

# PHOTOSHOP 101 THE MAGIC OF LAYERS

Presented to SMCCC  
30 April 2014

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# Overview

- **If you learn only ~~three~~ two things about PS:**

1. Calibrate your monitor
2. WP-BP & color correction step
3. Do everything else on a layer
  - Remember:

“White Reveals - Black Conceals”

Everything else is a matter of taste and which tool you are most comfortable using (there are usually at least three different ways to skin any problem in PS)

# Assumptions

- Your environment is properly setup (see backups)
- You have converted your image to an RGB file (TIFF or JPG) either in-camera or in your RAW converter of choice.
- You have some reason to want to make changes to your picture
- Remember from the words of Vinny Versace:
  - Photoshop is a noun not a verb...
  - Photoshop should be an emery board not a jackhammer

# Quick Workflow Summary

- Global corrections such as:
  - Crop, horizon, ...
  - Dynamic Range, (curves, exposure, saturation...)
  - Gamma (exposure, curves, levels...)
  - Color correction (hue/sat, color balance,...)
- Local corrections
  - See above
  - Dodge-Burn (curves, gray layer,...)
  - Sharpen
  - Artistic adjustments

# Quick Workflow cont.

- Bit corrections such as:
  - Dust spots, pimples, minor defects...
  - May be done before global.
- Finish for output:
  - Save Hi-Rez Master
  - Resize / Final crop
  - Sharpen for final output
  - SAVE

# A Single Monitor Setup



Source: Entire Image  
Mean: 88.39  
Std Dev: 30.51  
Median: 96  
Pixels: 144000  
Level:  
Count:  
Percentile:  
Cache Level: 3

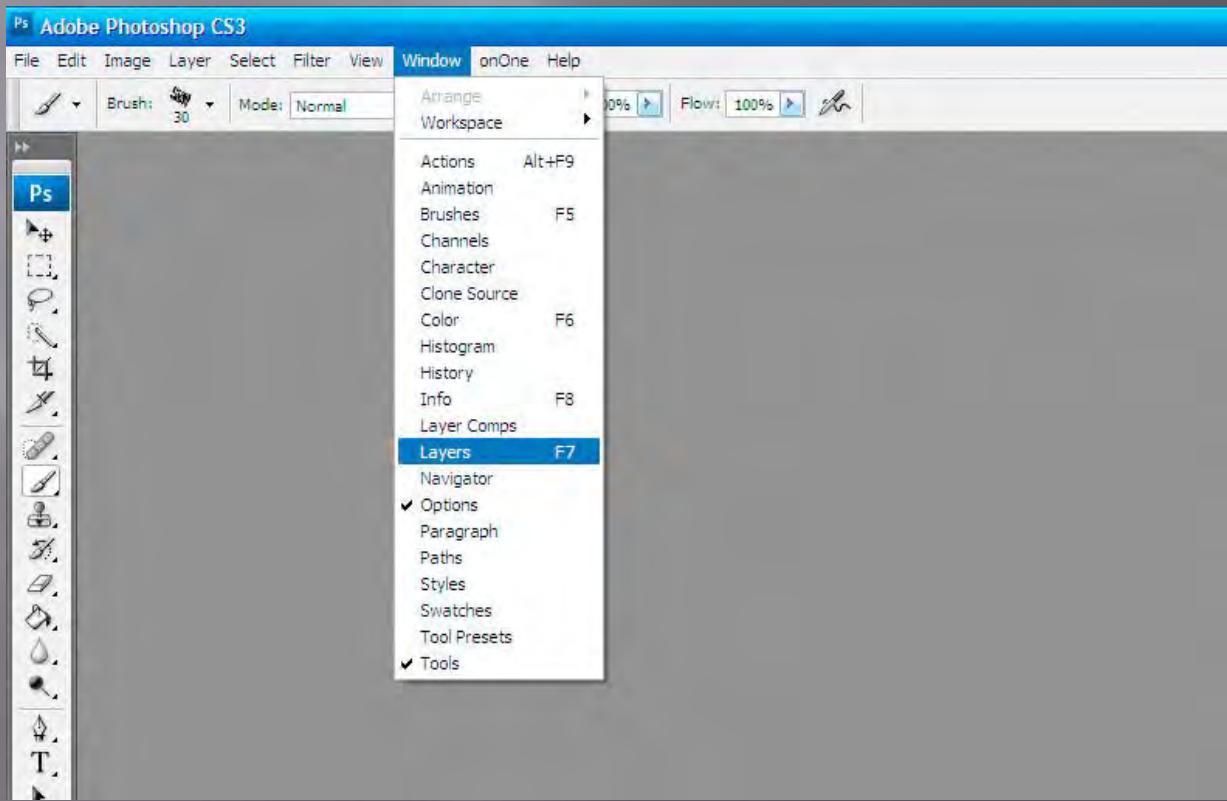
# My Two Monitor Setup



# Step One:

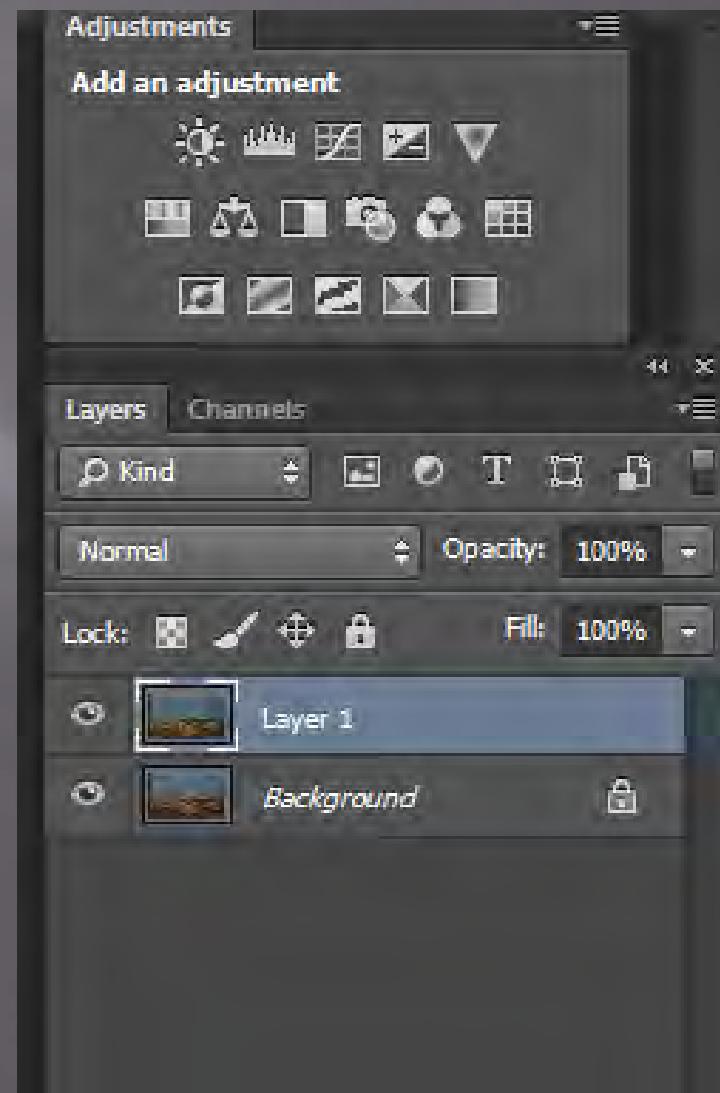
## Make sure your layer palette is visible

- F7
- Window>Layers



## Step Two: Make a B/U Layer to start working from

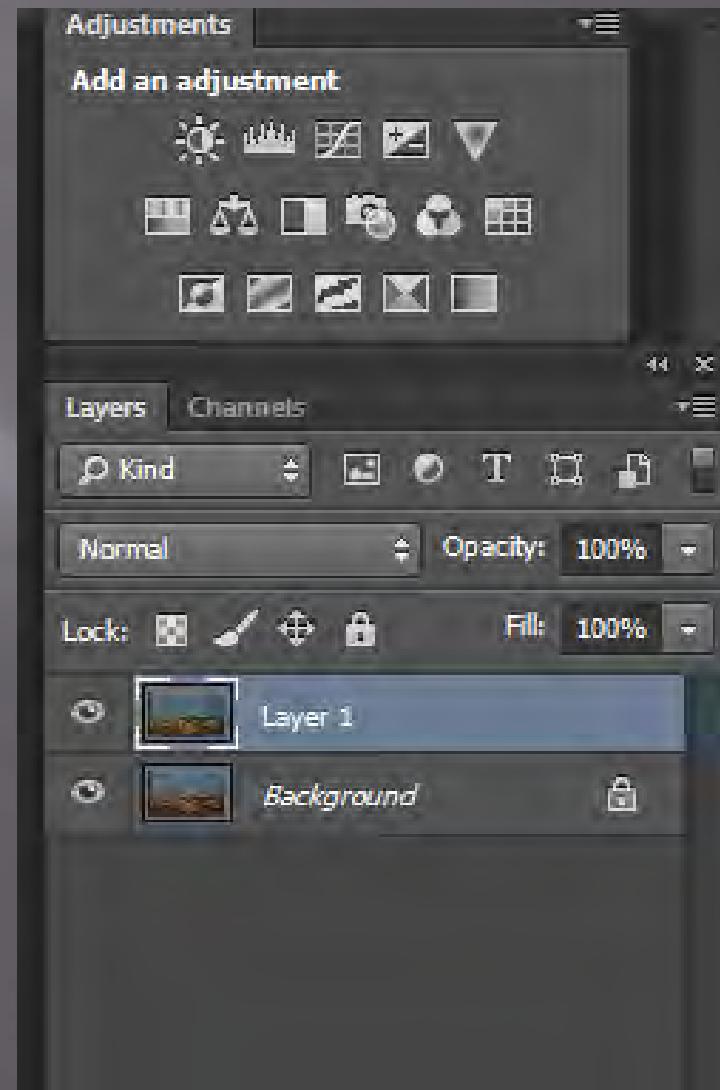
- Ctrl-J
- From Layers palette:
- ....
- Don't forget to label the new layer so you don't forget what it's doing.



# Step Three:

## Label each new layer, then have a ball

- Play with the different blending modes
- Don't forget Opacity changes
  - "how can you tell you've gone far enough until you've gone too far" V.V.
- Luminance blending helps prevent color shift.



# So Lets Look At the Test File

- Open the Gradient Tiff.tiff
  - There are seven layers we can use to explore the impacts to exposure based on:
    - Blending modes
    - Opacity
    - Exposure controls
  - There is an extra layer available for exploring sharpening effects as well
- So lets open it and play a little ;o)

# The Real Secret: Shhhhhh

## Use a layer mask

- Automatic with an adjustment layer
- You need to make one with a filtered layer
  - You'll want to do a “Merge Down” for filters
- When don't you need a layer mask? Global corrections

**Remember “White Reveals – Black Conceals”**

# The Gouge Sheet

## An ounce of gouge > A pound of knowledge

- Copy existing layer Ctrl-J
  - Merge Down “the Move” Ctrl-Alt-Shft-E
  - Brush B
  - Bigger Brush ]
  - Smaller Brush [
  - Switch palette color X
  - Default palette (B & W) D
  - Invert mask Ctrl-I
  - Black Mask Opt-mask button

# My Favorite Adjustments

## Different than last time

- Copied layer for minor defect correction
- Global
  - **Ruler** for horizon,
  - Crop for gross adjustment
  - **Curves** for dynamic range
  - **Exposure** for gamma
- Local
  - **Gray Layer** for minor shadow/highlight fixes
    - Used to use curves

# My Favorite Adjustments cont.

## □ Finishing

- Convert to 8bit color
- Crop to final size for output (**after saving master**)
- Sharpen for output
- Minor curves adjustment (for major size changes)
- Color Space for final output
  - sRGB for the WEB
  - AdobeRGB sRGB for prints

# Bottom Line

- ❑ GET IT RIGHT IN THE CAMERA but...
- ❑ If not .... fix it on a layer so you can always go back.

# Workshop Activity

Test File First!

- Open a new file ~1000x500 color WHITE
- Copy Layer
- Fill new layer BLACK
- Create a layer mask
  - Create a brush
    - ~100 px wide
    - Opacity 50%
    - Flow 75%
    - Make sure foreground color is Black

# Cont.

- Now lets play with the brush:
- Set foreground to Black
  - Make a brush stroke
  - Make a second one over the top notice the impact
    - Whats going on? We're painting with a black brush on a black layer and the result is white?
    - Try this with a brush of ~25 opacity, brush a couple times

# A little technique

- You can build up mask effects by brushing on layers of ~25
- Then take a wider brush of ~10% opacity and run it over the edge to smooth it.

# Workshop Cont.

- Now set the opacity to 50%
  - Make a brush stroke
  - Immediately after making the stroke:
  - Ctrl-Shft-F for fade
    - Adjust the fade slider

# A few more quick notes

- Don't forget the layer opacity adjustment!
  - Often the easiest way to get that perfect adjustment is to go just a little too far and then back off the opacity of the layer
- The second one is the blending modes
  - Luminosity can be used to avoid color shifts
  - Darken can be used to do just that..
  - The other two I frequently use are:
    - Soft light for High Pass Sharpening and
    - Screen for printing.

# So lets look at the WS file

- This is file that was taken on a very foggy day (it was southern California) when the waves were huge
  - The file is a 16bit TIFF reduced to 2000 x 1334 (Why TIFF? Why 16 bit?...)
- OBTW what do you think the EV was when I shot it?

# Workshop Steps

- Open File
  - Possible Color Space issue
- Correct image deficiencies
  - Global
    - Crop for composition
  - Local
  - Bit
- Save Hi-Rez File for possible reuse later
  - Change to preferred Color Space / bit depth
  - Save As.....(I prefer TIFF, PSD, why?)
- Prep for final output
  - Resize / Crop
    - Alt-Ctrl-I or Image>Size set new size and make sure resample image is selected. OK
  - Color / Brightness adjust for resize
    - Curves

# Workshop Steps

- Sharpen for final output
  - The “Move” or “Flatten” file
    - Ctrl-Alt-Shft-E or Alt-L-F
  - Filter > Smart Sharpen (HE-MAN approach)
    - Amount to 500
    - Radius to 0.1
    - Step up radius until sharpening is visible
    - Reduce Amount until sharpening just disappears.
- Image is complete, now for the “extras”
  - Add 2 pixel border
    - Ctrl-Alt-S or Image>Size
      - Set to pixels
      - Relative
      - 4 pixels color background (black)

# Workshop Steps

- Add Drop Shadow
  - Click fx button on the bottom of the Layers Panel
  - Select Drop Shadow
    - I usually use:
      - Distance: 10
      - Size: 15
- Add white background
  - Image>Size
    - Select
      - Pixels / Relative / Centered
      - Add pixels in both horizontal/vertical = (final - 10)
      - Gray
    - Image>Size
      - Select
        - Pixels / Relative / Top Center
        - 10 vertical
        - Gray

# Workshop Steps

- Add copyright text
- Select the Type tool
  - Select Font (I'm currently using Trajan Pro)
  - Select size (for this size image this is usually SMALL 4pt)
  - Draw a text box in the corner and type in: © BJ Ramsay 2014
  - Touch outside text box (I usually touch layers panel layer) to stop typing in the text box.
  - Select the Move Tool (V) and position the text where desired.
  - Additional adjustments to text layer as appropriate
    - Opacity, Drop Shadow, Bevel...

# Workshop Steps

- Convert to sRGB and flatten file
  - Alt-E-V sRGB and flatten file selected.
- SAVE AS:
  - New file name,
  - File type JPG
  - Compression as desired: I use ~10
- Picture is ready to POST

# Backups

# Preferences

- <http://www.photoshopessentials.com/basics/cs5/preferences/>

- Good link to a well described CS5 Setup:
  - <http://www.photoshopessentials.com/basics/cs5/preferences/>