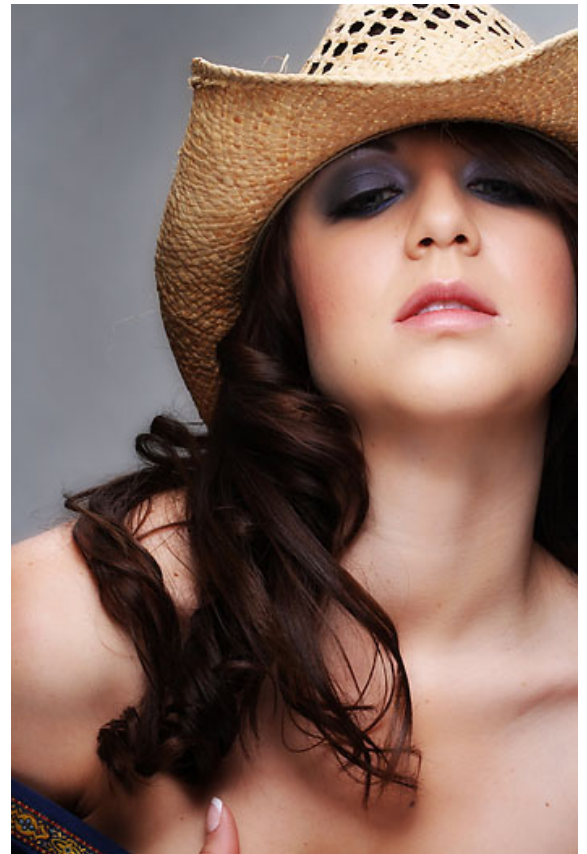


You can see how close the dish is to her and how low the umbrella is. For a shot like this, flare can always be an issue. Interestingly enough, in this shot the beauty dish provided the flag for the hair-light, keeping any flare off the lens... pretty cool, eh! Take a look at the shiny board as well to see how it is as close to the subject as we can get it, just barely out of frame on the 1/2 shots.

#### Speedlight Information:

Two matched speedlights in silver umbrellas could be a place to start. Or two shoot-thru umbrellas in very close. Go with equal distance from the subject and go for something like f8 on both. Keeping the light close will help the drop off. You can always use a DIY beauty dish with an umbrella for the hairlight.

Here is the set from the side. You can see the backlight softbox. I used it to give a little light-to-dark on the background, but it is totally an option that you can choose to do if you want. You can also see that I am not using any fill cards so the image is totally lit from direct light coming from the front.



# SINGLE SMALL STROBE PORTRAIT DIRECTLY INTO THE SUN



This shot of Megan was done for my portrait book. Megan is a Doctor and an accomplished photographer. I wanted a portrait that would be different than some sort of modeling or professional headshot.

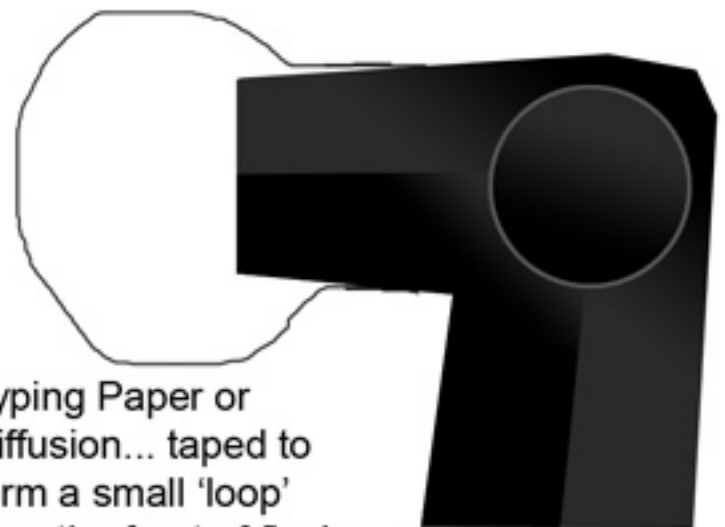
This location is near the studio and off the beaten path. It is along side a road that is little used. We were there nearly 30 minutes and only two cars came by.

The thistly weeds were a great backdrop for her conservative wardrobe and made her natural beauty even more evident. I wanted to try getting some 'flare' shots, but alas they looked like flare destroyed shots instead of flare enhanced shots. After a few dozen of those, I decided to pull out the strobes and get a backlit shot of her with the sun.

I am not fond of the normal "fill-flash" look with the overly lit faces and the deep contrasty shadows. I take a bit more time to make it look my way.



Image without flash firing.



I am using a 430EZ on a stand with a simple setup clamp holder. Over the front of the flash is a small, curved piece of diffusion. You can get that at video stores or 'Grip' rental places. When you tape it on the flash. This simple little thing can give you a bit more size to the flash as well as a bit of soft feel to the light.

I placed the strobe at a height that was slightly over the top of her head. This allowed a natural look to the resulting shadow, letting it fall slightly down. If I had placed the light too low, and it had lit her under the chin, the result would be comical... too high and it has an un-natural feel to it as well. I placed a small bit of diffusion over the front of the flash to give it a little more diffusion.

I knew that the exposure on her back was probably in the neighborhood of f-16 at 1/125 due to the F16 Rule: F-16 at the 1/ISO for exposure in bright daylight. ISO 100 made it f-16 at 1/100 or 1/125. So now I knew that in order to get my exposure to look normal, I would render the exposure at even... f-16 from the sun at 1/125 and the flash close enough to the subject to give me f-16. Just to make sure, I popped a shot without the flash going off and zoomed in a bit to see what effect the light without the flash had on Megan.

As you can see, the test shot actually showed me the sky as being natural, the highlight from the direct sun was manageable and the backlight on the weeds was sharp and clear as well. So all I had to do was add my light and shoot.

### **Tips for Small Strobe Portraiture:**

This shot of Megan was very easy to do because I was prepared. It is important to be ready with the tools you are going to need. The sun is fading fast, the light is changing fast and the model is waiting patiently. Don't be fumbling with finding equipment, changing batteries, looking for triggers, wrestling with stands. Make it a fluid and quickly unfolding experience so you can keep your mind on the shot and engaging the talent instead of wondering where your Pocket Wizard is.

Make sure you have:

Fresh Batteries in the units.

Radio Slaves have fresh batteries as well.

Sync cord is wrapped neatly and ready to use if that is your method.

Stands at the ready.

Weights to hold stands at the ready.

Meter out and around your neck for quick access.

Any fill cards and such that you may need should be ready to grab and use quickly

I knew that the light I was providing would light her up as well as the weeds so I placed the stand and the strobe where I knew f-16 would be at 1/4 power and did my test shots. I liked the shot, and with only a minor correction in the placement of the strobe (I moved it in about a foot), started shooting. I needed to bring it in a little due to the nature of her dark coat and wardrobe.

### **POST PROCESSING:**

I corrected about 1/3 over in RAW, and brought the image into Photoshop. There I cleaned up skin with minor retouching, added a little openness to the dark jacket and increased saturation of the color of the weeds. The sky rendered well, but it needed a bit more punch so I darkened the blue and added a bit of contrast to the clouds.



# CREATING A SHINY LOOK



The thing about the corset was the glossy, shiny look. I wanted that shine to be smooth and liquid, a wide and smooth highlight that would set off the face of the model and the textures of the rest of the image.

I wanted a dramatic light on the face however, so using a large softbox was not the answer as that would mean that the face would be lit with that large, wide source as well.

I chose a small softbox for slightly over her head, and brought it in very close. This light gave me the look on the face that I wanted. Dramatic with shadow and definition. What I needed was some more fill to bring the contrast level down a bit.

## Shooting a Shiny Surface: Diagram A

A large V-card on camera left and a flat panel on camera right did the job nicely. But the corset was still too dark as the angle of the shot meant there was nothing for the vinyl to reflect.

Shooting something like this isn't about pouring light on , it is about creating something for the shiny material to reflect. I added a fill card at an angle to be lit from the main light and placed it in very close to Jillian. That fill card is what is being reflected in the vinyl. It gives the liquid look to the smooth, shiny surface.

This was fine, but in the test shots there was something missing. I needed to give the body a little snap, some edge to it to make it stand out a bit more from the background instead of blending in.



## Shooting a Shiny Surface: Diagram B

Bringing in a speedlight at a very low power was exactly the answer. I focused the light past Jillian and bounced it into the V-card on camera left. The little wink of light gave me a very subtle edge light to the image. That made the shiny, smooth corset even more interesting as it added a 'hard' edge to other parts of the shot.

# SINGLE UMBRELLA HEADSHOT AND WHITE BACKGROUND.

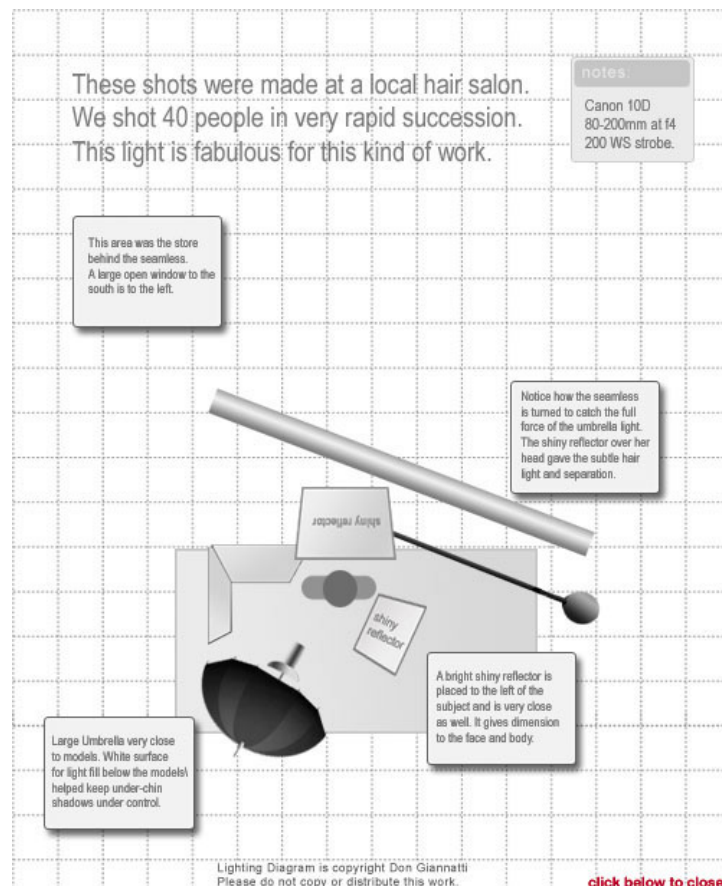


Asked to shoot 40 non-models at an upscale salon was quite a challenge. I needed a light that would serve many different faces and body types. I would literally have only a few minutes with each and they would be nervous so working the light in many different ways was out of the question. I had to make the light work with each with minimum alteration.

The single umbrella has always done well for me in these situations. I use a big 54" white umbrella with black backing to mitigate spill. In this one umbrella I used a 200 WS strobe so I could get a very large aperture. Limited depth-of-field is the look I was going for, so the images would have a more 'immediate' or casual look.

The seamless was angled toward the light to make sure I got as much as I could without fall-off. The boom held a bright shiny card angled to bounce light down on the models and there was a small, white reflector angled slightly up at the model on her left. It and the umbrella were very close for maximum softness. Look into her eyes and you will see both.

I also placed a 4x8 sheet of white board on the ground to work on. This kept the dark carpet from adding unwanted shadows under the chin, nose and eyes. See the diagram below.





# CREATING A MOOD WITH FLASH AND PHOTOSHOP



Sometimes you find a location or a situation that you just know that you can do more with by creating the world the way you want it. In this case, the alley was OK, but it didn't get me excited. I saw the shot in my mind with the post process in place. In other words, the initial photograph was to be used as the material for a Photoshop piece. So with the final image fixed in my head I started to create the image.

First up was the wardrobe. The striking blue dress was a must, but I wanted to keep the color of the rest of the shot muted. To do that I knew I would have to make her stand out a bit more than just flash or bounced light. I needed a separation light... one that seemed to be out of place with the surroundings, and yet subtle enough that it didn't jump off the page screaming 'effect'.

Somer was in the shade, and there was a little fill wrap-around from the front, but not enough to make a difference. This meant I would have to provide the light for Somer. For the main light I used a small soft-box on a boom that was held just above her and aimed just a little down. I knew that would give a nice, soft light and a dramatic drop off as the light traveled down her body. This would help give the shot some dynamics and not let it look contrived or 'pasted in'.

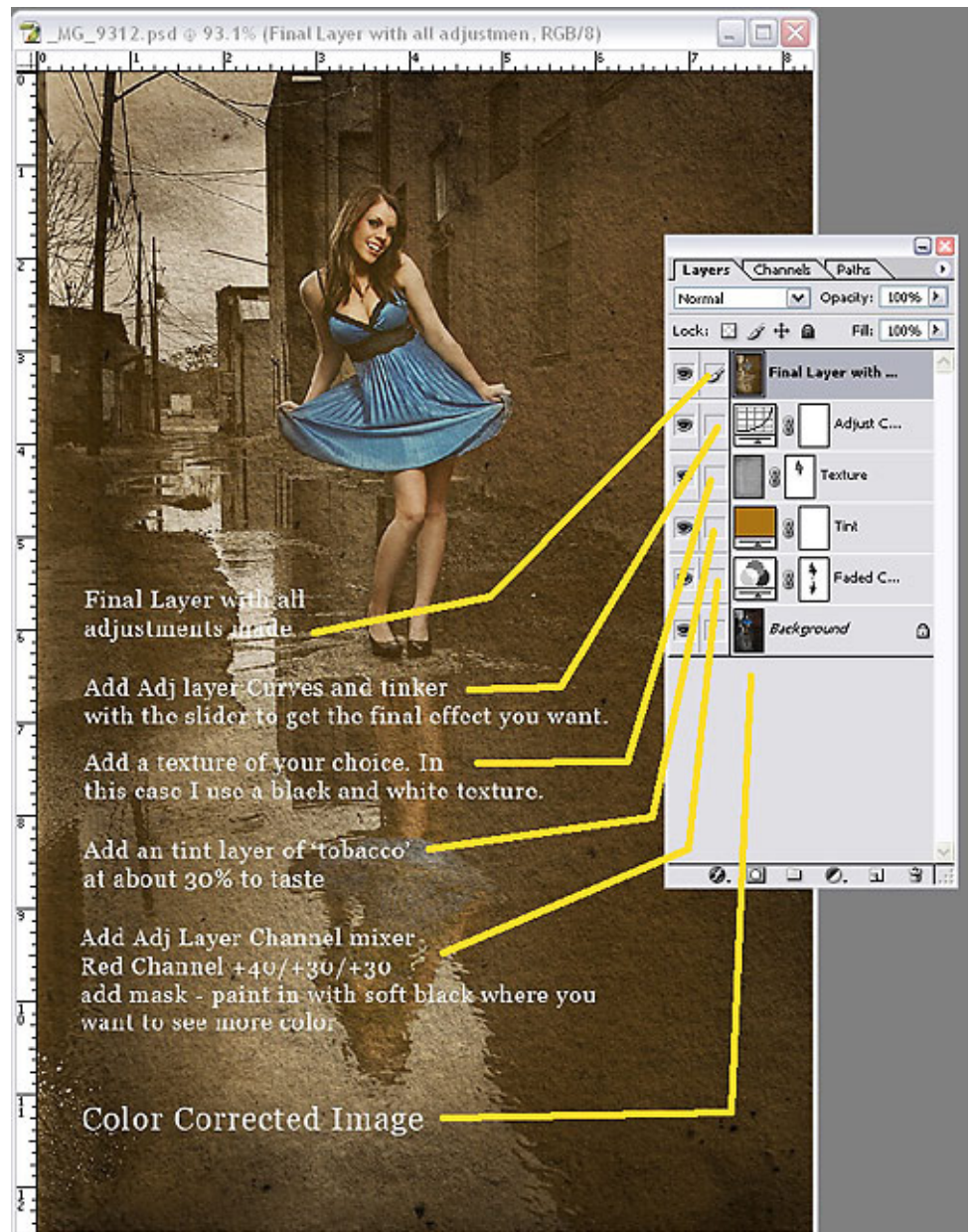
To create the some separation, and add a bit of drama, I placed a strobe with a bare head to the rear of the model and pointed back toward her to create a side/back light. I dialed the power down to make sure the exposure would only be a wink compared to the main light. Since it was coming from the back, it would catch the edge of her arms and legs and actually appear brighter.

The other thing that was essential was the reflection of Somer in the water in front. It was a subtle thing and yet it seemed so powerful as a compositional element. I knew the light on Somer would make her bright enough to be seen in the reflection.



In Photoshop I used some high band filters to give it an 'edgy look' then masked out the background and muted it. I added some noise and a texture to give it character. There are lots of actions that can be used, and you can use them instead of doing the manual work, but it is rather easy, if you take your time and build it in one layer at a time.

In the example, the color correction and highpass work has been done and moved to a flattened base layer. You can prepare that image to your own taste. Included in the screenshot are the Photoshop layers and how/why they were chosen





## ONE LIGHT SETUP WITH TWO VERSIONS OF THE LIGHT



Yesterday I shot Jordan for her mom's Irish Step Dancing Wig catalog. Today we got together for some pics just for her. This was the first time she had shot without a wig on... so it was a lot of fun. I have known Jordan since she was about 9, so it was also fun to shoot her without a wig on.

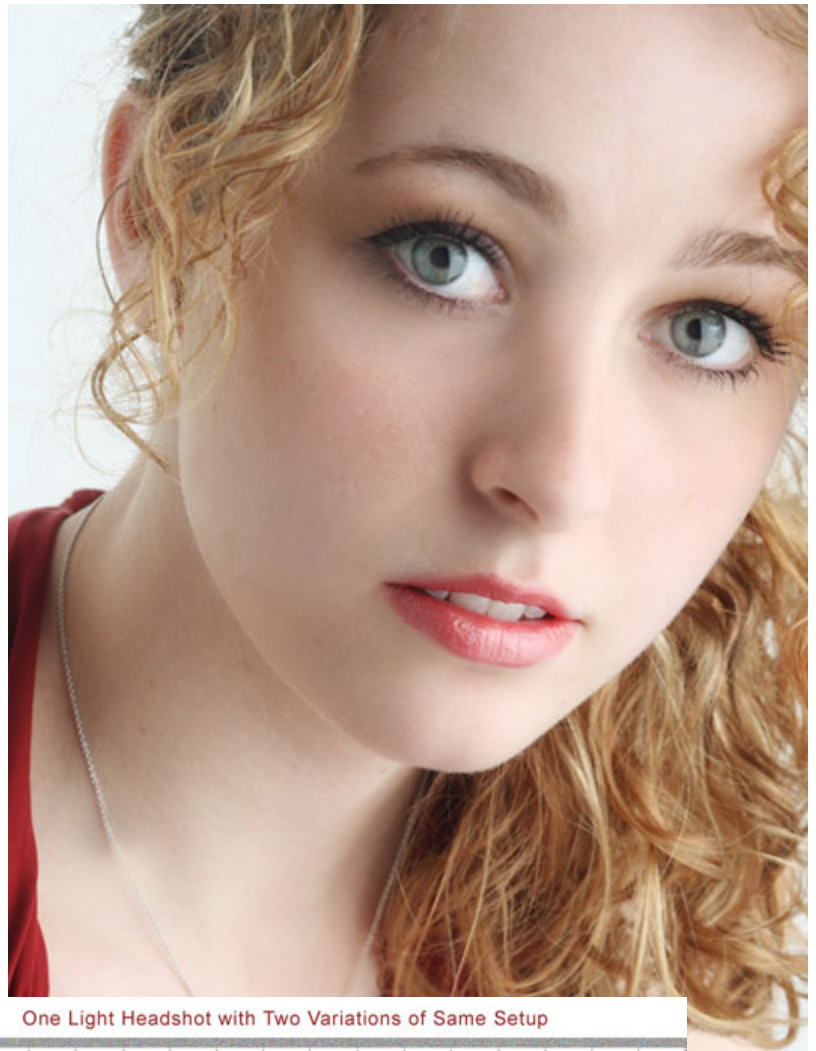
I used a staple of lighting that I use on head shots: One large soft box and lots of fill cards. I control the contrast with V-Cards or fill cards and change up the background as I like.

I added a shiny panel to the area below her and angled to catch some of the light from the softbox. This little 'kicker' light adds a nice snap to the skin and under chin area. The softbox is to the left of camera and the V-Card fill is to camera right. I have a large foam core panel behind her and in pretty close for the background. This is a shot from that setup.

Here is a setup shot. This shot shows the dark background. I had removed the background foam core so we could do some dark background shots.

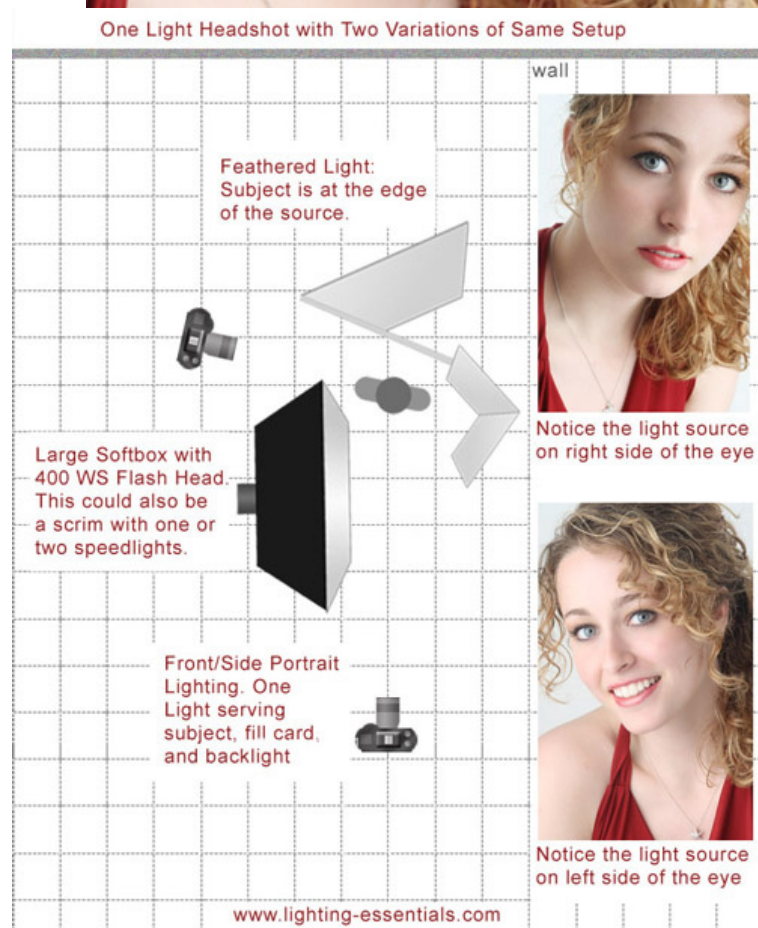


As I was adding the white background card I noticed how gorgeous the light was as she turned to look at me. I quickly grabbed the camera and shot from that angle... literally along the line of the background card. Since she was at the rear of the softbox, when she turned to me the light from the softbox was actually going by her and she was lit by the edge, or 'feather' of the softbox. The light wrapped on all the white cards and added that subtle little backlight on the chin and neck. I love this light!



One Light Headshot with Two Variations of Same Setup

Here is a lighting diagram for this shoot. You can see the two camera angles with the associated images. Try this light sometime. And especially try the feathering of the light... working on the edge of the light instead of in the light. You can discover some wonderful looks.





# SUBTRACTIVE LIGHTING: CREATING DRAMA WITH CONTRAST



In this photograph we wanted a very deep shadow to create more mystery around the already mysterious image. The model with luscious lips emerging from behind the mask. In my mind, I wanted her to be emerging from the darkness as well. The mask is very glossy, so I knew a large, liquid highlight was called for so that the curves of the mask and her face would be smooth and soft.

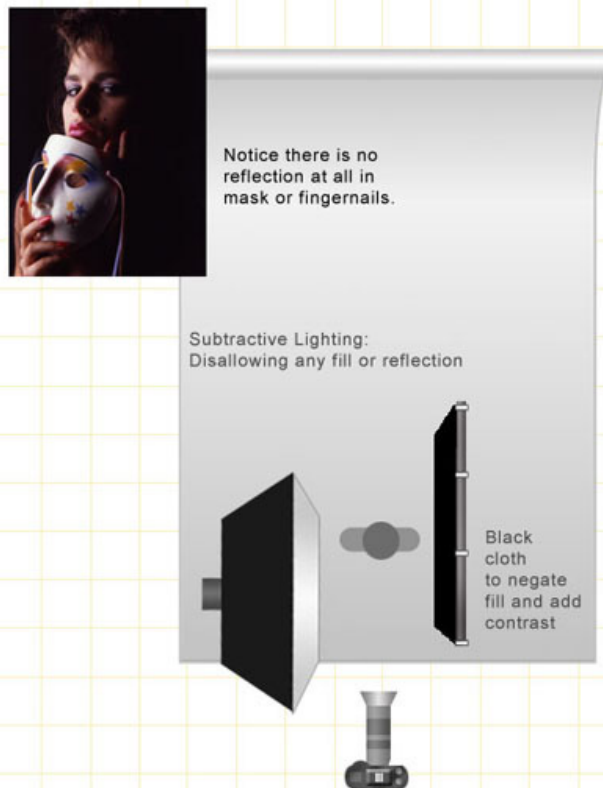
Using a large softbox very close to the subject provided a large reflection of the source on the mask, her fingernails and her skin. This light, quite powerful, also provided some fill on the shadow side of her face because it simply lit up the wall. Even though the wall was quite a distance from her, the fact that her skin reflected the light on the wall was problematic. It also provided a nice kick of reflection on the mask... one that I didn't want.

To mitigate the reflection and increase the contrast I hung a 6'x6' black cloth just to the right of the image and in as close as possible. This black cloth provided two qualities: it blocked the light from hitting the wall, and more importantly, it gave the skin and the mask something dark to reflect.

I essentially 'subtracted' the light from the shadow side of the image. Please note that there is no Photoshop on this image to darken or 'burn' that area in. The transparency is perfectly black and the contrast is as you see in the image.

You will notice that just on the edge of the mask as it disappears into the darkness, there is a little edge light going on. That is caused by the ribbon catching the light and creating a little fill of its own. I thought it was very subtle and added to the image by providing a point of diminution... where the final vestiges of the mask and the subject go into total shadow. Sometimes little things can really make the shot come alive. Look for them in your shots.

(I shot this on a 4x5 view camera, but you can do the same thing with any camera setup.)



This shot is another subtractive lighting still life. It was shot for a client who wanted the feeling of strength for their software tools. The theme was bodybuilding and they came up with the idea of a body builder with light coming in from the side. Yeah. Never seen that before. I pushed for a still life and they said go ahead and shoot it cause they could use it for something else if they didn't use it for the brochure cover.

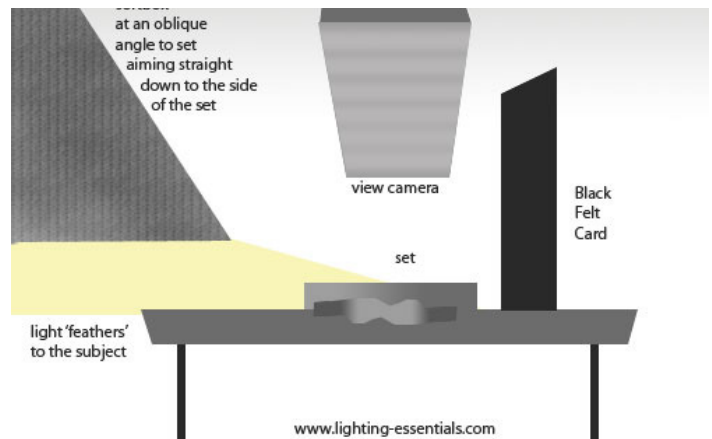
The light in this case is quite different. I will explain and add a diagram to show how different it is. I call it edge light or feathered light. The camera is focused down on the still life which is an old rusted weight, some weight lifting gloves and chalk that they use for working with the iron. All is on a 4x4 sheet of 'stone' slate. The camera in this case is a Deardorff 8x10 with a 375MM lens. Shot at f32 I would have loved another stop, but this was optimal for what we could do.

You can see where the dark shadows play at the right side of everything. Deep and mysterious, they help create the drama. It also creates a nice light for revealing texture. Whether it is the leather or the slate background, the textures make the shot richer and more interesting. Notice the white chalk. I deliberately placed it on the far side from the light so that it wouldn't be too bright or lose texture. The addition of the black subtractive card increased the contrast. Without the subtractive, there was nearly no texture in that lump of chalk.

When I delivered the shot, I made a presentation holder with the 8x10 transparency mounted in it. (I always shoot two sets of transparencies or more on shots like this.) The client went nuts. They ended up making some really cool large wall graphics and I shot 3 more similar still life for them. They tripled the shoot fee and it was a nice job. Oh, and I didn't have to shoot some bodybuilder dude with the side light.

#### Recommended:

I keep a 4x4ft square of black cloth with me in my kit. It comes in handy on many shoots where there is a little glare to be knocked down, or I need to darken an area or do a little subtractive lighting. It packs very small, and can be invaluable... oh, and it is big enough to do a headshot against black on location if you need it. And a little bit of speedlight and ambient light mixed against a dark background can be very dramatic.





# MANIPULATING NATURAL LIGHT WITH SIMPLE TOOLS

There are times when the natural light is simply so gorgeous you have to shoot it. And there are times when the natural light is very nice, but something can be done to make it a bit more, well, perfect.

We are going to look at 4 examples of using modifiers to create an image where we are using the natural light as our main source, but add a little something with our modifiers. Simple shots with simple solutions.

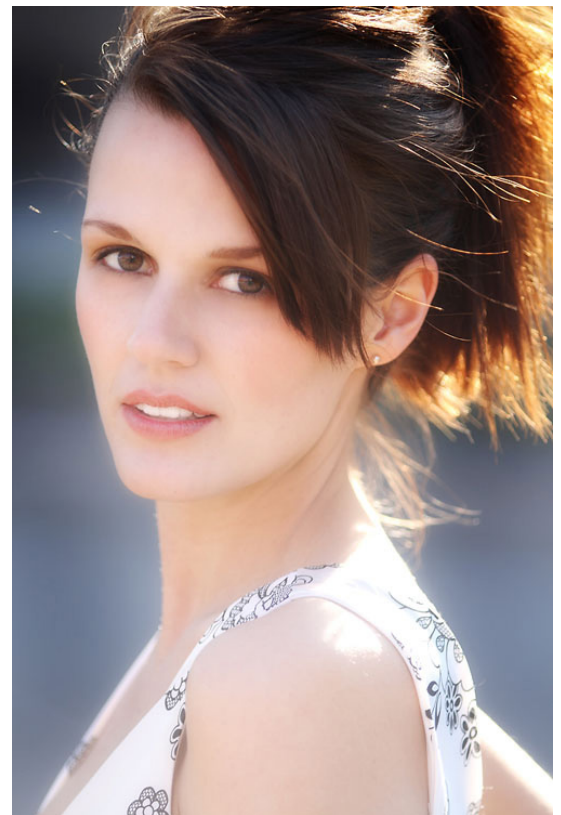


Our first shot is Kymmy at the Detroit workshop.

We found this cool entryway facing south with the sun still pretty high in the sky. Placing Kymmy just under the eaves put her into the shade with some wonderful light giving a soft, wrapped look to her. It made her skin nearly glow and gave some nice modeling to her shape.

However, we saw that the interior of the doorway behind her was way too dark. It made her stand out against the black background with an un-natural look to it. We added a speedlight in the corner on a ledge and aimed it at the back of the entryway. It was zoomed out to wide angle coverage and we fired it with a wireless trigger. The power was very low and it only opened up the shadowy area. I didn't want a 'blast' of backlight or highlights on the painted wood, just a little bit of light to fill in the darkness and make the image look more natural.

Next we have Stacia standing with the light coming behind her. She is mostly lit by the large white building behind me, but a wink of fill-flash was all we needed to open up her eyes and add some light to her skin. Since the speedlight was set to only add 1/3 stop over the ambient natural light, no shadows result, nor is it looking like a harshly lit 'Fill Flash' image. Gently using the flash at minimal power can make wonderful little tweaks to the already lovely natural light.



Here we have Briana on the Freeway. I am not going to go into the story that this image led to, but suffice it to say that it was a tense moment with us and a cop who had been lied to by a 'concerned citizen' with a filthy mind. Let's talk light though.

The point of this shot was to make Briana look like a natural part of the landscape, not a 'hero' or somehow to light her with artificiality. I took the ambient reading and set the flash to match that. That is all you need to do on shots like this. Just set the flash to match the soft overall light, and when it flashes it only affects the darker and shadow areas of the image, opening them ever so slightly to give better skin tones. You can see the reflection of the light on the pole, as there was a resulting natural specular, but it is nearly un-noticed at all on Briana and the surroundings.



Lastly we have Malisha in Sunnyvale at the workshop. I was loving the way the wind was whipping her hair around and giving it that soft, sexy look. She was standing under an awning and being lit by the sky and the buildings behind me. That's it. I loved the fact that her makeup and coloring matched the color behind her, so I had one of the workshop attendees use the Gold reflector to shine a bit on the background. This gave the image a gradient on the background, making Malisha pop a bit more, and it also added some depth to the image, taking out the flat look that open shade can have.



I often use these shiny reflectors (gold and silver) to bounce light into the backgrounds that are too dark and boring. They can be so much easier than setting up a flash although sometimes you simply have to use a flash to get what you want. I think these things are one of the best lighting buys you can make. I use them all the time.

When you are setting up a shot and it looks like natural light may be the way to go, think about whether or not adding a little modification could make the shot pop even more without even being noticed. Whether it is to make the background more interesting, or to open up the eyes, add sheen to the skin or make the soft overcast ambient have bit more punch, a little modification could make the difference.



## NATURAL LIGHT HEADSHOTS: KEEPING IT SIMPLE



In Mexico we had wonderful white casitas to stay in courtesy of the Las Palmas Resort. They provided some remarkable shooting areas as well as natural light bouncing off all the white walls and railings.

I personally love natural light for all kinds of portraiture, but especially for headshots. The way the ambient light works the modeling of the features of the subject is something I especially like.

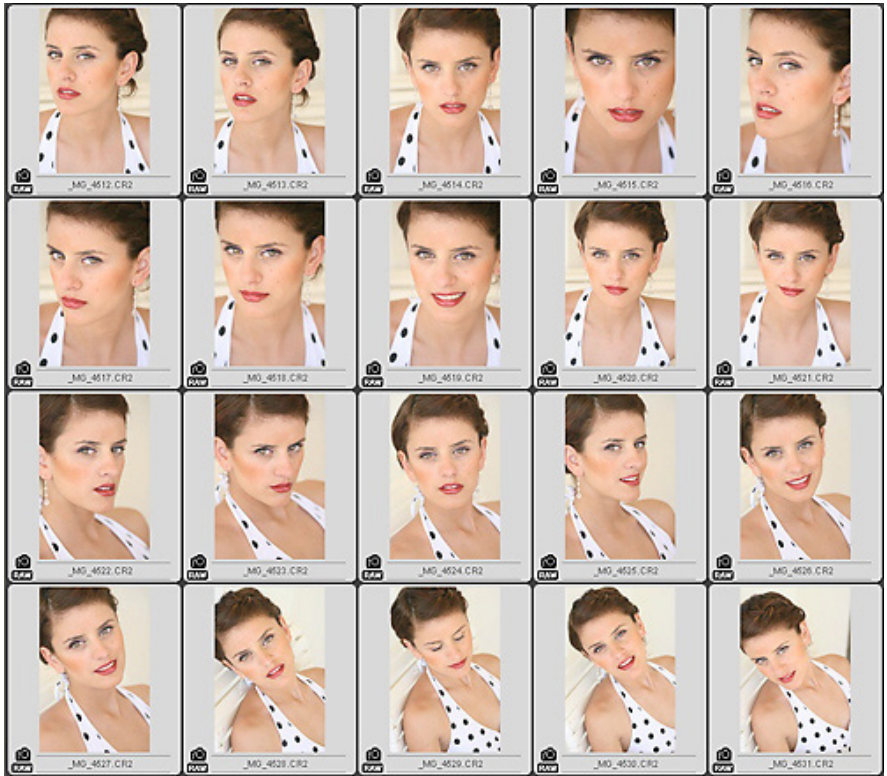
Our first image is one of Priscilla in the afternoon sun. We are on a patio and the sun is still a little high in the sky, but behind her. The area we are on has a wall of white over my right shoulder. I exposed for her face, letting the background go bright. I like the natural look of it as well as the feeling of light. I was using a long lens with 2.8 so the DOF is narrow. You can see how the light models her features against the bright sky.

In the next shot of Jazmin, we have her in the shade of the bright wall. The ambient is everywhere and she is being lit by the lightly overcast white sky. The light seems to come from everywhere and her eyes are so bright. In her eyes you see the sky and the horizon as the catch-light. No reflector was used in this or any shots on this page.



Below is a contact sheet of Jazmin. You can see that no matter how she turns her face, the light is soft and even all around. If you had seen her in person it would have looked like she was dark in the shade, but once you isolate the subject and expose for the ambient light on her face, the whole scene takes on a different look.

This shot of Priscilla on the balcony is more of an environmental portrait. We see a lot of the surroundings and it certainly is not as tight as the shot above of Jazmin. I converted it to B&W because of the subtle tones. And I like B&W. You can tell by the angle of the light on her shoulders that the sun is still quite high. This poured a lot of light across the white floor in front of her as well as the wall behind me. As usual with natural light shots, I exposed for the face (ambient) light, letting the highlight be whatever it is... even if it is blown out.



The next shot of Jazmin is a fashion shot. I simply kept the sunlight to her back and let the natural light of the surroundings set the exposure. The sun was down a bit from the previous shot, so it is a little less on her shoulders than it was on Priscilla. Again, the exposure is taken at her face in the ambient light instead of the direct sunlight. Then the shot is exposed for the ambient, letting the backlight go bright.

In these shots we did not use a reflector or any kind of light modification. I simply used the natural, ambient and direct light to make the image. While it is certainly fun to work with all kinds of lighting equipment, it is also equally fun to use just your wits and the light that is existing at the scene.



## MAKE YOUR OWN REALITY TO ADD DRAMA



There are times when the light you have doesn't match the light you want. The drama of moody skies are rendered useless if they are overexposed and the muddy, dark skin tones of heavily overcast days can make the most competent Photoshop Guru moan in agony.

What to do? Think about underexposing the surroundings to bring the drama back to the image. But that doesn't mean underexposing the subject. We can use our small flashes to create a light that features our subject and darkens the surroundings. This somewhat muted, eery look we call "beating the sun." And we did this shot with only two small strobes and a boom. And a willing and beautiful model helped.

When we got to the location I was struck that the sun, even though behind some rather dark and moody clouds, was shining right down the alley towards us. This caused a wonderful reflection on the water as it trickled down through the buildings. All in all, somewhat of an unusual scene.

To add to the unusual look, we put Haley into a party dress. One that was totally incongruous to the scene and the light we were going to create. This unusual wardrobe selection helps to make the shot a little more 'over the top' than say, shorts and a t-shirt would.

Gear for this shot:

Camera and Wide Angle (20-35mm L Canon)

Two Stands

One Boom (human boom optional, but very nice)

Two speedlights (I am using an SB 800 and a 430EX)

One Small softbox for the main light

Wireless triggers

John Sartin (a shooter who was assisting me on this shot), took one stand mounted speedlight down the alley and pointed it back toward Haley. This gave her a very slight rim light and added separation between her and the scene. We placed it low to get plenty of rim light on her legs as they would be a little darker than her body.

As we used a speedlight in a small softbox for main light, I knew that it would not cover her entirely at the distance we were using. That meant that the light would fall off as it went down her body to her legs. Adding the rim light to the legs gave them depth and also separation. Two battery operated speedlights were all that was needed to get the shot.

**SUN behind clouds**

This flash is aimed at her legs to provide a tiny bit of edge to them. This will enhance the feeling of reflected light.

Keeping the softbox close makes a nice soft light with a nice shaping quality.

By not using fill, the drop off is rather dramatic as you can see in the shadow side of her face. I kept the main light on her face and the second light on her legs for separation.

When I saw the alley I knew I had to make a shot there. The sun was coming straight down the alley and creating this nice little reflection in the water. The clouds were amazing and so dramatic.

The colors of the buildings were very muted, but I further muted them in post-processing.

I loved this sort of retro looking dress that Hayley had. It has that face thing going on and the colors were muted as well. I knew that I wanted to use that mane of red hair to make the color statement of the image.

Don Giannatti

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# GENTLE STROBE FOR NATURAL FILL

Getting really nice, soft light on location can be a challenge. Too often photographers use their naked flashes for fill and end up with something more harsh than they expected. Using a flash to fill in ambient light can be far more subtle and rewarding.

For this shot of my daughter, I used a large white umbrella and a 430EZ flash with remote triggers. To the right side of her I used a bright fill card. Let's examine how easy it is to get this clean, non flash look.  
(Our March Review is [here](#).)

I looked for a place where the sunlight was coming through the large park trees and giving me some dappled areas for Alissa to sit in. This keeps her out of the bright sunny areas which can cause too much fill coming up from the ground. Essentially she is in the shade with a little bit of sun on her shoulders and neck. This is a comfortable area for your model to sit in as well.

I did a quick meter of the sunlight falling on her head at 1/100 of a second. I choose that as a starting point whenever there is sunlight. My ISO is normally set to 100 as well. 1/100 also allows my flash to sync and I can go up a stop easily to 1/200 if I need to.

The meter gave me f5.6. I wanted the light to be a bit more 'poppy' so I settled on f5 (a 1/3 stop overexposure of the backlight) and got my flash ready.

I have pre-measured my flash and umbrella combination and knew that at 3 feet it would give me f5.6 at 1/8 power at ISO 100. I made sure it was zoomed to '24mm' which gives the widest coverage of the umbrella, and set the flash at 3 feet. Since I was shooting at f5, I simply moved it back 6 inches and shot a test shot. Perfect. Pre-measuring your light can be quite a time saver. I would use string or cord for a few months, eventually you will become an expert at gaging the distance.

Below you can see a side by side comparison of the top of the head. Note that they are practically the same. The exposure for the ambient is not affected by the strobe. I am only filling the shadow areas with light to bring the face up to exposure with the ambient.



ISO 100, 1/100 at f-5

Shot at ambient with no flash or fill



I generally take a shot or two without the flash to make sure that the ambient and direct backlight are what I want to begin with. Here is a shot without the flash or fill card:

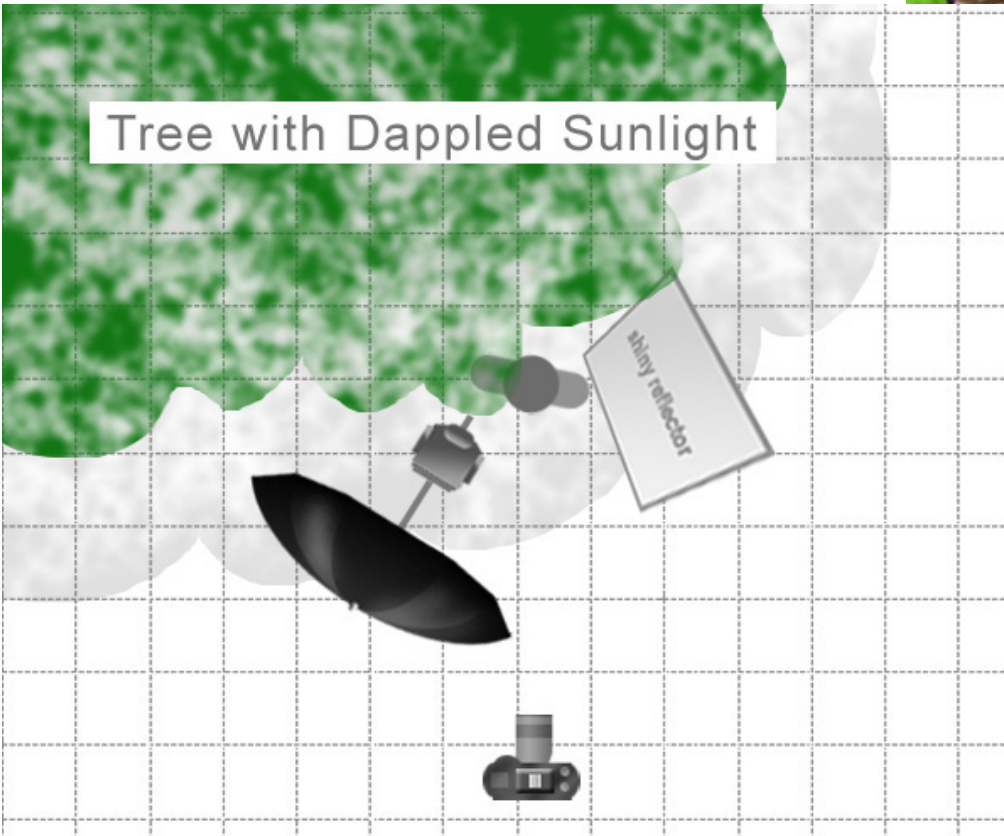
Here is the shot with the strobe in the umbrella and the fill card in close on the camera right side. You can see the umbrella and fill card in the eyes. I make sure that the eyes have a nice look to them by bringing in the sources and 'opening' the eyes instead of distant pin-points of source light.

ISO 100, 1/100 at f-5

Shot at ambient with flash and fill



## Tree with Dappled Sunlight



I keep a little bit of light on the hair and shoulders.

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I have created a to scale setup diagram. You can see that the flash is close to 3 feet away. It is also tipped very slightly to fill the top of the head as well as the face. Slightly being the operative word here.



# USING LIGHTING AND POSING TO CREATE THE EFFECT YOU WANT

Using light to advantage means you must know what you want to light. What do you want the light to say? What do you want the image to say? If it is simply to make a nice shot of someone, that may be all that's needed. It doesn't have to be complicated.

Sometimes we want to say something more in a picture. Maybe as an outright theme, or simply something that the photographer and model can agree on for a starting point in the creation of the image. A word, or a feeling... maybe a shared movie experience or book that is known to both, can be the catalyst for the image. That can also determine the lighting that you choose and how you decide to implement it.

Our first image shows how Briana worked a pose that we wanted to say "hot" and somewhat lonely. Her body language is fluid and the head back, hand to her forehead communicates a feeling of 'heat' to the image. She seems as if she is resigned to the hotness of the day. Her full 'S' curve says languid and not tense or ready for flight. It is a relaxed and easy pose.

The body language of the model is as important as the smile or expression. Every bit of the images mood comes from light, shadow and expression. Briana worked this pose very well to get all of it going together. By the way, it wasn't all that hot that day, but it was a bit warm.

Posing note: Look at how she uses her hands here. Fingers are slightly curled and delicate in presentation. The hand on the head is turned up as though pushing her hair back, but the slightly closed fingers keep us from seeing the inside of her hand. Leaning way back on the wall and keeping her legs in front of her gives a sultry, vixen look to the image.

I used daylight and strobe to create a sense of tension in the lighting. By letting the ambient provide some nice fill I kept the shot from looking 'strobed' and artificial. The main light is a speedlight with a small diffusion grid on it. It is coming from camera left and is very close to the axis of the camera. This mitigates the shadows that would have been thrown if the light were more oblique to the model. I do this to simulate the sun... a light source the viewer automatically knows is warm. The small light source creates a very defined shadow which is exactly what the sun would do. We are building 'hot' into the lighting.

A second light was placed far to camera left and is to the side of Briana. That light is providing a slight rim light and helps separate her from the background. It also lends itself to the feeling of hot and a warm day. Maybe it is the reflection off a building or simply the feeling that light is coming from everywhere. The color of the set was chosen for its warmth as well, and the combination make the image have a little more to it than a simple shot of a cute girl.





## USING LIGHTING AND POSING TO CREATE THE EFFECT YOU WANT (CONT)

Below are two additional images from that shoot. As you can see, Briana effectively moves in the space provided, keeping the face sultry and the body language fluid and sexy. The pose is very curvy with a wide “S” curve keeping the eyes moving. There isn’t a feeling of ‘posing’ to the images, they are more of a natural look caught by the photographer. This is one of the things that I want in my style... the feeling of ‘serendipity’ over ‘setup’. Keeping your model informed of the intention of the image helps her to focus on the mood and essential ‘story’ that has to be conveyed.

In these shots I tightened up the lighting for a more spotlight approach. I brought the main light in closer but moved it more to the left to drive the shadows from that angle, and dialed the shutter speed up to eliminate too much of the ambient light. I am always trying things when I am shooting and these ended up looking pretty cool so I kept shooting the setup. The second light is again to far camera left and is ‘raking’ across Briana to provide a less ‘flat’ look that may have been created by a single strobe.

Adding a rim or separation light is a very effective tool to fight the ‘flash’ look. By keeping the main light coming directly at her against the wall and pushing the shadows behind her, it gives a feeling of a hot light streaming on to her, not of a flash that would have been directly on camera. The second light helps mitigate the shadows from the more oblique light. Again, this hard light in the location setting seems to say sunlight... but with a small twist.





Our next set of images show Briana in an environment of structure and light. The images are made with natural light and the light is bouncing all around the little alcove area.

Briana and I liked the stone pillar things so she decided to use them for her posing. The images below are but a few of the many I took (all are on her posing DVD so you can see how she worked with them), and show how a little change in the pose can change the shot dramatically.

Sunlight is streaming through the area here, but it isn't ordinary sunlight. It is actually a blast reflection from a building across the courtyard. This gave the light some texture and some interesting built in shadow like properties... from the window crossbeams in the reflection. I set the camera angle to get some side light and then had Bri play with the light as it entered the alcove area where she was.

The sunglasses help the shot and also helps her from being overwhelmed by the blinding light. She uses the pillar to stand against, lean against, push away from and more. These two images show how much the change can mean to the 'story' of the image.

I kept the camera in the same zoom and position for most of these images as I loved the angles around her. Their straight uniformity make her curves and posing looseness more dramatic and in stark contrast. I had thought about adding a second light to her hair from behind, but realized that would have limited her ability to move in that space and decided to go with the full natural look.

By staying with the natural light, the overall feeling of the shot is one of heat and interesting light. Sometimes you have everything at your fingertips already and don't have to add any additional light to the image. I think the light and the posing and the wardrobe all give a feeling of hot and a summer like look that is real. Briana's playful posing with the pillar and her reaction to the light itself makes the shot even more real.



## USING LIGHTING AND POSING TO CREATE THE EFFECT YOU WANT (CONT)

This shot shows how Bri used the pillar, the light and the pose to make the shot come alive. Having your model react and respond to the environment, and that includes the light, can make the shot have more impact. It is always a good thing to let the model know what you are trying to achieve and how the light will work with her and the poses.



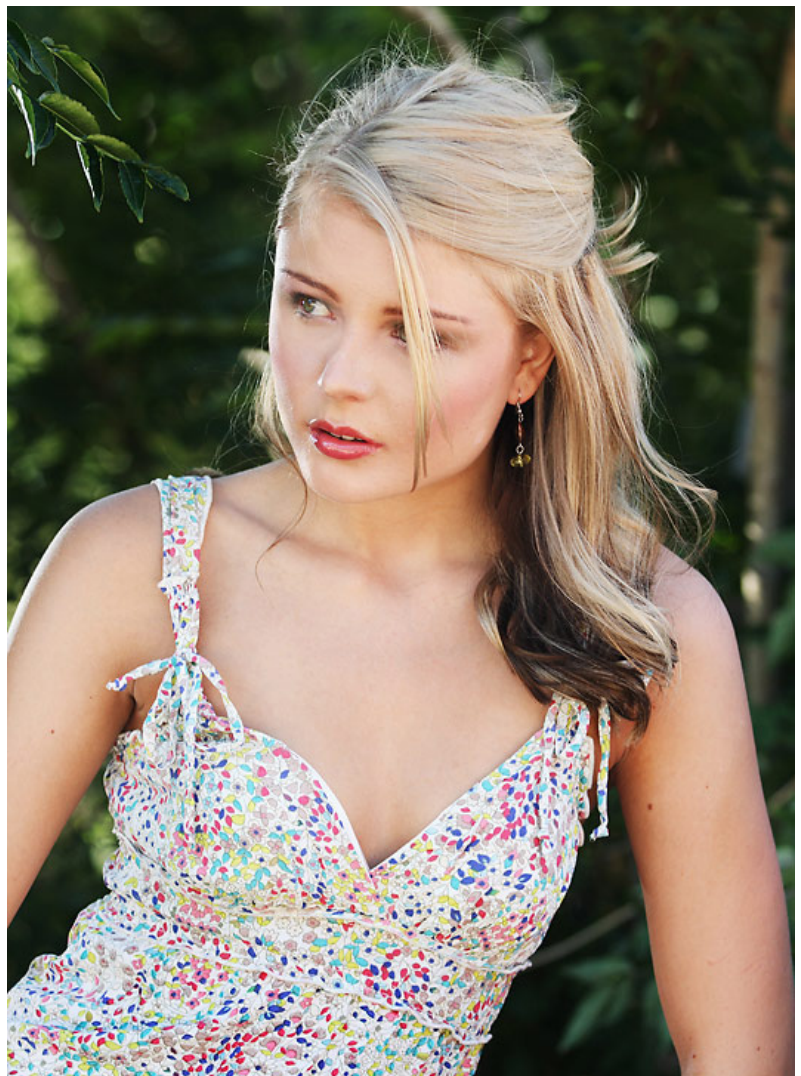
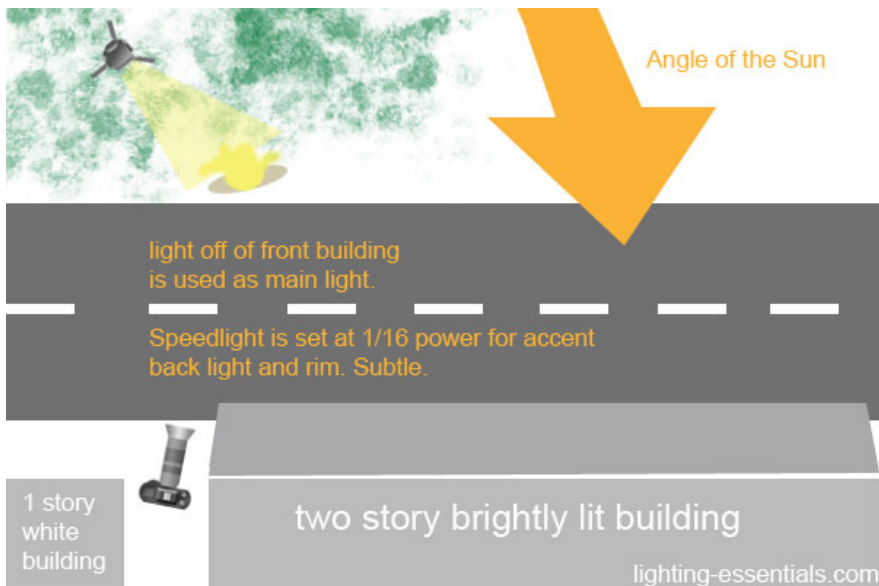
# DECONSTRUCTING A PORTRAIT ON LOCATION

Miami is in the mountains east of Phoenix and on these fall days it runs about 10-12 degrees cooler. I had been wanting to do a roadtrip to get back to shooting more natural light work. Megan accompanied me and she shot with a lot of strobes while I did similar images with either natural light or strobe accent. It was a ton of fun.

Christina is across the street from me and I am shooting on a long lens (80-200MM 2.8L) and I am shooting wide open to limit the depth of field. The light is bouncing all over the street at this point and the sun is slightly behind her in position. She is in a little glade of trees and I wanted that color and the 'dappled' look to the field behind her.

The strobe is placed well behind her and dialed way down to 1/32 I believe (it was Megan's SB back there) and I remember we were shooting with very little strobe power. You can see from this image that it added just a little wink of highlight and rim lighting to make her stand out. I really like using a little light to separate the subject and this is a good example. We can make the light look like it is a little bit of sunlight at the back if we make sure the angle of the light is the same, or nearly the same, as the angle of the sun that is in the background. Changing that angle can still produce a cool shot, but it may not look like the sun because of the cross shadows.

Here is a diagram.



You can see how simple it is to do clean shots like this, so take a subject, a single strobe and a camera and look for some nice areas that have some natural bounce light coming into a darker area. Add the strobe light gently so as to make the image a subtle and natural portrait.





# BLENDING A SMALL STROBE AND DRAMATIC AMBIENT LIGHT



## Knowing Light

The line from the camera to the subject is called the axis. It is one third of the triangle caused by the placement of the light, the subject and the camera. The wider that triangle, the more shadow is caused from the light across the subject. Keeping the light on axis of the camera can create less angular shadows. Keeping it on axis of the subject can create less angular shadows as well, especially the nose and chin area. You will have to make the determination on how that works for you as you are shooting.

First up is Megan in Seattle. I had her sitting on a small table near the water in Pike Market. The sun was about an hour from sunset so it is kind of low on the horizon, but not a 'setting sun' by any means.

For this shot I used a speedlight in close and at lower power for faster recycle. It also creates a kind of spotlight look that I like a lot as the proximity of the flash and the subject are so close that the light doesn't have the distance to 'spread' and cover more subject.

In this contact sheet you can see how keeping the light in context with the angle of her face mitigates the shadows that may be caused if the light remained stationary.

Notice the small shadow on her nose and the direction of the shadow under her chin. This is a direct affect of the position of the strobe. In this case, I was making sure the angle of the light and her face were as close to 'axis' as possible... even moving the light as she moved to maintain that angle. The strobe is slightly off to the camera right by a few inches and we still get that shadow. (It doesn't bother me, and the 'hot' effect is exactly what I wanted... a dramatic hard light.

If the light had been stationary to any angle, the shadows would have grown and diminished as she moved her head. I kept the light right into her face from a very slight angle wherever she moved. This mitigated long nose shadows and chin shadows that could have been distracting.



You can see how the light follows the axis of the face, not letting the light get too far sideways of her face and causing large side shadows to be cast. There are shadows of course, but they are mitigated by the direction of the light staying right on angle.

In this case, I actually followed her movements with my flash in my hand. You can have an assistant do the same thing... watching the talent closely.



Using the natural light as ambient fill, I wanted the speedlight to seem like an un-natural light source... a shining beam of light that was totally at odds with the surroundings. The sun is high overhead, and slightly... very slightly behind Trikitita to the camera left of her. You can see the sun causing a hot spot on her elbow on the left shot, on the right shot you can see how it is lighting up the old fort walls around her. The light is without shape at noon, simply falling straight down on the landscape.

Using a single speedlight, I went from the opposite side of the sun and kept the axis of the light straight into her face. This was an effort to keep the face and dress well lit and not cause any more shadows than necessary on her face, but allow the light to shape and augment the dress' shape and design.

Keeping it to one added source I allowed the light to 'fall off' as it went down her dress. This light to dark gradation adds some interest to the image as well. It plays well off of the underexposed, rather flat, ambient light.

For this shot I underexposed the background 1.5 stops. The ambient exposure was f16 at 1/125 so I moved the aperture to f-22 (1 stop darker than the metered light) and moved my shutter speed to 1/200 (2/3 less exposure from ambient – close enough for me to call it 1/2). Then I moved my flash into the range to give me f-22. In this case it was about 6 feet from her at 1/2 power, zoomed to 50mm. The shot setting of f-22 @ 1/200 resulted in good exposure for the flash lit area and a 1.5 underexposed ambient area.



## BLENDING A SMALL STROBE AND DRAMATIC AMBIENT LIGHT (CONT)



The next image is one I like a lot. Briana on a deserted dirt road in Prescott. I loved the setting sun and the moon was an extra special catch.

I used the flash as an on-axis fill for this shot. You can catch the slight shadows from her legs going back from the camera. This cross shadow effect is kinda fun, and the light is doing a great job of showing her form and expression. With the sun as the only light source, I would have had shadows from her nose, chin, cheeks and even hair. I didn't want any extraneous shadows on her, so I elected to fill in from camera axis to eliminate the shadows that were caused from the sun.

I used a 550EX at perfect balance to the setting sun. This allows the sun to be my right side light, and the strobe gives me the main. Briana is well lit without difficult shadows. The 550 is being held in my right hand and is as high as I could get it, and very slightly to camera right axis to give the light a tiny bit of 'shape'.



Otero, the Bermuda model that can jump over the moon if asked, did this shot with me during the workshop. I wanted to do something with all the models so I had the two ladies stand in the surf and asked Otero to do one of his martial arts jumps for me. I had one of the workshop attendees hold the flash and I had Otero jump on 'three'.

This shot uses the sun as the main light, and adds the strobe to open the shadows and add some pop to Otero... especially in the shadows as he crunches up.

Sun was f-16 at 1/125 at ISO 200, so I made the strobe equal that by putting it on 1/2 power and metering in the spot where f-16 would occur. That is the precise spot I wanted Otero to jump in. By making the strobe equal in power to the sun, I opened the shadows and 'popped' the colors of his clothes and skin. You will notice that the models and the ambient surroundings are also lit correctly. Using the flash at equal power does not mean that it will 'overpower' the sun.

My human-boom assistant was very careful to consistently aim the flash at Otero's face, not watching me... but the talent. The two models were directed to the look of distraction and the light fell on them well because I turned their faces away from the harsh light of the day. Without turned heads, shadowed eye-sockets and under nose would have killed the shot.



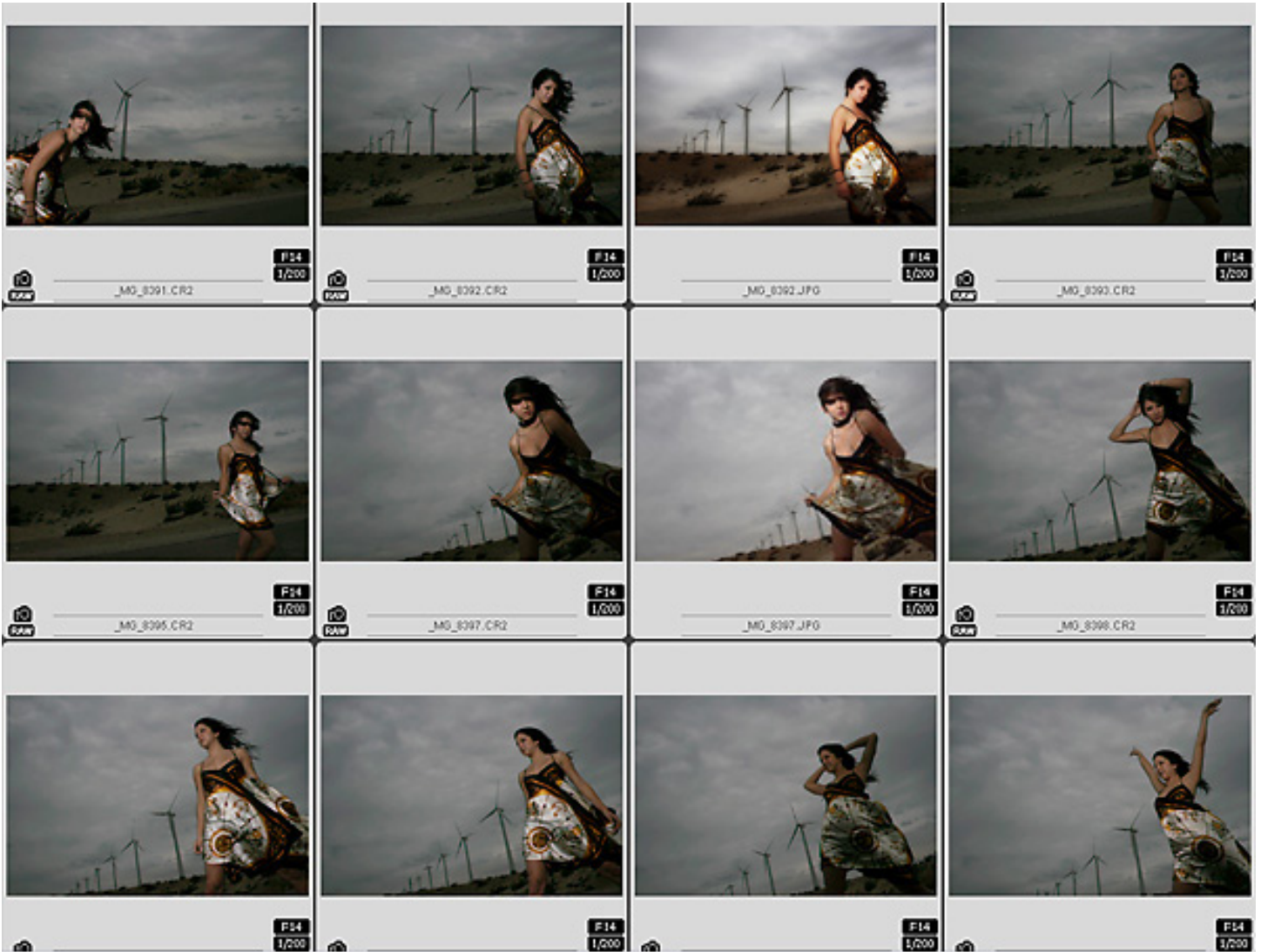
## BLENDING A SMALL STROBE AND DRAMATIC AMBIENT LIGHT (CONT)

The wind was crazy on the mountains outside of Palm Springs when I made this shot of Briana. I wanted to include the windmills and the strange landscape. But I wanted Briana to dominate the shot. How better to do it than use a speedlight to light her from a different angle than the sun, and underexpose the sunlight a little as well, deadening the color.



The light was heavy overcast, so it was flat and uninteresting. I didn't want the light I provided to be flat as well, so I decided on a sidelight look. Holding the light at about 30 degrees to camera left, I was able to create the look of light from a direction, instead of from above. The slightly zoomed nature of the light created that pool of light that I like and the exposure was created to be one stop over ambient. That means that the ambient exposure (f-8 at 1/125) was allowed to be one stop underexposed by shooting the flash at f-11 (at 1/125) at ISO 100. The flash exposure of f-11 renders the f-8 exposure as one stop underexposed. This makes Briana 'pop' from the background and really shows off the colors of her dress.

The light is a Canon 430 on a collapsed stand that I am holding like a boom on my left hip. I wanted the light to come down instead of across at her. The light is close and slightly out of camera range to camera left. It is set to 1/8 power for fast recycle and the overcast day made that plenty of light. The strobe is zoomed to 50mm for a slightly narrow throw.



Notice how the angle of the strobe doesn't show harsh shadows on Briana's face. I was carefully watching the angles of her face and following it with the strobe on the stand on my hip. Takes a little doing, but it can certainly be done.



## NATURAL LIGHT FOR NATURAL, SUBTLE BEAUTY



We are going to take a look at how we can use simple, natural light for some beauty shots of Bri on location in Miami, Arizona.

This sleepy little town has such great old walls and patinas to work with. That and the fact that it is about 12 degrees cooler than Phoenix made it a great place to go shoot.



For the shot on the right, I asked Bri to look back at me so I could get an idea about how the light would wrap in that shady area. She is not out of makeup yet, but I do this so if I need to set anything up, I can get to it while she is still being made up.



Our first shot is Briana in the place where we did makeup, turning around toward the sidewalk so I could get the lit background to add dimension. Notice how her hair picks up the reflection of the buildings (specular) on each shaft, adding a wonderful natural hair light. There are no reflectors, fill cards or flash here, just the soft light from the brightly filled sidewalk area.



Our next shot is one of Bri in the shade of a north facing building on a two lane town street. She is right near the shadow edge, but not far enough out to pick up any hair light. I wanted a far more subtle look to this image than the bright hair light would have provided. There is still a 'hair light' look here and that is the reflection of the light above on the hair... tiny speculars of the source if you will. Personally, I love this kind of subtle, soft light.

When trying this type of light, make sure you don't end up with very bright surfaces below the model. If that happens, like a white sidewalk, you could have low light... that is light that is coming up and causing shadows on the top part of the cheeks. Way worse looking than what the sunlight does coming down and throwing shadows under the eyes.

Also make sure that there are bright areas across from your model. If there are lots of dark trees and things as that would make a much more muddy scene. Everything reflects and a dark light source, which is exactly what those dark trees would be, is not attractive and will make your Photoshop work overtime.





## NATURAL LIGHT FOR NATURAL, SUBTLE BEAUTY (CONT)

Here is another shot from the same place, but this one is in black and white. Notice how the subtle shadings lend themselves perfectly to monochrome imaging. There are so many shades in this image, yet the natural feel is complimentary to the subject and the mood.

When shooting in the shade like this, I find that digital seems a bit flat. I use several very subtle masks in curves to bump up selected luminance and add contrast.



This last shot is also with no fill cards or flash. Right down the street we found this cool old gate. I had Briana in the sun there, and the sun was also lighting up the buildings where I am standing. I love the flooded soft wash of light. Of course the direct sun adds a lot of sparkle to the images, and I am not worried about 'blowing' those tones out as they are already in that realm... and the look is one that I like. Very 'fashion' looking.





## USING THE SUN FOR A HAIRLIGHT: SOME VARIATIONS



The sun is a wonderful light source as we all know. It provides hard, direct light, diffused light, bounce light... heck, it's an all-over lighting machine. There are many ways to use the sun for main light and fill, but today we are going to look at a few ways to use it for a hair light or rim light.

You can use it in a natural light situation and with big strobes, with bounce and with speedlights. It is a constant light source and so it can be carefully controlled. Yes, those cloudy days when it goes in and out can be a pain, but mostly it is pretty easy to manage.

Our first image shows Stephanie on a location shoot we did recently. Early morning light was coming at a very nice angle. I made an exposure reading for the side light and added a little fill for the face. I exposed for the face in this image which of course rendered the sunlight a little overexposed. That is OK for a shot like this. The backlight should look rich and have a feeling of being a bit brighter than the main... that is what makes it a backlight.

Care was taken with Stephanie to make sure that her face was always in the shadow side of her hair. Keeping her hair blocking the direct sun meant that there was no little streaks on her nose or cheeks. I personally do not like those little hot spots on the sides of noses and cheeks and lips. It looks bad to me, especially on a still image. My eye always goes right to it. If you inform your model to keep her face out of the light, most will work with you easily.

To the left is a closer shot. In this case the open sky behind me and the very bright weeds to Stephanie's front and side provided all the main light I needed. There is no lighting added to the shot at all. She has simply worked with me to keep her nose out of the direct light. I exposed for the face in this photograph.



The shot below was taken with the fill from a large building to camera left. The white building is being blasted by the sun and is providing wonderful light. Taking the model into the sunlight gave me some great backlight on her hair. I had Kymmy throw her head and hair around in the wind and caught some wonderful movement. I love wind sometimes.

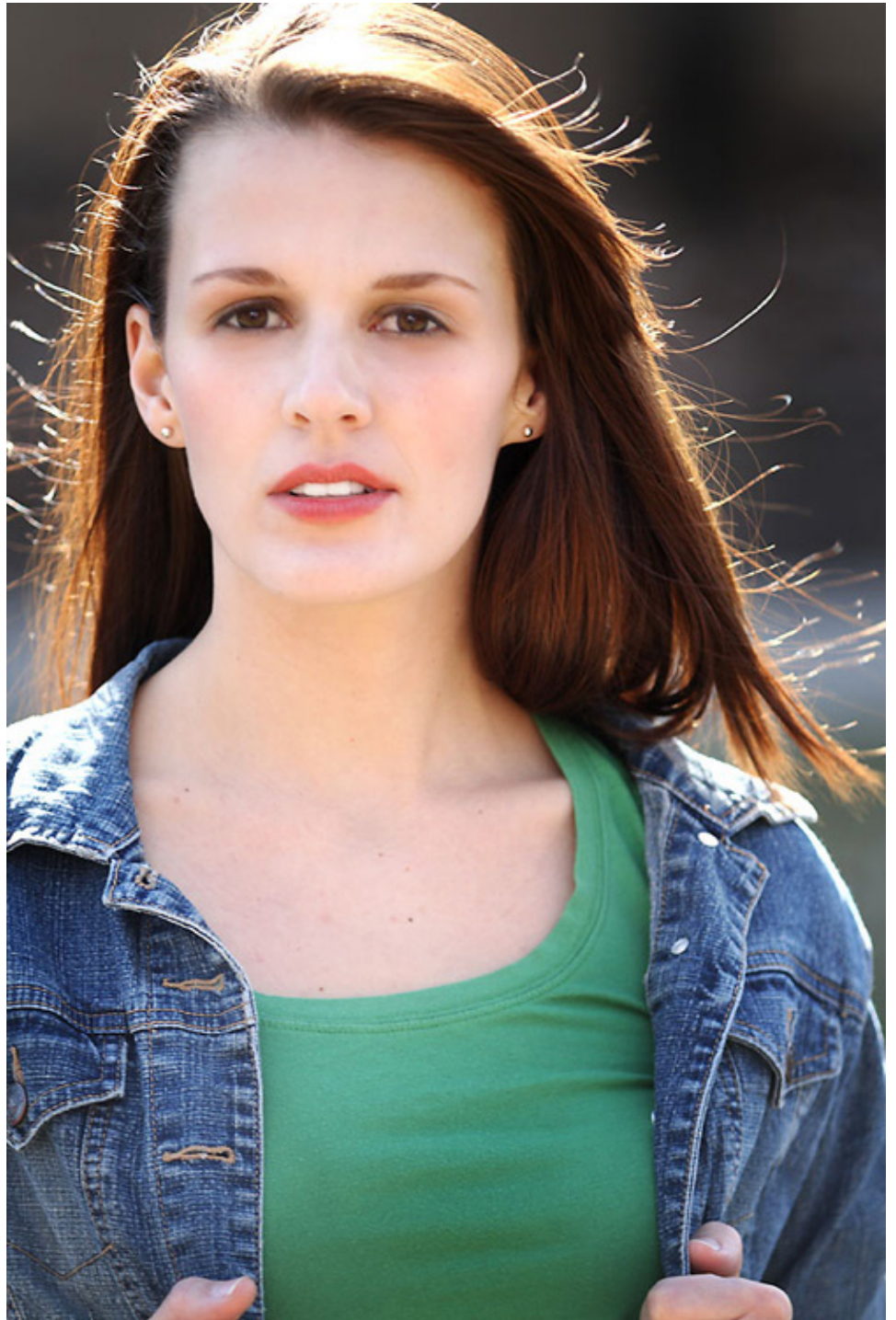
Again, I took a reading from her face toward the camera. I made sure that no light from the direct sun was on the meter. If the sun gets to the face of the meter (the ball on the incident meter) it will give you a bad reading. I shot the reading from the face and let the sun exposure fall where it may. Personally I love the feeling of the powerful backlight, as it gives the image a warmth that is hard to imitate.





## USING THE SUN FOR A HAIRLIGHT: SOME VARIATIONS (CONT)

Detroit model Stacia was in the same light as the previous shot, but this time we brought in a small bounce source to lighten up the face and the clothes. By doing so we lowered the contrast of the shot. We brought the exposure ranges closer together so the hair light is not as bright in relationship to the face, as it is in the picture of Kymmy before. This was a very small amount of fill.



Below we find Stephanie leaning on a fence post with morning sun over her shoulder. Subtle, but the little bit of light on her head helps 'ground' the image and give it a place in the light. Dramatic portrait with only open sky for main light and a strong morning light over shoulders for the separation. Yes, I know what I said above about that little patch of light... well, sometimes, not often, but sometimes it can be kind of effective in giving the image a cinematic feel.





## USING THE SUN FOR A HAIRLIGHT: SOME VARIATIONS (CONT)

Our last shot is one from the Mexico workshop. We had Jasmin on the stairs with heavy backlight. The bright walls added lots of fill, but we wanted a more 'lit' look to the shot. Adding a speedlight on a stand just out of camera and to camera right was the answer. In this case, we let the sun be a bit brighter than our main so we could keep the feeling of the bright back light. Simple to do this type of shot.

Take a meter reading of the background (just let the light hit the ball on your incident meter). You could use the F16 Rule (f-16 at 1/ISO) if you wanted, and on a sunny day you will be right in line with the F16 rule.

Let's say that the reading is f-16 at 1/100 of a second. Great. Now all we have to do is bring our light in to a point where we can get f-11.5 or so to keep the background bright. F-11.5 is one half stop less light than the f-16 so if we shoot at 11.5, we are letting the f-16 sunlight be a half stop overexposed. We knew that at 1/4 power and about 7feet we would get somewhere in the very close neighborhood of f-11.5. Place strobe, test shot, adjust and shoot.



## CLAMSHELL LIGHTING FOR A GLAMOROUS HEADSHOT





## CLAMSHELL LIGHTING FOR A GLAMOROUS HEADSHOT (CONT)

As you can see in the image, I have placed Bri right next to the background. In this case it is a piece of the V-Card... some core actually. The background gives a great specular edge (since Bri's head is hiding most of the specular) and a wonderful little shadow all around her. Somewhat like a ring light would do. This is because the lights are so close to the lens that it has much of the characteristics of a ring flash.

Here is the setup shot showing how the umbrellas are placed from camera:



I like using matching umbrellas for a lot of reasons... power is the same, faster setup and the matched catch-lights all make it worth getting two of the umbrellas that you plan on using. I could use larger ones, but I think that the smaller work better for me to get in close. I love the drop off of close lighting and the effect that it has on the skin.



You can see how soft the shadow is behind her even though there is little fill added on either side. You can add all the fill you want, it is 'flavor to taste' and I chose to leave it out for a more striking frontal light. This shadow just peeks around the subject and adds a bit of gradient to the image that helps the subject stand off the background even while being right next to



## SPEND A DAY SHOOTING PORTRAITS



Taken outside with a single light in a softbox, the shot of Maria was made against a bright, slightly hazy sky.

Bringing the softbox in close to Maria let me bring the white sky (shooting almost directly into the sun) into a darker range. I used shutter speed to drop the sky (taking it 1.5 stops under the exposure) and the strobe to bring up the tones on Maria. The large, flat light source created a wonderful patina to the skin, and the backlight added a tiny bit of rim and accent. We kept the box about 2.5 feet from her and I crept in under it a bit to shoot up and into the sky. Using a Canon 20-35MML let me crop quickly and I made sure to get her expressive arms into the frame.

I had seen the power lines and when she started doing some posing I thought about a puppet on a wire. Two versions exist: one with the power lines taken out in Photoshop and this one with them left in. I liked this one better, at least for now, so I left them in for the faint reflection of the 'puppet' pose.



There was a lot of fill coming off the white sand, so I placed Jessica in the sun and made my exposures. I wanted the feel of the beach and when I saw her skirt, I loved how it mirrored the color of the beach grass.

Portraiture on location for me means showing the location. I decided again on the wide lens to include the elements of the location that were special to me. The deep blue sky, white sand, beach grass and model. Placing her on the sand kept my fill good, and getting low for a good amount of sky let the image place the viewer there. I used a polarizing filter on the 20-35MM L to give more depth to the sky. It also let a lot of color come out of the grass.

Jessica was told to not pose 'for me' but to be self-absorbed in the scene. I had her look off toward the sun, and also a bit over my head, but I didn't want a lot of 'into the camera' looks. The portrait shows the blend of the subject in the landscape.



## SPEND A DAY SHOOTING PORTRAITS (CONT)



Here we have a shot of Vanessa jumping on the edge of the water at Bean Point on Anna Maria Island. Behind her is the meeting point of Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. It is a very interesting and beautiful, place.

There was a lot of light filling in from the sand, but there was still a very bright sun to deal with. I didn't want her looking into the sun, but rather into the camera. I knew that would add some side shadows to the image. You can see the shadow behind her and note that the sun was very high, not an optimal time for a portrait. But, hey... that's what we like... a challenge.

I took my meter readings in the sun and in the shaded side of her outfit. I wanted the shady side to be much brighter as there was a little over 2 stop difference. Setting my flash to almost equal the sun (f-16) I was able to open the shadows very well without losing the highlights on the white outfit. I will be doing a post soon to show you exactly how to use your flash as an adjunct to full sun, not just a fill or a tool to beat the sun.

Working with Vanessa, I had her roll the pants legs up a little and walk at the edge of the surf a ways down before exiting to the sand in front of me. This kept the sand clean and free of footprints. A 1-2-3 count let me anticipate her jump and I was careful to check the shot to make sure I had something without making her do it over and over. We got it on frame 6, and shot two more for safety. Anticipating the apex of the jump is very important. Even though it is a DSLR, there is still a lag time from click to capture.



Erin was standing just to the right of the sun from my position. I loved the little sun in the background... almost hitting the edge of the sea. I decided to underexpose the background by nearly two stops with my shutter speed. Rendering the sun and sky that deep orange/red would make Erin's blonde hair and black dress really stand out.

Using the wide angle again, I took a few images to quickly find my shutter speed / f-stop combination for the dark background. My meter was all the way over there, and the sun was going down, so yes, I chimped. Once I found the good exposure for the background and set the strobe distance to give me an exposure that would be two stops under on the background, I moved in and took a few frames. This one worked the best.

Keeping the aperture / shutter speed relationships in your head can be the quickest way to get some of these kind of shots. For instance... background is f-8 at 1/120 of a second. If I want to underexpose the background, I can close the aperture to f-16. That is two stops underexposed on the background if I shoot the subject at f-16 with the strobe at the same shutter speed.



## SPEND A DAY SHOOTING PORTRAITS (CONT)

We were shooting at the beach when I turned around and saw our MUA sitting and basking in the very low sun. What a shot! I moved in and positioned her head where I wanted it and let the natural sunlight fill the frame with soft, warm light.

This kind of light can be very flattering and warm. It is one of my most favorite lighting tools, but it only happens for a few minutes each day. Yeah, rarefied light for sure. Quick and clean, the light gave me a most flattering shot of a wonderful lady.





Similar to the shot of Erin, I added some subject motion to the image. I had Vanessa pull her hair over to one side and she flipped her hair on my three-count. These shots are very scary cause you can't see her face in the viewfinder. You must rely on the model to make sure she has a good face when she hits that spot.

Shutter speed was not fast enough to freeze her hair, but it added a cool effect to the hair with the back-shadow from the long shutter/flash combination. Vanessa was a great sport on this shot as it can be a little tricky doing that whip thing over and over.



## CREATING A SIMPLE SPRAY LIGHT FOR BACKGROUNDS

One of the ways to separate the subject from the background is to use a spray light. The light creates a 'halo' of light to dark behind the subject and helps make a flat background more dynamic. It is a fairly simple technique with a lot of variations possible.



We can do this with all kinds of lights, from speedlights to normal reflectors and beauty dishes. Each can add its own look to the spray, and make it work within the framework of your image.

The portrait of Vanessa shows how the background works to create a light-to-dark base for the face and shoulders. The background is behind her about 10 feet. This helps create a dynamic background for the portrait to sit above. The look is far different than a flat background... and keeps the eyes right on our subject.

Keeping the wall 10 feet or so behind her helps blur it from limited DOF. I am shooting here at about f8 at 1/60 at ISO 100. With an 80-200MM L at this distance, the background drops out pretty fast. I am out to about 160-170mm with the lens, so it is quite a telephoto.

Adding a hair light gives a nice shoulder accent. For this shot there is a silver/white 'Zebra' over the top of her and slightly back. It creates a nice little accent that is still there even against the bright background gradient. You should really watch this area, because if it the background is too bright, it can kill the separation between the highlight on the shoulder and the spray light.



Marissa is wearing a white shirt in this shot, and it separates fine from the backlight.



## CREATING A SIMPLE SPRAY LIGHT FOR BACKGROUNDS (CONT)



The closer the light, the tighter the spread of light. This shot shows the background light at 6" from the wall.



This close up shows how close the light is actually to the wall. Just about 6". I think being very careful with the heat is a great idea.



Now we pull the light back about 2" to 8" from the wall. Notice the wider spray, and slightly less contrast from center to edge.



Now to 12" from the wall or background. The light is now very widely spread and there is a soft gradient from center

This last shot shows how subtle the look can be. We have a hair light on Marissa, and the spray light is adding a dynamic look behind her. The hair seems to be lit, and yet in the corner we can see some dark background to let the blonde stand out.

I like the spray light look. It can be done with far more subtlety than these as well. Photographers like Platon, who shoot a lot of editorial portraiture, depend on variations of this kind of light to provide subtle definition to their subjects.

Try using a Gary Fong diffuser for some softness, or add a few layers of gel for a color. I find that spray lights work well on dark to medium gray backgrounds. Colored seamless, old canvas, walls and wallpaper can also be used to advantage.





# CREATING AN AMBIENT LOOK WITH SPEEDLIGHTS ON LOCATION



## FOR THIS PHOTOGRAPH:

- Two speedlights ( am using a 550 and 430 Canon)
- 1 medium or large umbrella (biggest you have)
- Two stands
- Tripod recommended

We will examine an ambient light look in this tech sheet. There are times when we have some wonderful ambient to work with and then there are times when we have to all the light ourselves. These three shots represent ways of working to provide a natural look to an image without having any naturally occurring light to work with.

I am using a 60” umbrella with a 550 Canon Flash and a bare 430 Canon flash for the light in the first picture. And I wanted the image to look natural, relaxed and not look like it was strobed or overly lit. It is barely out of frame to camera left.

### Creating ‘Ambient’ Light

In the first shot we are going to create the ambient light with a second speedlight. I have mine on a stand and it is pointed up at the ceiling at an angle toward camera right. Look at the shadows from the drawer pulls behind Bri. You can see the angle of the shadows. That tells you where the light was coming from. I also wanted it to be at an angle so the image would look a little more natural. Coming straight down could have looked a little contrived. The slight angle is more convincing.

I took a meter reading of that light and dialed it to give me f4.5. That is 1 and 1/3 stop over the main light which was going to be f-2.8.

I moved Bri into position and made a few shots to get the angle of the light just right. Notice that there is no spill of the ambient strobe onto the shadow side of her face.

Two reasons:

1. I wanted her to be separated from the back
2. The feeling of light coming from the front.

Here is a diagram of the light and how I pre-visualized it.





## CREATING AN AMBIENT LOOK WITH SPEEDLIGHTS ON LOCATION (CONT)

Below you see the room with only the back light firing. You can see the spotlights in the ceiling and also how dark it is to Briana's™ front. The addition of the umbrella and its soft light makes the shot look more natural. And having the background be brighter also gives the shot a sense of light in two distinct areas... the way it would be naturally.



Above:

The effect of the large umbrella is very easily seen in these two images. The power of the light in the umbrella isn't very high. I wanted the spotlights to stay a part of the image, even though they may not be offering too much. The light on the camera left of her head shows how a little punch from the spotlight in the dining room can help add some texture to the shot.

### FOR THIS PHOTOGRAPH:

- One speedlight
- One stand
- Tripod recommended

The shot of Bri near the shower is a great example of how to create a natural light look with some strobes, in this case only one strobe.

This is a large, walk-in shower in the condo we use when doing the Mexico workshops. The shot was taken late at night so there is no sunlight coming through the large block glass window to camera right. I had to create a feeling of that beautiful sunlight with my strobes.

I took a speedlight and put it inside the shower with a medium shoot through umbrella and made some shots. They looked alright... but didn't have the look of the light flooding in that window. So I took the bare strobe and placed it right inside the shower and blasted the walls with it. That huge light-source nearly replicated the light that would be normally filling that shower on a beautiful Mexico morning.

I had Bri lean forward so there would be light flowing on the wall behind her head and then blocked by her body leaning against the molding. The tungsten lights in the bath area added some warm fill and the shot ended up looking quite natural. I had seen this shot in my head from the first morning, so it was cool to make it happen... and it looked exactly like I had it my head.





## CREATING AN AMBIENT LOOK WITH SPEEDLIGHTS ON LOCATION (CONT)



### **FOR THIS PHOTOGRAPH:**

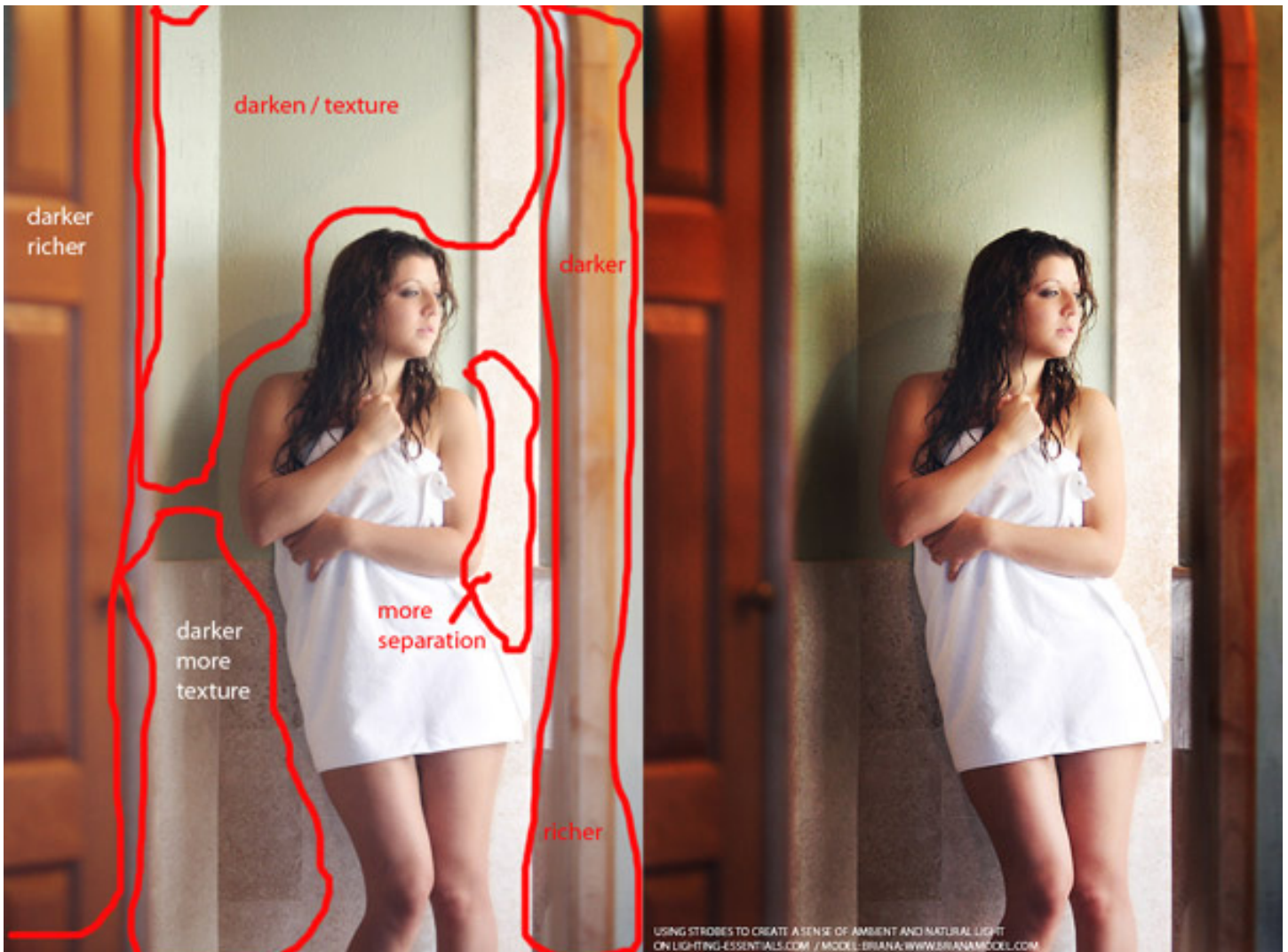
- One speedlight
- One stand
- Tripod recommended

Bri on the phone is a great example of finding a shot on the spur of the moment. She was doing her hair in the mirror there and the makeup lights all around the mirror were creating a wonderful light.

She turned her back to the mirror and all the light on her face went away. But I wanted to recreate that cool look of the mirror lights and the natural ambiance of the dressing room.

Directly in front of Briana, to camera left, is a walk-in closet. It is painted white. Perfect. I took a speedlight and placed it in the closet. Aiming it at the back wall provided a very large, soft light source coming out the double doors of the closet.

I metered the lights at ISO 800, and found a shutter speed that placed them at f-4. I made sure the light coming out of the closet was f 2.8 and shot at that exposure. This made the makeup lights brighter. And that gave the shot a sense of reality. If the light in front had been brighter, then it would not have made sense and it would have looked 'lit'... which is what I wasn't looking for.



First, you can see my markup... simple, just a reminder of the thoughts I have as editing.

Here is what I did.

- Checked the levels pallet and moved a little darker.
- Retouched any skin anomalies.
- Smoothed skin by making a new layer, blending it with Soft-light, backing opacity off to 30% and adding Gaussian Blur at 10
- Added a layer of 50% gray and used soft brush at 10% to gently paint in shadow and highlights: black for shadow and white for highlights.
- Copied that layer to a new layer and changed blend mode to Overlay. Adjusted opacity to what I liked.
- Applied TK's "Light" mask and adjusted a slight 'S' Curve effectively raising the contrast in the lighter areas without modifying the shadows.
- Applied TK's "Dark" mask and adjusted a tighter 'S' creating contrast in the shadows. This helped bring the texture out of the wall and stone.
- Applied TK's "Narrow Mid Tone" mask and raised the mid tones across middle and light nodes. This made the image more 'airy' in the middle tones.
- Applied sharpening to blue channel and overall at 200 / .3 / 4
- And closed the image.

This hardly took more than a few minutes, but the result is what I was looking for... a contrast that looks real, with tones and color that are rich as well



## USING A SINGLE SOFTBOX WITH A SHINY CARD FOR BEAUTY



You can see how the light is open and bright on her torso, and how the eyes seem alive with the open light and slight reflection of the shiny card below. Briana is standing in front of the V-card and there is some natural wrap going on there with the slightly angled V-card. You can see it on her shoulder edges and the way the light seems to stay pretty clean across her shoulders.

There is enough fall to show the shape, but the light doesn't simply fall away like it would with a smaller light source without the V-Card behind her.

One of the most important parts of this setup is to make sure that the light is actually reflected back on to the model. I stand behind the model and look into the shiny board to see if the reflection is bright on the board. Once I show the model what to look for, they can let me know if the reflection is there.



Here you can see the light as it is reflected off the shiny board and on to Briana in position for the portrait.

Keeping the light source very close to the subject gave a liquid look to the highlights on the lips, nails and especially the jacket and top. The soft highlights give the shot a warmth that is natural.

You can see how close the light is to Briana here. The shiny board is 4 feet square and covered with a textured bright material





## USING A SINGLE SOFTBOX WITH A SHINY CARD FOR BEAUTY (CONT)



This image shows how nice the light spreads across the skin and highlights the curves of the wardrobe.

I hope you liked this tutorial on using the bright shiny board and large softbox. Give it a try... you can even use a scrim or very large umbrella in the same position. If you try this with speed-lights, try using a couple of them to spread the light wider across the scrim or into the umbrella.

# PORTRAIT IN HOUSTON (TECH SHEET)

## LIGHTING ESSENTIALS

*tech sheet*

### NICOLE IN HOUSTON

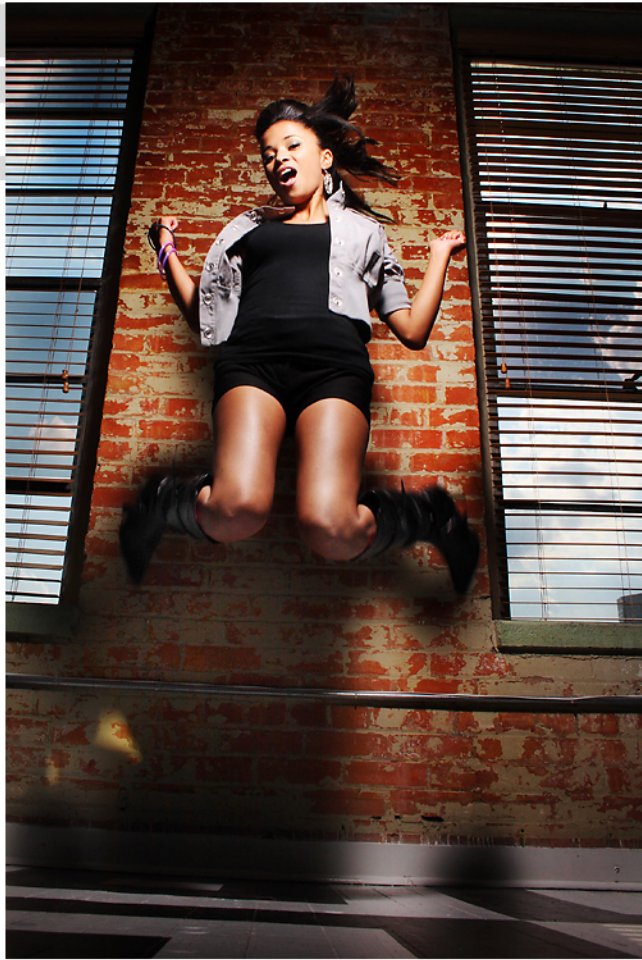
SINGLE HARD LIGHT IN A REFLECTOR WITH DIFFUSION

We wanted Nicole to jump to get a little action in the shot. The space was pretty narrow, but we figured we had enough room - if she was careful. It is never worth it if the model is put in danger even if only from a sprained ankle.

A single bright reflector was brought in and we put a little diffuser on it to soften the edges. In this case the reflector is a 10" parabolic on a boom. We didn't have any diffusion, so a little piece of paper towel was taped over it and the modeling lights turned off.

The light is placed directly over camera axis so the shadow drops straight down behind Nicole. This makes for an interesting lighting scheme but it is a bit dark under her knees. (See Photoshop Notes.) Driving the shadow down makes it appear more below her and not directly behind her to muddy the wall.

We metered the windows and got f-16 at 1/100 second. Moving the light to get f-16 was rather easy to do, though we had to cut the power down to about 1/8 on the small studio strobe. A great way to check this is to make a shot of the windows without the strobe going off and see if they look natural or not. The very cool clouds added a nice bit of drama to the shot.



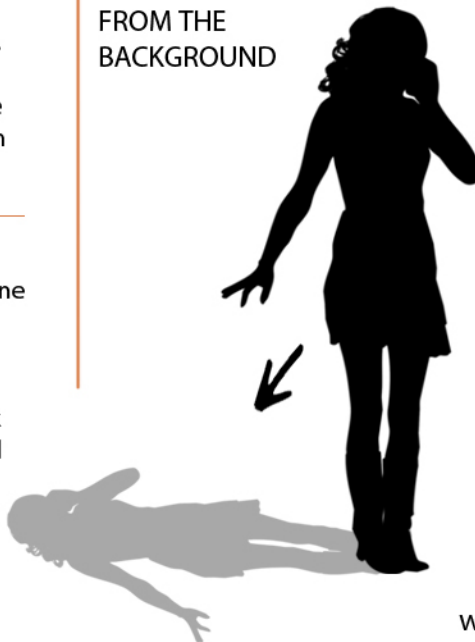
18MM Lens shot from lying camera down on the floor and shooting up. You will have to do a few test shots first to get it right, then simply repeat for a few jumps.

I usually count off 1,2,3 and that gives the model and myself a 'go spot' to make it work as planned. It can be so important to get it in as few shots as possible so we don't have the model jumping like crazy too many times. They can get tired and then injury is more prone.

## PHOTOSHOP

I processed two images from the same raw file. One was processed normally and one was processed a stop over to get some detail in the shadow. I merged the two to place the correctly exposed layer over the lighter one and added a layer mask and with a soft brush painted with black to reveal the lighter underlayer. I use an opacity of 10 so I can gently paint in the exposure I want. I finished off the shot with a little dodging/burning and some luminosity masking in the shadow detail.

DRIVE THE SHADOW DOWN FOR MORE SEPARATION IN THE SUBJECT FROM THE BACKGROUND

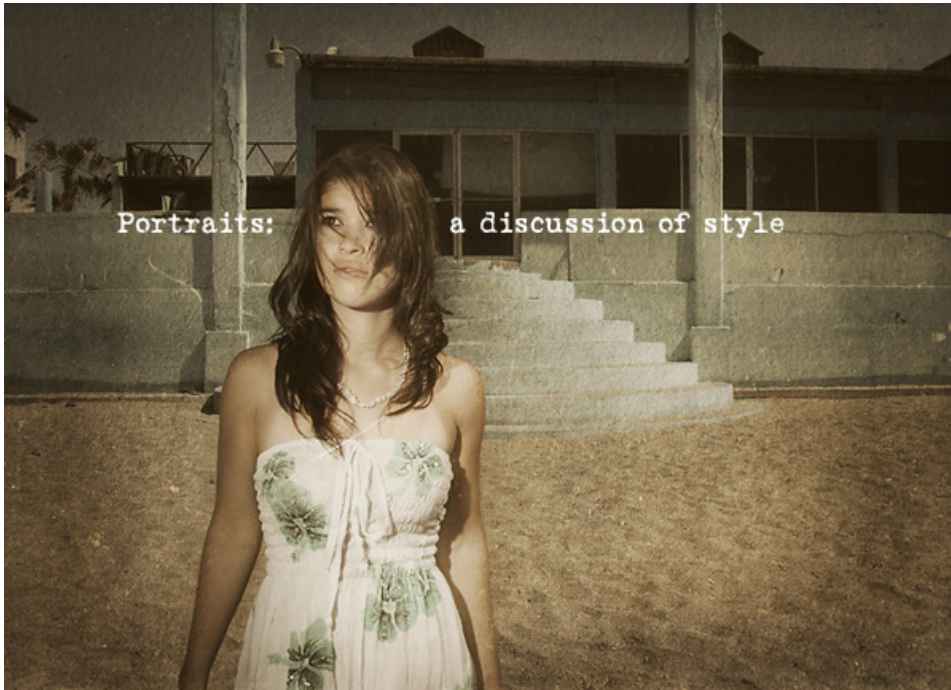


The hard light gives a corresponding shadow to below Nicole. But the wall distorts it. Keeping the shadow going down makes her stand out from the brick and gives the shot a more natural look. I also like the highlights it adds to her legs. You can see the effect of the diffuser, a paper towel, on the edges of the shadow.



# THINKING ABOUT PORTRAITS: 6 STUDIES IN BEAUTY

This post is about portrait lighting and some of the things I think about when shooting a portrait... whether in the studio or on location.



The shot to the left was done in Mexico. Christine had been walking with me and when she turned to talk to me I saw this shot. I pre-visualized the image as being somewhat illustrative... some heavy Photoshop was planned and I wanted the colors to be muted. The feeling was one of mystery, and the color palette and post would show a portrait that was modern, but also seemingly candid.

I liked the symmetry of the background, but also knew that putting her there would rob the image of the candid aspects. I wanted her to be moving into the middle of the poles... not be there already.

The sun was over my right shoulder and when she looked away toward the beach, her face was in shadow. I wanted to light her independently from the background and knew that a split lighting would work to show off the shot.

A hand held 430EX on a tethered cable was aimed right at her face... on the axis of her nose. I wanted no nose shadow or face sculpting at all. (Secretly I wished I had a beauty dish at the time, but – well, I didn't.) I had Christine look over toward the water – and the light – and carefully framed the shot. She did a great job of posing and looking like she was distracted and NOT being the subject of a photo. I loved the hair coming into the face and we did a dozen or so exposures. The light on her coming from camera left while the background is presented in light that is camera right adds a bit of whimsy or mystery to the shot. Christine's excellent acting for the camera cinched the look I wanted.



This photograph came about as a test. We were looking around for a place to do some soft headshots and I remembered the great light that was in the shower in the master of the casita. Somer went in and I went on the other side of the room to use a long lens. I remember thinking that the light was so warm in there due to the brown tiles, that it made her skin tone lovely.

The soft directional light gives the face shape and shows off her beautiful eyes. Using a long lens with this kind of light also brings a flatness to the features from the shortening effect of the telephoto. That shortening effect, added to the very shallow DOF of the aperture (2.8) helps to sculpt the subject from the background.

I used no fill cards or strobes for this shot, preferring to let the light do its thing. I turned her head slightly toward the light to get a full half face lit. I don't like the light to be 'patchy' on the shadow side of the face. The pose, soft and natural light, and DOF combine to make a lovely, understated portrait.



## THINKING ABOUT PORTRAITS: 6 STUDIES IN BEAUTY (CONT)



Jesika on the Yellow Sofa in Dallas.

This shot is from the workshop in Dallas. We were taking a bit of a break when I noticed Jesika sitting in the light in the corner. The window light is coming from over her left shoulder (camera right) and was creating a wonderfully soft shadow on the couch. It was a very large window and had a wonderful soft feel to the light coming in. I needed to add a little light from the front to open the shadows and gain some texture in her wardrobe.

Bringing the medium octabox in, I set the light by making it slightly less than the sunlight. Taking the light reading with a meter and then metering the strobed Octabox to about 2/3 less exposure. I then exposed for the face, and let the back light go 2/3 over. The point was to make the light seem as though it was coming from the window, but also that she was the subject and she was lit a bit oddly to bring her out of the background. The eye knows when something is added, even subconsciously. Looking into the shadow area at her feet you will see the shadow created by the strobe and octabox. This is because this area was in total shadow, not getting any sunlight from the window. There is no shadow on the lit area behind her because the octa is less light than the window, but there is at her feet because it is more light than what was there.

I wanted a feeling of isolation and vulnerability, so I chose the wide angle lens and placed Jesika at the bottom of the image. The formidable brick wall rising above her, added with the symmetry of the couch and angles, gave her frame a 'place' against the ground. Her pose and the angle of her back and legs break the symmetry, and her face adds to the feeling of vulnerability.

The light, while seemingly natural, adds to the drama by keeping the figure so well 'placed' within the background and the set.



I used a large (60") soft-white umbrella in very close for this shot. I needed the light to be soft and even to show off her delicate features and Lorri's great makeup work. Adding a large white fill below her at chest height filled in any shadows and opened her eyes beautifully.

The first shots were fine, but there was something missing... a sense of mystery or 'interestingness'... So I added a speedlight in close for a hair light, letting the hair get quite lit from an off stage source. Bringing a fill card in at an angle to catch some of the direct hairlight gave me a bright poppy hairlight to camera right as well. This little bit of lighting made the image more interesting and drives the viewer to her eyes.

The pose was the last little bit of work I did. I wanted to make a statement other than "look at me I'm pretty"... I wanted drama. Having her avert her eyes was a simple way to pull the image from the "seen before" to the "interesting." As she worked this pose she would slightly tilt her face... I wanted her to actually do the tilting and look away from me so there would be some reality to the image. Catching it was my job. We did it until I thought we had it right.

Adding the backlight to the soft front light gave the glancing away a little context... a little drama.



## THINKING ABOUT PORTRAITS: 6 STUDIES IN BEAUTY (CONT)



Sometimes a very direct look can be dramatic as well. Edyta was piercing me with those eyes and I needed something to offset the hardness of the portrait. Although I liked the hard, symmetrical look to it, I wanted to break the image up with some angles and whimsy.

She was wearing a tube-top and with the bare shoulders and well toned muscles she looked too strong to me. I wanted the light to add to the strength, but not to make her look over the top, so I worked it a bit more. The main light was brought in quite close and again it is my 60" umbrella. A shiny fill board was added for bottom fill and it is just out of sight of the camera. This light gave her a well lit face as well as some beautiful liquid like highlights on the shoulders and muscles in the chest.

A few shots told me that it was still too "flat" so I needed to add some dimension. I did that with a small reflector against the back wall (10 feet behind her) and positioning it to give me a small circle of light behind her shoulders and neck. The closer the light gets to the back, the tighter the ring of light becomes. Working that light to the correct amount of power can be a bit daunting, but a few sheets of spun glass from the local video house can dampen the strong light and give a little softness to the edges.

Doing this gave me some depth, and the addition of a speedlight in close on the top of her head gave me just a bit of hairlight and another reason to drive the eyes back to the face. Big strobes with speedlights are a great combination... I love it.

The angularity and the directness achieved with the lighting, I now turned my attention to the pose. I wanted something else other than the bare shoulders. We added the flowers and it immediately worked for me. The hard, direct look of Edyta is offset by the seemingly random shapes of the flowers. They add whimsy where symmetry prevailed.

The last shot is of Laura and it is taken in the shade with a small fill card in close. I wanted something to catch the youthfulness and grace of a lovely young lady. Choosing natural light was instant... the long lens gave me a tight crop and I added a small card to the shadow side of her face to even out the exposure across her face.

I had taken her hair (after she messily put it 'up' on top of her head) and pulled some strands out to let them frame her face. I love that look and it adds to the natural effect of the shot. Pull out fewer than you need, you can always get more...pulling out too many and you gotta start over. They were kind of blowing and moving around her face in the very faint breeze.

I moved her forward to catch the edge of the sun on her head, but not far enough forward to cause a 'backlight' look to it. I wanted the sun to catch little strands of hair and add contrast to the shot.

The very flat light across her face, and the tiny bits of sunlight catching her hair, give the shot a natural, almost candid look. Choosing the long lens and bringing it in tight also added to the vulnerability of the image and her beauty put right in front of our faces to view. I have a 20x30 of this shot in the studio and it really is striking. The combination of a natural look with a tight crop makes it irresistible.





## IN PRAISE OF NATURAL LIGHT: EXAMPLES AND DISCUSSION

I have heard it called available light, natural light, real light and so many other similar terms that it can all be so confusing. I may not have the definitive, nor the best accepted explanation of what it is, but to me 'natural light' only means I did not bring any artificial light sources into play. Using what is there, and modifying the bejeezus out of it is fine. (Let's not go into whether the



use of reflectors is indeed a light source or any kind of semantical issues, OK... I mean I didn't bring a strobe, hot light, flashlight, or studio flash along for the shot. Shiny boards, scrims, and reflectors are fine in my definition. Feel free to define it your way.)

I like the softness of natural light. I like its ability to sculpt and define. I like the simple way the light moves across my subjects creating complex behavior that I can exploit. I think it is accessible light – a welcoming

light. Natural light seems familiar and emotional to me.

When I started out, I used a Nikon with three lenses and a reflector. I didn't own any lighting equipment at all. I shot model composites, local fashion and editorial, portraits for business, even still life all with the light in the alley behind my studio and the light that would come through the two story windows. I ended up with a cadre of fill cards... silver, white, gold, bronze. And there was a stash of odd shapes for odd fills, and cookies for shaping the window light.

I love working on location and the challenges it brings. Environments create lighting situations that can be astounding to work with. Even when I am carrying strobes, the natural environment is totally a part of the creative process. Below are a few shots from the early portfolio. All were taken in the 1980's, most in the early 80's.

My first lighting kit was a set of Ascor Strobes with four heads. Wow. They were used like crazy for a week and then set for quite a while as I kept working in the style I was accustomed to working in. Over a couple of years the strobes became another tool in my arsenal of lights, and the work started to include them more and more.

But I never lost my love for the simple natural light. And the intimacy it can create.



These shots were taken on an iPhone on the south side of my studio in soft, overcast light in the late afternoon. I like the way her face is softly sculpted by the light. The DOF is of course not controlled on the wide angle iPhone lens.

The natural softness and the slightly hard shadow from the slightly diffused sun produced a nice look to my eye. The model kept her face toward the light so I could keep the ratio closer than the side light would have created.

This portrait was taken in Balboa Park at the San Diego workshop. We had wrapped a shoot and were heading to meet the other group when I noticed the way the slightly overcast sky was reflecting on the large leaf. I loved the feeling of it, and the shape of that large leaf just seemed like a perfect background for a portrait. Yes, I really did.

I placed her in the soft light of the shade of the building and turned her face up to catch the same soft, broad light that the leaf was enjoying. I really like the way the light formed on her face. And the softness of the light kept her face free of pesky shadows. I do like shadows, it's just them pesky shadows that bother me. The lens was a 20-35MM L at f-4 and zoomed to about 30MM. There are no fill cards or additional modifiers at all on this shot.





## IN PRAISE OF NATURAL LIGHT: EXAMPLES AND DISCUSSION (CONT)



Lately I have been doing all kinds of lighting (at the workshops we go from natural light to 4 and 5 strobes... it is a blast to be able to control and manipulate so many sources), and find my natural light work to be even more interesting to me. I like to move fast, capture a moment and leave it all on the set.

It can be a much shorter process for me these days, and the accessible, intimate, natural light creates a definitive change from the manipulated and illustrative strobe work.



I particularly liked this location near my old studio. It was simply the wall facing east – and to the east was a two story white and light tan building that caught the afternoon light and became a great, soft light source. In the afternoon I could place a model in the shade and still get a wonderful highlight on the hair from the open sky. This is also a totally natural light shot.

With the huge light source of the building and the open sky above us, I can work her face any way and still have wide, broad, soft light. A 200MM lens at f-2.8 gave me a very shallow DOF and isolates her face against the wall.



## TWENTY NON-PHOTOGRAPH NECESSITIES FOR LOCATION PHOTOGRAPHERS



We all know about checklists for our photography gear. Making sure we don't get 50 miles out in the desert and find we forgot our tripod mount, or sync cord, or stands or worse. Much worse. I have a checklist that I go through, and I also have started to keep packed for location work. So much of my work lately is out of the studio... and in the studio I already have enough gear that I don't really have to touch most of my location gear.

Organization is the key to productivity.

So is being able to work quickly and efficiently. And having what you need is one of the most important things to provide peace of mind. I love it when someone asks "Do you have any hairpins?" "Yep." "A steamer?" "Yep." "Wouldn't it be great if we had something to mount that little thing to that other little thing?" "Yeah, I got somethin'..."

And almost all of it is in my location kit B case. It isn't too big, but it gets the job done. In it are mostly non-photographic tools that go with me everywhere. That kit saves my butt on many a job, so I thought I would share the most essential tools and things I carry. And most of them aren't expensive or hard to find.

## **Non Photography Essentials**

### **1. Bed Sheet with Hole in the center**

If you have ever been on a location with a model and no place for her to change, it can end up wasting a lot of time as you look for somewhere for her to find a little privacy. Finding a cheap bed sheet at Target and cutting a hole in the middle of it makes a perfect small changing room. Find someone who knows how to sew and they can put a nice edge on the hole so it doesn't rip. If you don't know anyone, simply use gaffer's tape, folding it over the cut edges for a trim.

When a model needs a place to change, she can poke her head through the middle of the sheet and change under it. Not perfect, but a very nice quick changing room. Mine is a white one so I can use it as a large bounce if I need to, but most of the time it serves its purpose as a changing room.

### **2. Shower Curtain**

I love shower curtains from Target. Get the white cloth ones... not the plastic ones. The plastic ones have fluorescents in them which can add strange color and if it is cold they are stiff and unusable. The white, cloth shower curtain is a staple for my location kit. I have 3 in different cases.

They make great scrims for shooting a light through. They can be taped to a wall for using a bounce flash. And they can make a nice, large reflector for bouncing natural light. Stretch them between stands or clamp them to a painting pole and they are a great light source.

Put a speedlight or a ProFoto behind them and they become a large 5x6 foot softlight. And they roll up into a tiny little space that takes up almost no room.

### **3. Clamps**

Clamps... man I love clamps. I have big ones and medium ones and tiny ones. And I have a lot of them. Some with magnets, some with hooks and some old time metal ones... the ones that look like wood clamps. A visit to Home Depot will get a whole bag full for around \$20.

If you can get the large clamps (like on my cover shot) they will have holes in the handles. And those holes can work for hanging fishing line or cord or even bungees. I don't necessarily buy the expensive ones even though I do have 6 of them for the studio, as I find the cheap ones work great and if I forget one or lose one, it doesn't hurt too much.

From clamping a piece of cardboard to a stand for a bounce to clamping the shirt behind the model to pull it a size smaller, the clamps get used all the time at nearly every shoot. And with the hole, you can mount a speedlight umbrella bracket to it. Very sweet.

I am not counting the Magic Clamps and the Manfrotto's that I have as they are actually made for photography.

### **4. Flashlights**

If you have ever been shooting in a very low light situation with a model all in black, you know the experience of having your camera "hunt" for the exposure... going back and forth because it can't find something with contrast on it to make the focus. With a nice flashlight, an assistant can hold the light on the model's face and the camera will have something to focus on. Don't worry, in most cases there isn't enough light to affect your exposure.

I have a small one that goes in my camera bag, and a pretty good sized one for the kit. I also have a 10million candle flashlight that comes in handy on location when it starts to get dark and you just need some light to get packed up by. You can use that for those tricky backlit shots with a lot of flare that also keeps your focus tricky.



## TWENTY NON-PHOTOGRAPH NECESSITIES FOR LOCATION PHOTOGRAPHERS (CONT)

BTW, you can even do a headshot with one of them if there is enough ambient. Keep it charged and keep it with you on location, you won't regret it. They are only about \$25, so they won't break the bank.

### 5. Fishing Line

Yes. Fishing line. Keep a thin and a medium roll of fishing line. You don't need hooks or sinkers or worms, you just need the line. It is very easy to touch out of a photograph and can be used to pull bridal gowns into the wind, or holding something vertical that seems to be sagging. Make sure you have something to cut it with and keep it tightly wound... believe me, you don't want to let it get all unraveled in your kit.

### 6. Clothesline

A cheap roll of clothesline is something that goes with me everywhere. I can lash something down with it, or tie something together. Or hang the shower curtain with it. There are so many things you can do with 50 feet of line. And it is something that if you need it, there is nothing else that will do.

Cotton line is my favorite. I don't use the plastic as the knots so often will not hold.

### 7. Tupperware

Heh. Yeah. They can keep some stuff dry when it decides to rain. I live in Arizona. I have heard about rain... it could be bad for some gear. I have a few small ones and one big one that will hold my laptop if needed. They can also hold the super glue, fishing line and small clamps, so they do double duty.

### 8. Superglue and Gaffer's Tape

Oh yeah. Gotta always have a little tube of super glue. Again, if you need it there is nothing else that will do. I have actually super glued a stand together on a shoot. It held for the shot at least.

Gaffer's tape in black and white always go along as well. If I want it to be removed later, I gaffer it up. If not, superglue to the rescue. Gaffer's tape is used for other things than photography, so I am including it here with the other non-photo tools.

### 9. All-in-one hammer/knife/saw/wrench Thingy

You can see the one I use in the cover shot. Make sure you have one with you at every shoot. The possibilities of the uses are endless. And it is so much easier than carrying a whole tool kit. On large shoots, I do carry a tool kit, but most of the time on the small shoots, the non-gear gear kit is what goes with me. BTW, don't forget and pack this away in your camera bag when you fly. Or you can spend some time looking for another one.

### 10. Garbage Bags

Self explanatory. And they can be used for covering gear in the rain, keeping models hair dry, holding wet shower curtains, and for already worn wardrobe. I use the Glad black 40 gallon ones. Big and tough.

### 11. Walkie Talkie's

I like the little Motorola ones. Good distance, clear reception and they don't squawk all the time. Great for keeping in touch with team members who may have to be at some distance. Sure saves on shouting and waving arms around like an idiot.

### 12. Umbrellas

Not photographic ones. Shade umbrellas. Or even those little cabana things. Shooting in the hot sun can be tough on your head and tough on your camera. A black camera and lens out in the sun in the Arizona desert can get hot enough for third degree burns. And, worse, the lenses have been known to get hot enough that the

elements can slightly shift.

I use lighter color ones, and beach umbrellas clamped to a stand to keep the camera and flashes cooler.

### **13. Shoe Shine Kit**

If you have ever shot with a model with scuffed shoes, it is wonderful to be able to clean up the shoes a little. I carry the three most popular color, with a brush and a cloth. Tips are welcome. Pick one of these up at Target.

### **14. Lint Roller**

Absolutely a must. I don't want to sit at the computer and touch out lint or dust or pet hair... Not one minute longer than I need to. And to be able to practically eliminate that with a \$4 lint roller? Sorry, it goes everywhere with me.

### **15. Makeup Box / First Aid**

Hit the local Ulta store and be prepared to spend about \$25-\$30. You need some powders in a bottle, the shaker kind. Lighter, medium and darker for skin tones. Don't get the compact type because we don't want to pass on something from one model to another. With the shaker powder the model puts some on her hand or a paper towel and then pats on it with a round sponge applicator (get a bag of those) or a brush. If you get brushes, get a pack of mediums and get cheap ones. More than likely you will not be passing them from one model to another. They are one use only. A bag of sponge applicators are about \$4 – should last you a long time. These are for moments when the model has forgotten to bring something you need. In most cases, hopefully, she will have it or you will at least be working with a Make Up Artist.

Nail polish and Polish remover are important. I found one of those little sample kits at Ulta with about 12 colors in it. For \$4. It is another one of those things that when you need it, there is no replacement. A couple of packs of fake fingernails aren't a bad idea either.

If you have a MUA, then this is not necessary. But if you don't, a little kit like this is very nice to have around. I do not deal with all kinds of makeup... just powder and nails.

Add in a couple of first aid things as you build a kit. Band aids, neosporin, aloe vera and some cotton balls make up my little first aid portion. I also have some tweezers and such. You can find a little first aid kit at Home Depot or Walgreens.

### **16. Hair Ties, Hairspray**

Absolutely important. Grab a bag and a can of hairspray. Get some hair clips as well. Again, black and white are all I get... colors become too difficult to match. I saw an infomercial about some clips that can hide bra straps so I bought a kit of those as well. They are pretty cool and work with for a lot of styles.

### **17. Bungee Cords**

Big ones, small ones, ball bungees and multiple hook ones. Spend ten or fifteen bucks and get a whole bag of them

### **18. Anti-Static spray / Steamer**

A spray can of anti-static spray can take the wrinkles out of pants and blouses that have static in them. And a steamer can work miracles on a dress or even a t-shirt that has been twisted en-route. You have to have access to electricity for the steamer, but it goes with me in the kit anyway.

### **19. Mirrors**

Small and medium mirrors are great for touching up hair and makeup. I keep a bunch in the kit bag to make



## TWENTY NON-PHOTOGRAPH NECESSITIES FOR LOCATION PHOTOGRAPHERS (CONT)

sure that I have something when it is needed. They are cheap, and light so they travel well. I have also used them to bounce a little light where I want it as well.

### 20. Extension Cords / Multiple Outlets

Oh yeah... you must have an extension cord or two, and a couple of the surge-protector kind of multiple outlet strips. These are the things that can make the difference between moving quick and fast and being delayed while someone runs to Home Depot for an extension cord. I also carry a couple of screw-in bulb/cord outlet with the on/off chain on them. Easy to control the extraneous lights when you can turn each off one by one if needed.

### Oh, and a few more:

Clothes Pins

Sewing kit

Lens cleaning solution

scotch tape

tethering tools (for lines, not shooting)

ground spikes

extra stand mounts

vice grips (1 medium, 2 small)

allen wrenches

4 Bogen super clamps

carpet knife

loupe (spare)

small lint brush

hairpins

... little things that are so important...

Most of these things are easy to find and store. Heat and dampness are to be avoided. But when you are on location and need one of these things...



# USING A FLASH TO ADD A LITTLE SNAP WITH NATURAL LIGHT

I love natural light. It has a quality that is so unique and fits with my vision so well. Lots of terrific pics made with only the light that is there at the time. Learning to use natural light and make it work for you is one of the most important things that a photographer can do to improve their work.

I have shot natural light for many, many years. I have learned to use it, define it, control it and exploit it. It can be such a great main light, and working with some reflectors can add to the natural feel as well.

On this shoot I had decided to get back to my roots of shooting with lots of natural light and concentrating on the image, pose, attitude, expression and composition without adding lights. I think you will enjoy how the shoot came together.

Megan came along as well and shot with her speed-lights. She has graciously let me use her images to show how two different approaches can work on the same shot.

Our first shot is one of Megan shooting the driver's seat of a cool old 57 Chevy we found in Miami, Arizona. The owner was happy to let us hang all over it and make our images. I wanted to test the shot with Megan while Bri and Christina were being styled by Lisa. The car is in the shade of a two story building with the sun behind.

The car was about 10-12 feet from the shadow line so there would be way less of the "up light" that can sometimes happen when the subject is right on a shadow line with a bright floor or ground. You can see where the car is in the shade here and you can also see where we had placed our strobes.



Here is the car with and without the strobe firing.



## USING A FLASH TO ADD A LITTLE SNAP WITH NATURAL LIGHT (CONT)

I wanted the natural light to be my main, but I also wanted a feeling of direct sun to be interjected into the image. For this I added a speedlight at a very low setting. Without the speedlight adding a bit of backlight, the image would have been one dimensional. All the light would have been coming in from the front and the image would have been a little flat possibly. Now, there would be times when that would be totally acceptable, but that is what I love about being able to create what I want when I want it. This time I wanted that kick of 'sun' to make the shot sparkle a bit.

As you can see, we added the speedlight to the back side of the car – passenger side – to throw the light back into the car and hit the back side of the models. This would give us a feeling of direct light which would contrast with the very soft main light – all natural – on the girls faces. The main light was the brightly lit buildings all around the scene as well as the bright open sky. The natural light exposure was f3.5 at 1/125 @ ISO 100.



That meant that I was OK within the flash sync of the camera. Since the f-stop was so open, I knew that the strobe couldn't be too hot or it would blow out the interior of the car instead of adding the feel of sun. Dialing down the strobe to 1/32nd power was all I needed to add a wink of light for effect. That also meant that the recycle time would

be minimal and I could shoot as fast as I would with the natural light.



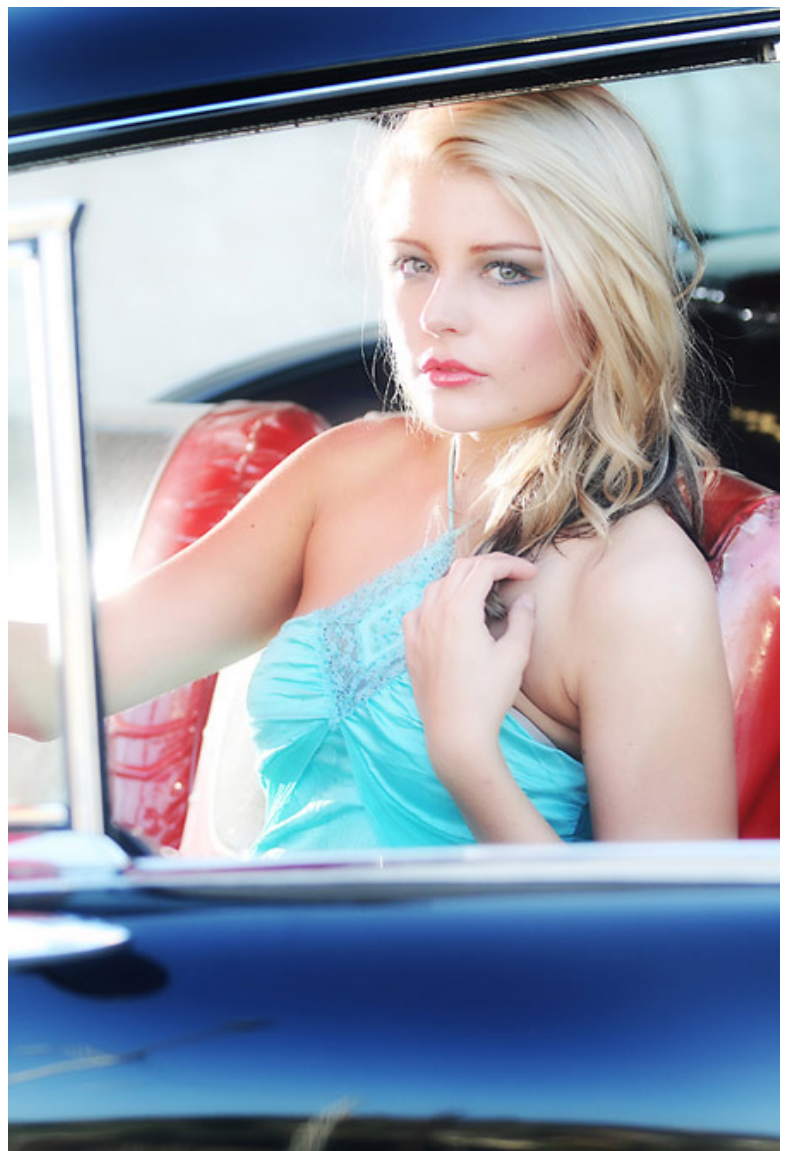
Remember that even at 1/32 power, that little flash is capable of adding some significant light to a scene that is in the shade. When attempting these shots, start low and add if needed. We only want a feeling of light, not a blast of light.

Here is Megan's shot using a speedlight for the main and keeping the ambient up for fill. Again, the speedlight is dialed way down to only interject a little punch to the image.

In this shot you can see how hi-tech my strobe mount is... LOL. Bungees and a clamp. Yep, only the best equipment on my shoots. In the back you see Megan's very cool adjustable mount.



This shot is with Christina. I had the strobe aiming right at the side of her and it bounced all over the car and lit the side of her face and hair. The look has the feel of sunlight coming in the side window. Exposure is f3.5, 1/125 @ISO 100 and the strobe is set at 1/32nd power.





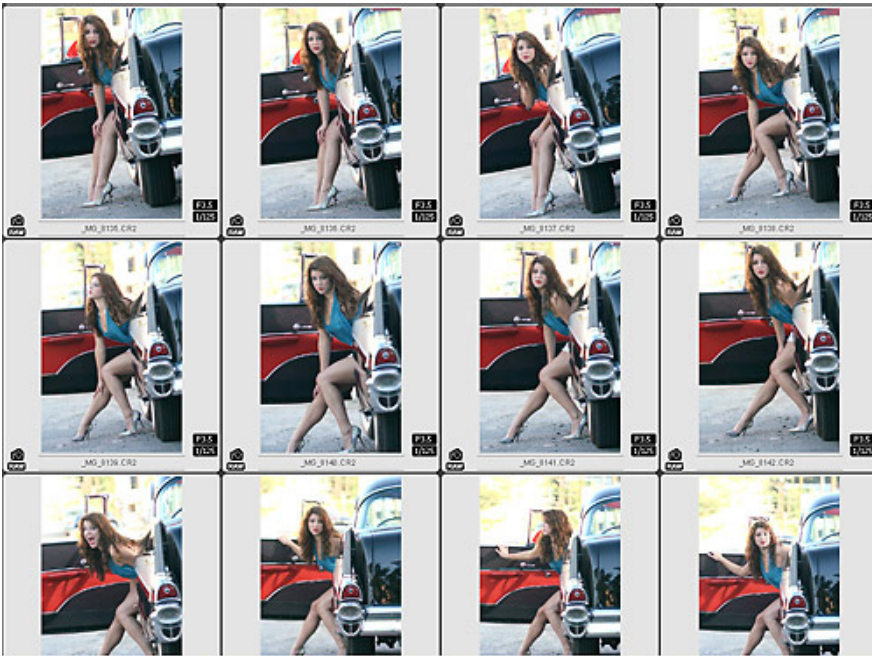
## USING A FLASH TO ADD A LITTLE SNAP WITH NATURAL LIGHT (CONT)



Briana was standing next to the car and I wanted to make the shot look like late day sunlight so I placed the speedlight on a stand a bit above Bri's head and only a little out of frame. I didn't change exposure on the camera, leaving it at the point of correct exposure for the natural light. I wanted the sunlight to be brighter than the ambient, not to lower the ambient. With the flash at 1/32nd power and at that distance it only added about 2/3 stop to the shot... that was all I needed to add the feeling of the sun as a main light. Briana's pose with the hand over the eyes adds to the illusion.



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In the contact sheet of Briana you can see how the flash adds light from inside of the car, but also how the ambient and reflected light from the bright buildings add hair-light to the camera left on her hair. Here is a final shot of Briana in this last set of images.





## USING A FLASH TO ADD A LITTLE SNAP WITH NATURAL LIGHT (CONT)

We headed toward a very cool old fence with Christina to do a second variation shot. In this image Megan is using a strobe for main light against the sun backlight while I am using only the available light bouncing around in the narrow little street. Behind me is bright sky and two story buildings with very light color. The street is a tiny two lane street so you can imagine how close they are.

The sun is enough south these days (mid September) to give us pretty good backlight. We stood Christina in front of the iron gate and each of us did headshots. Megan's flash is again dialed way down to only add a wink of strobe to the already available light (see background density on both images).

First is Megan's shot with a flash for main:



Photo by Megan Abshire

Next up is my shot with natural light for main. As you can see, both shots are lovely images. There is no right and wrong way to do these things, only the personal vision of the photographer and the look they have in their head.





## BONUS ARTICLE: SHOOTING FOR AND PRESENTING A PORTFOLIO



### Create a Portfolio Shoot Schedule.

It is time to plan and book some images for your portfolio. And while I do believe that at some point shooting 'for the book' is not necessary, at the beginning it may be. You have limited time to produce and shooting all week is generally not an option.

Some photographers feel that shooting expressly for a portfolio is something that limits you. I feel that while that is true for photographers who already have portfolios and have been shooting for a number of years, it isn't true for those who have never created a portfolio. If you are a good shooter and planning at some point to make that jump, it is a good thing to begin to plan your portfolio.

Using the image collection from the post on How You Shoot for inspiration, pull some shots together to shoot.

"Yeah, Don, that may be easy for you to do, but I don't have the resources of a long time shooter."

True, you don't. But you may have more resources than you think you do.

Let's say you want to do editorial portraiture. OK, we need to look at the images you have chosen. Maybe you have chosen a 'candid' approach in your images. Let's look at how you can go about getting some work for your portfolio. I promise not to mention family as I know exactly how hard that can be. I really do.

1. Are there some small businesses in your area? Introduce yourself and ask if you can do a portrait of the owner in his/her place of business. Make a time, plan a shoot and execute it. Get an image that they love, and get one that YOU love.
2. Approach the local Chamber of Commerce and ask if they would

## **The Concept.**

The Moleskin, or a similar sketching book, is a very popular tool for planning a shoot. I also use a Flip Video camera and a P&S camera that is nearly always with me, to record a place or location that catches my eye. Going back to those images and pulling out the Moleskin lets me plan out the shot and make notes while I am thinking about them.

I sketch ideas for designs, websites and photographs whenever I am waiting for something or in a position where I cannot get online or onto a laptop.

## **The shoot.**

### **Time:**

Allow plenty of time. Time can be an enemy when you are working on a shot. The sun sets faster, and the makeup artist takes longer. It is a fact of nature. Deal. If you can go to the site earlier and get things put together first, that is a great tool for keeping the shot on or close to schedule.

### **Gear:**

Have the gear ready. Fresh batteries, clean lenses, fresh cards or media, stands at the ready and your 'kit' ready to go will take some stress off as well. Have additional items that you could possibly need like tripods, booms and different modifiers at the shoot. Not having something you need to make the shot can drive you crazy so take everything you may need.

If you have scouted the location, done a test shoot or position shoot, and KNOW what you will need, then take a minimal kit. If it needs something, have it in pairs if possible.

## **The Team:**

If you don't need someone, that is great. I usually do need an additional pair of hands, some muscle, someone to move things and bounce ideas off of. And I enjoy working with others who love images. Makeup artists, wardrobe and food stylists, hair designers and talent all combine to make a shoot with me. We have fun and we work hard.

## **The Edit:**

I move all images off the cards to drive A, then back up that to drive B. Only after verifying the images have been saved on two different media do they get erased.

With the image in Bridge or Lightroom I do a very fast edit. I go as fast as I can and make no evaluation other than "does it look good" – not great – just good. Tagging or starring them or whatever, I will go through the shoot in only a few minutes. That is the initial "gut" edit.

I will then go through the edit again. Looking for the images that I like and being pretty interested in the ones that catch my eye quickly.

The third edit is the brutal one. Very tight editing is what is called for. I look at the image and think about the Post unless I had already known what I was going to do in post before I shot it.



## BONUS ARTICLE: SHOOTING FOR AND PRESENTING A PORTFOLIO (CONT)

### The Presentation:

Here is where testing and challenging the eye can become a process that can bog down. There are literally millions of ways to crop or show an image, and thousands of ways to show it well. You only have to find one – the one that works with your style.



Full bleed images are popular. They command the page, and make create a very large target for the viewer. The bleed takes the eye off the page and presents a 'natural' border to the images.



Images with a small border seem to be 'classic' in presentation. The small border contains the images and provides an edge for the eyes to be constrained as well as a "palette" for the image to sit above.



A small image on the left, and especially in this case a nearly monochrome image, can pull the eye from the color picture on the right because of the size relationship. This has to be done with care as sometimes it won't work. You will have to find that right mix for your images. However, when it does work, it can be amazingly effective.



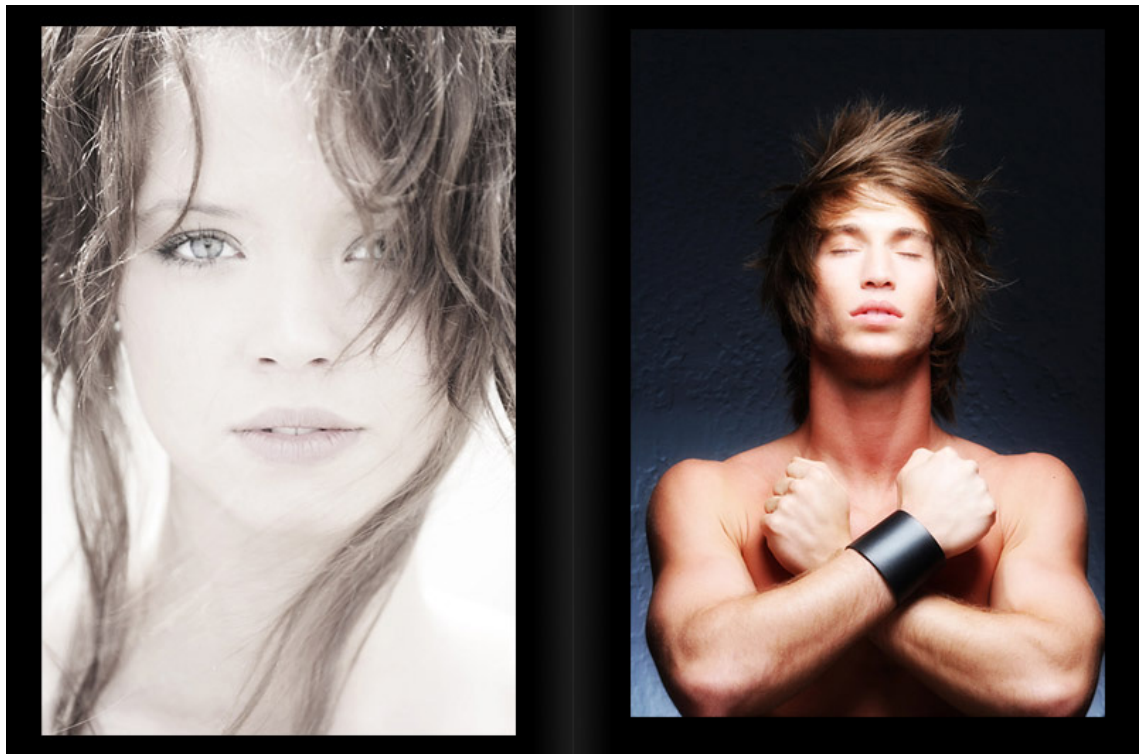
The small image on the right can pull the eye because of the color and border contrast. In this case the eye doesn't escape off the right side of the page, but rather gets trapped with the small image.



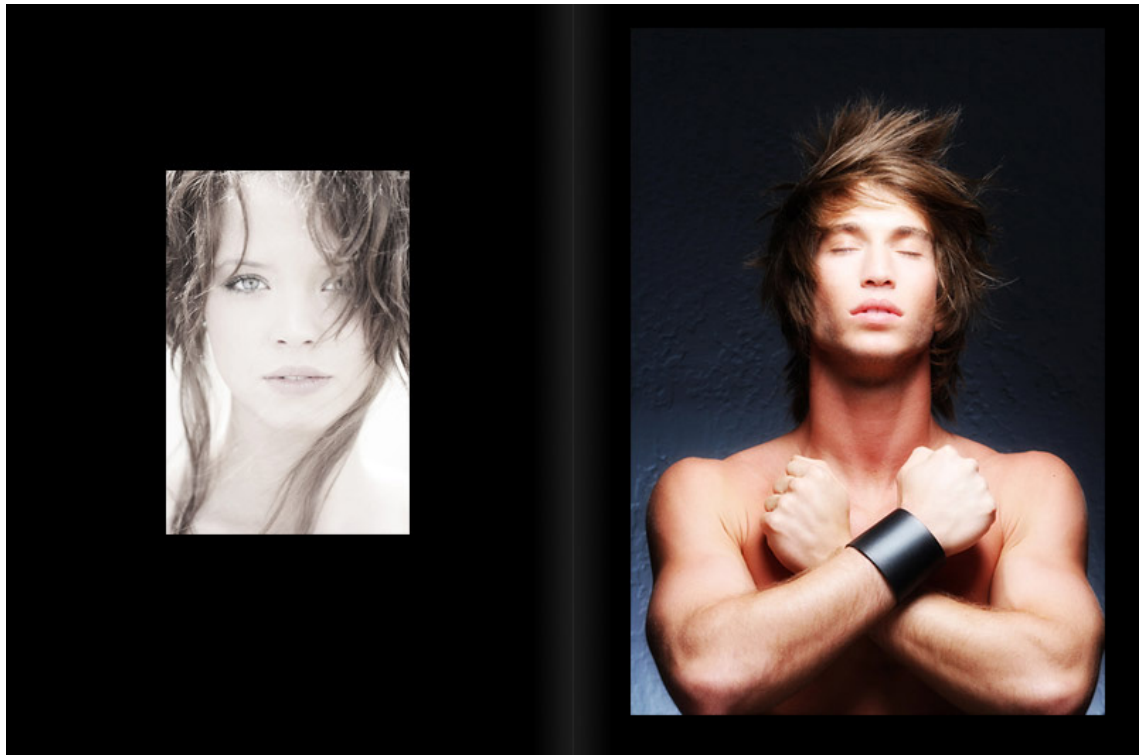
## BONUS ARTICLE: SHOOTING FOR AND PRESENTING A PORTFOLIO (CONT)



Two small images gives a precious approach, making each image seem to have a singular importance that is developed by the use of white space. This can be a super effective presentation for the right images.



The black background presents a very negative space for the images to live over. The small black border can create a dramatic presentation at the edge of the image.



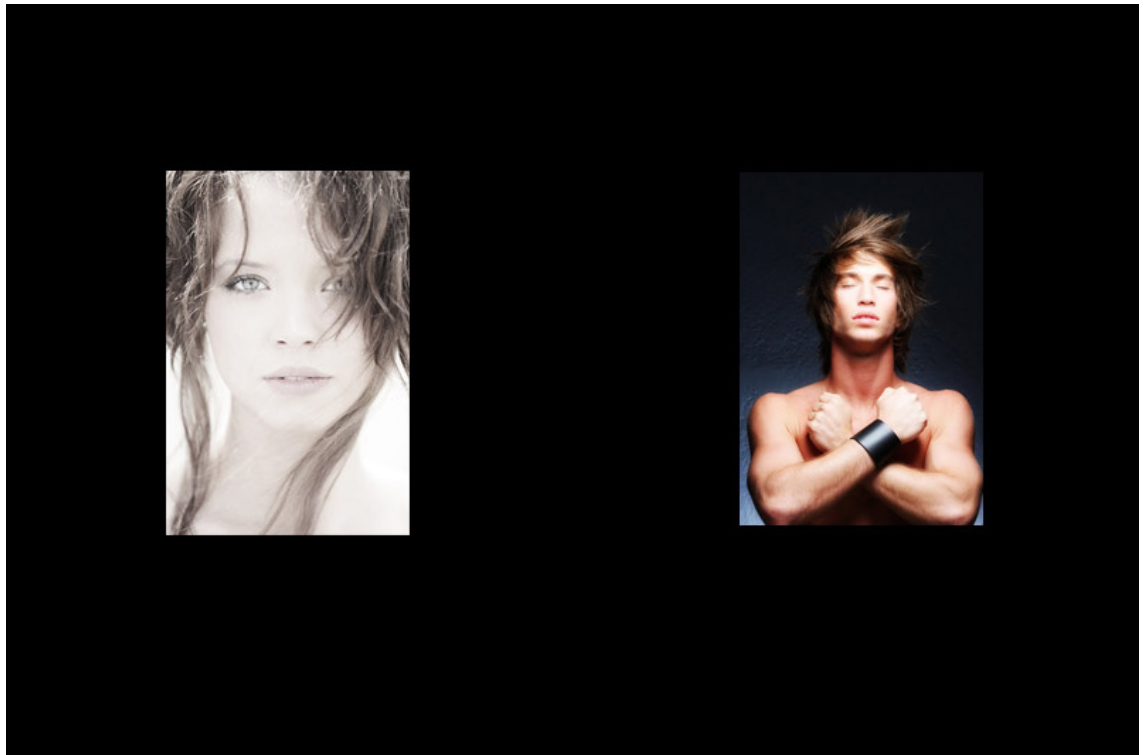
Similar to the small image on the left on white above, the small image against the black draws the eye. But in a different way. The image seems more dramatic with the heavy contrast of the black background.



The black page on the right has a small image floating in the space and the color really draws the eye.



## BONUS ARTICLE: SHOOTING FOR AND PRESENTING A PORTFOLIO (CONT)



The two small images in the black background seem ‘special’ – precious almost. The large black background border makes the images pop. Both seem to be of equal importance and pull the eye with the same weight.

### **Finding Flow**

Do not think this will be a fast or quick exercise. Finding the flow and style of book you want takes a lot of time, false starts, rabbit holes, and do-overs.

Get someone to help you who has done it before.

Find a group of eyes that can give you quality feedback and then listen to what they have to say, but move forward on things you are simply certain about.

There is a lot more information at [www.lighting-essentials.com](http://www.lighting-essentials.com) that can help you build a solid and respected portfolio.

See you there.

I hope you enjoyed these articles and possibly learned a thing or two.

While some of the techniques are not something everyone does, the skill is still the same.

Blending strobe and ambient, or creating strobe lit images in and out of the studio is just a fact of life for most photographers.

I prefer natural light, but I modify the heck out of it with white cards, shiny boards, and occasionally a strobe or two.

It's all light.

It's all photography.

And I hope you enjoy the newsletter as well.

We try to keep it filled with stuff you will really like, and hopefully provide a thought or two for you to think about.

Photography is and has always been a strong passion for me, and I find nothing more satisfying than helping other photographers reach their goals and live their dreams.

If you are interested in hearing more about how I work with photographers and how I can absolutely help you develop a successful commercial photography business, head on over to my website at [www.dongiannatti.com](http://www.dongiannatti.com)

This lighting book is currently ONLY for subscribers to this newsletter and I would like to continue to offer you all something special.

Watch for more in the weekly dispatch, "*In The Frame*".



LIGHTING ESSENTIALS LIGHTING BOOK  
A COMPILATION OF LIGHTING TUTORIALS

