

# Powerful Portrait Photography



*Making Portraits That Tell 1,001 Words*

**Michael Willems** BSc, LPPO

# EXCERPT

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First Edition: November 2014

ISBN 978-0-9918636-5-5

# EXCERPT

## Foreword

What is photography for?

More than anything else, it is for remembering. For locking fleeting moments into eternity. For owning those moments forever.

Photography is a time travel tool.

And more than anything else, it is *people* that we want to travel back to. In portraits you and your loved ones will live forever, be young forever, and by making portraits we can all be a little more than “dust in the wind”.

This book will quickly help you make powerful portraits. In order to do so, you will first learn the technical requirements of a good photo. Second we will explore the different types of portraits and their unique purposes. Last, we will review a collection of tools and practical tips that you may need to go that extra mile.

Enjoy making, and looking at, great photos.

*Michael Willems*

Oakville, Ontario, December 2014

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## **ABOUT THIS EXCERPT**

This contains a 30-page excerpt from the full 171-page book, which is available from <http://learning.photography>. The sections contained in this excerpt were chosen to give you a good idea of the book's style and content, but they also form an interesting and useful section all by themselves: you will learn about lighting patterns

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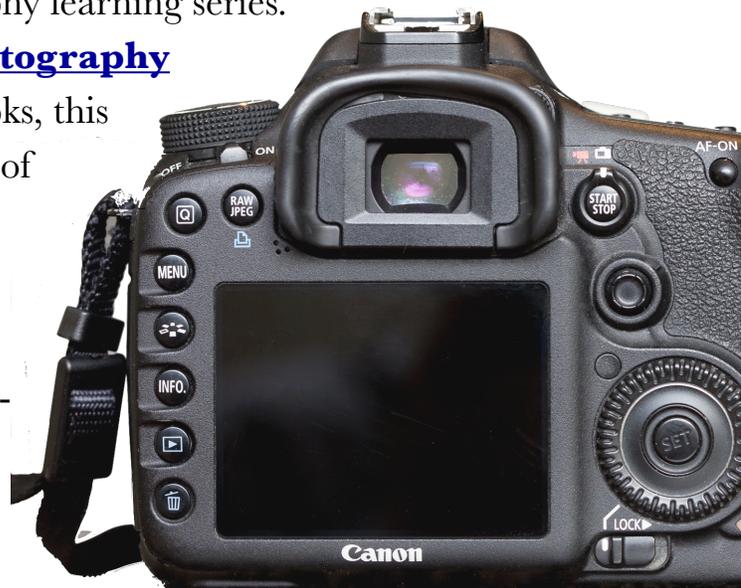
## Why This Book?



*Self Portrait, Timmins, Ontario, 2014*

This is the sixth e-book in my photography learning series. Go to the store on <http://learning.photography> for the others. Like the previous several books, this one too is concerned with a particular type of photography; in this case, portraiture. Photographing people.

Why people? Google “Famous Photo”: 90% of all the photos that come up are portraits. Pictures of people. Because people are irreplaceable, and are more interesting than things.



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People age, people come and go into our lives; those people are our parents, our children, our lovers or the objects of our unrequited love, our friends, our spouses: they are the most important things in our lives. With photography, we carry them in our wallets, we put them on our walls, and most importantly, we make them last forever, we stop time.

Moments cannot be repeated, but they can be captured in a photo. Look at a photo of yourself when you were young, and you *are* young again. Look at a vacation even ten years ago and you are on that vacation again, and your companions' smiles take you back to the moment you pressed the shutter. That is how it works for me, and I am sure it is the way it works for you, too. It is amazing to see how we travel back to the past when looking at a picture... no wonder portraits are so important! I have portraits of my ancestors, and even though I do not know their names, their portraits are important to me. Through these portraits, I connect with my past. People who have no portraits made of themselves deny the next generations that connection.



*An affordable 50mm lens: this f/1.4 lens, and the cheaper f/1.8, are great as portrait lenses.*

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## **First, You Need Equipment.**

However, you do not need a *lot* of photography equipment: you can often make portraits with the simplest of cameras. You can make professional portraits with ambient light, a cheap SLR, and a 50mm f/1.8 prime lens that cost only about \$150: you do not need the \$2000 f/1.2 lens shown on the right. You can even make professional studio portraits with a “kit” lens, if that is all you have access to.



But clearly, the more equipment you have access to, the wider the range of creative options open to you. Not just in cameras, but especially in flash and other related equipment.

In this book, you will learn what options allow you to do what type of work; then, you can decide what to spend.

## **...Then You Need Skills...**

For the purposes of this book, I presume that you know the fundamentals of photography and camera operation. You should know them well:

- Exposure: i.e. the interplay of ISO, Aperture and Shutter in determining how bright or dark an image is.
- The creative effect of using the aperture.
- The creative effect of using the the shutter.
- How to use your camera’s autofocus (“AF”) system.
- White Balance.
- Flash control.

In case you are a little rusty, I will give you basics and some “recipes” in this book, but you may find my other books a very useful addition; in particular the “Mastering Your Camera” and “Pro Flash Manual” books. This is knowledge you really need: you should buy these e-books, which are available at <http://learning.photography>.

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## ...And Not Least, You Need Personality.

The most important requirement for good portraits is *affinity with your subject*. This is necessary for good communication, and you need that to put your



subject at ease and get the most out of him or her.

Personality helps there. Experience will help too, both in terms of life and of portrait photography. Openness helps, too, as does the ability to deal with people. And here we have one of those rare areas where age is a benefit. I know how a seventeen-

year old feels, and how a 37-year old feels; and so on. (I do not yet know how a 57-year old feels or how a 67-year old feels, but I suspect I will find out one day).

An important skill is to make your subject feel at ease. Whether you are shooting a corporate headshot or a nude portrait, it is always intimidating to be photographed, and it is your job to ensure that the subject feels comfortable. An easygoing demeanour, a sense of humour, a comfortable environment, allowing enough time: all these are important factors that determine how relaxed your client is. A good photographer is a people-person.

**TIP:** Be sure that you too are regularly photographed. There is no better way to know what your subjects are going through when you aim that lens at them. And you need that empathy to be good at the job.

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## HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED:

**I. BASIC NEEDS.** First, this book goes over the basic needs for the various types of studio: home, outdoors, and on location. This first section talks in some detail about the basics of knowledge and equipment needed “to do it properly”. That does not mean you need all equipment for every shoot; but you should be aware of what a full outfit consists of for the shoot you are planning. The fact that you can improvise and do with less does not take away from that.

**II. TYPES OF PORTRAIT.** In this section, looking at the specifics of each main type of portrait, you will learn how to best execute each one. Because some portraits are created using a mix of the defined types (especially once you get creative!), it is important that you read all these sections, even if a particular section may not interest you.

**III. TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS.** Finally, we go over a number of specific techniques and tools that will help you raise your portraits from the mundane to the expert, even to the creative.

At the end, provided you follow the logic and do the exercises, you will be at least a competent portrait photographer. But better still, you will be all set to get creative and to develop your own style. Portraiture is enormous fun.

**TIP:** I suggest you skim through this book in its entirety before getting into detail. That way, when questions arise, you know that these are answered in later sections. The book is, as you will see, organized in a logical way, which means that in many cases, things finally all fall into place at the end.

### **What this book isn't:**

This book is not a technical photography training book. You should know about aperture, shutter, and ISO. You should know about lens focal lengths, depth-of-field, how to focus, and about your camera's menu settings. You should know flash fundamentals. Finally, you should know basic composition principles, like the Rule of Thirds and the importance of simplifying.

If not, you need to get the companions to this book, *Pro Flash Manual* and *Mastering Your Camera*, from <http://learning.photography>. See the last pages of this book for a short description.

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## Lighting Patterns & Viewpoints

The above standard portrait, it turns out, is only one way to light a face. There are many, and you should know them, and the terms used to describe them. Let's look at the most important ones, as well as a couple of “viewpoint” styles.

The *lighting patterns* you need to know are:

- Rembrandt lighting.
- Loop lighting.
- Butterfly lighting.
- Split lighting.
- Rim lighting.

And the *viewpoint styles*, as I call them, are

- Short lighting.
- Broad lighting.

This chapter shows you all these styles, including lighting diagrams. Whatever style you like (and this will vary from portrait to portrait), it is important that you get comfortable with all these patterns: this is part of your basic portrait education. Learning the styles is also a good way to start to see the importance of lighting in general.



# EXCERPT

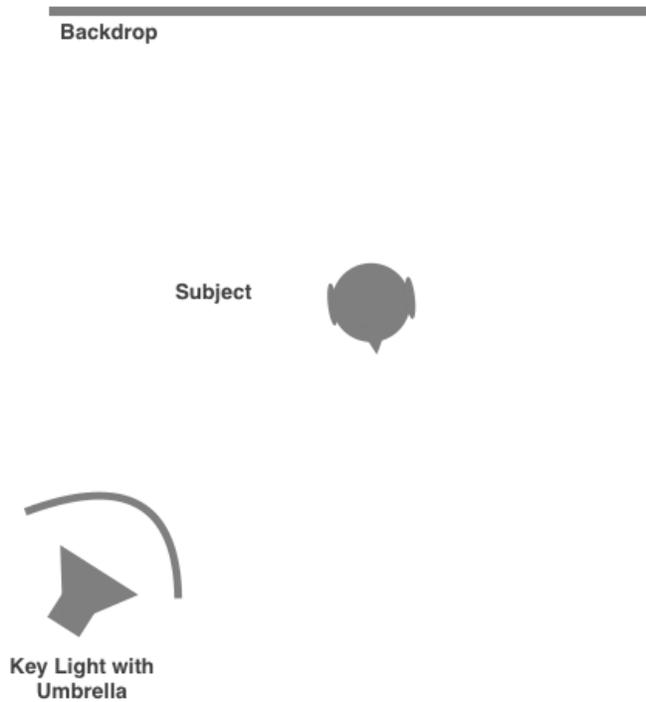
**Tip:** To learn these patterns, obtain a *dummy head* of some sort. Best, one with texture. You could also use a basketball (it is round and has dimples), but an actual head is better. If it is the right material, smear olive oil over it, so that you see reflections, and you learn to deal with them.



OK. Now, on to the lighting patterns!

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## REMBRANDT LIGHTING



In essence, this uses the same setup as before, but the key light is the important one: it is moved so that under the opposite eye, we see a fully enclosed *triangle of light*. It is that well-defined triangle that defines Rembrandt lighting, which of course is called after the master of this lighting, famous Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rhijn.

This light makes a face look like what it is: three-dimensional and “real” instead of “flat”. But it is dramatic, more so than most

# EXCERPT



*Rembrandt Van Rhijn*

types of lighting, so it may not be suitable for all faces.

“Dramatic”, of course, means that it emphasizes facial features; and “facial features” is a euphemism for... wrinkles. Fine if you are young and beautiful or if you want to show “character”, which itself is a euphemism, namely for “age”. It is therefore not the obvious choice for beauty lighting.<sup>1</sup>

To set up Rembrandt lighting, you should start with the first light (the “key light”)—others are optional and, if used, come afterward. Move this key light so that the nose shadow meets

up with the other shadows on the cheek so that a triangle of light, no more and no less, remains under the opposite eye. A good strategy is to start at “45 degrees off to the side, 45 degrees up” and then adjust until you have it right. You may need to raise the light a little more, or use more of an angle: it really depends on the face. Not all faces are equal, and not all faces are suitable for Rembrandt lighting.

To help you adjust the lights, one option is to use the modelling light. On strobes (big studio flashes) this is a separate light bulb that you can turn on; it helps you direct the light just right. On speedlights, it is a function that makes

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<sup>1</sup> I point out often that you “normally” shoot women with butterfly lighting and men with Rembrandt lighting. But please don’t get caught in using these as the only way to shoot women and men respectively. Try what works, and often the non-obvious works best.

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the flash emit an almost continuous source of light for a few seconds: long enough to adjust the flash.<sup>2</sup>

Another way is to simply fire the flash and see the result. Make sure that you tell your model not to move: obviously, if you have the light set up perfectly and the model moves his or her head, the photo will not be right.



*Another example of Rembrandt Lighting. One off-camera flash with umbrella.*

**TIP:** A good strategy when shooting is to tell your subject **“baby steps!”**, i.e. all adjustments in positioning should be subtle and small. Watch for the catch lights: the eye on the shadow side should not be completely in the dark, and preferably should still have a catch light. See the discussion on page 35.

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<sup>2</sup> If you use this, do not use it more than a few times in succession, or the speedlight will overheat.

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## LOOP LIGHTING



Backdrop

Subject, turned  
toward key light



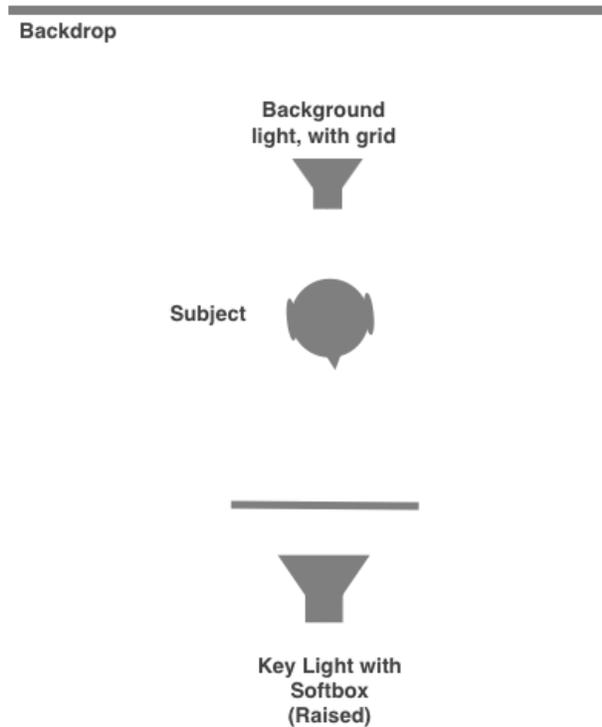
Key Light with  
Umbrella

This lighting scheme uses the same setup, but now we bring the light forward toward the camera position a little, so that the triangle does not quite form; i.e. the “loop” shadow under the nose does not meet up with the cheek shadow. Usually, that means somewhere between 30 and 45 degrees from the front. Every face is different, so make sure that what you set up works.

Loop lighting is a very common lighting pattern. It is simple, and can be made flattering or dramatic, depending on the difference between the key and fill lights. It is also somewhat less critical for the subject not to move: some types rely on the subject remaining absolutely still; here, there is a little tolerance.

# EXCERPT

## BUTTERFLY LIGHTING



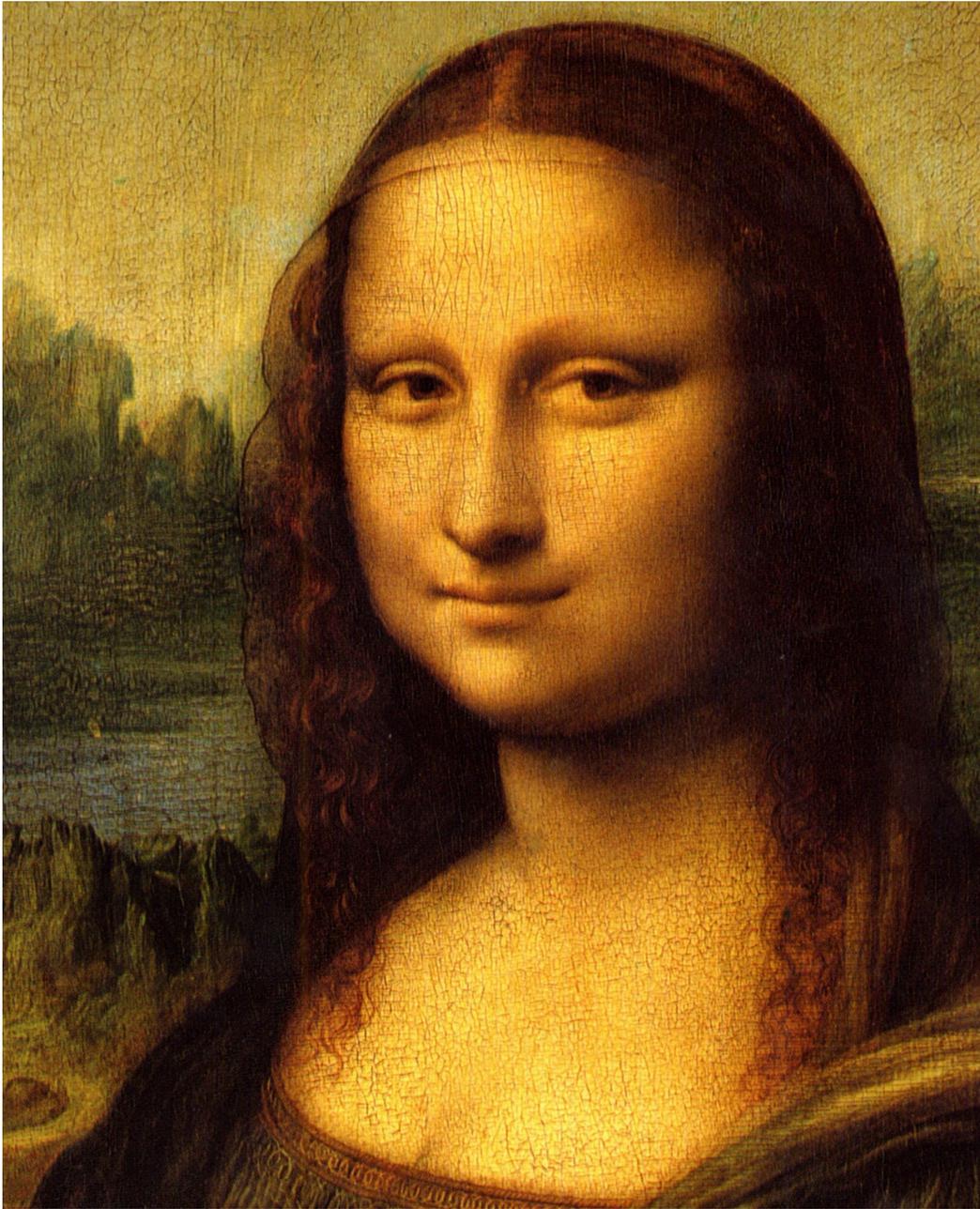
In this common form of beauty lighting, we have a softbox directly in front of the model, 45 degrees up. This forms a small butterfly-like shadow directly under the model's nose. This is typical beauty lighting because it flattens (de-emphasizes) features; and for “features” read “wrinkles and other imperfections”. It is also symmetrical, and we equate facial symmetry with beauty.

You may need a reflector under the model's head (on his or her lap, say) to slightly light the bottom half of the face, which would otherwise be too dark.

Butterfly lighting (sometimes referred to as “Paramount lighting” after the Hollywood studio of that name) is my favourite lighting scheme for women, especially slim narrow-faced women, including most models. It is also very simple to do: Put a softbox somewhere; ask the model to turn face toward the softbox so that the softbox is roughly 45 degrees up from her face; shoot.

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**Important note:** As you will recall, the lighting pattern talks about *where the light is with respect to the face*. Not with respect to me. So I could shoot straight on, like above; or I could shoot this broad or short (see later in this chapter), and it would still be butterfly lighting.



*A historical example of Butterfly Lighting*

# EXCERPT

## SPLIT LIGHTING



Backdrop



Subject



Key Light

Split lighting is lighting where you light exactly half the face. You achieve this by lighting from the left or right, perhaps slightly from behind, and without a softening modifier, or using only a small one.

Split lighting is dramatic, and is used for effect. It creates a slightly masculine look, but can be used for women as well.

When setting up split lighting, look carefully at where the shadows fall. A small adjustment can have large effects.

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*An effective example of split lighting, achieved with one flash fitted with a grid. This is also short lighting.*



*Split lighting, achieved with one flash fitted with a grid. A photo like this takes a minute to set up and make.*

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## SILHOUETTES

Backdrop

Background  
light, with gel



Subject



Silhouette lighting is lighting where you light the wall behind the person, but you avoid light on the person. Set your camera to 100 ISO, 1/125 sec and f/8, and set a gelled flash (i.e. a flash fitted with a coloured gel, as above), or a flash without a gel, left, to half power, and aim that flash at the wall behind the person, taking care to avoid hitting the person with any of that light.

Silhouettes are fun, and allow you to see a subject in a new perspective.

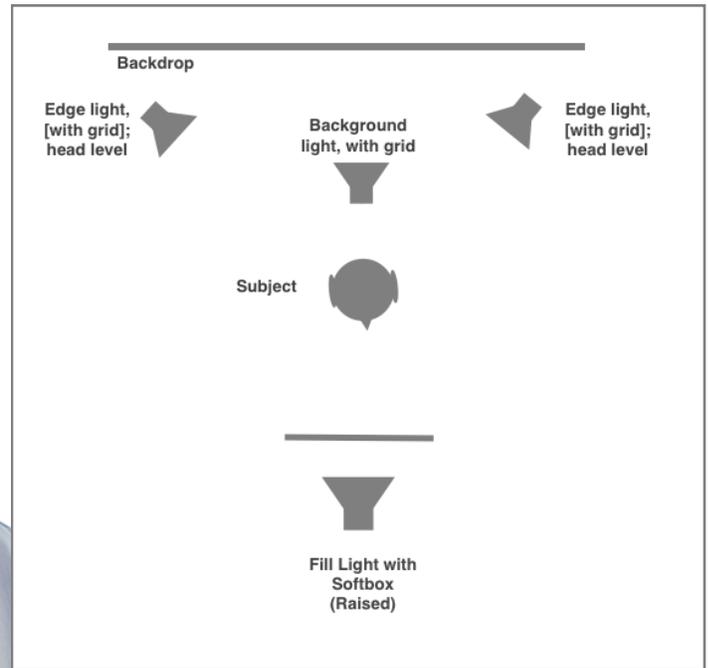
# EXCERPT



— Michael *Willem*s —  
P H O T O G R A P H E R

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## RIM LIGHTING



This type of light, where you light from the back and fill from the front, is cool and trendy and is therefore mostly used in artistic portraits. But it can also be used in business portraits, as you see here. See page **32** for the setup.

The edge lights are bright, as bright as they can be without actually over-exposing; the fill light is a stop or two darker.

As you can see, this type of light can be done in a formal studio setting, but also in a more environmental setting, as in the image on the right.



# EXCERPT



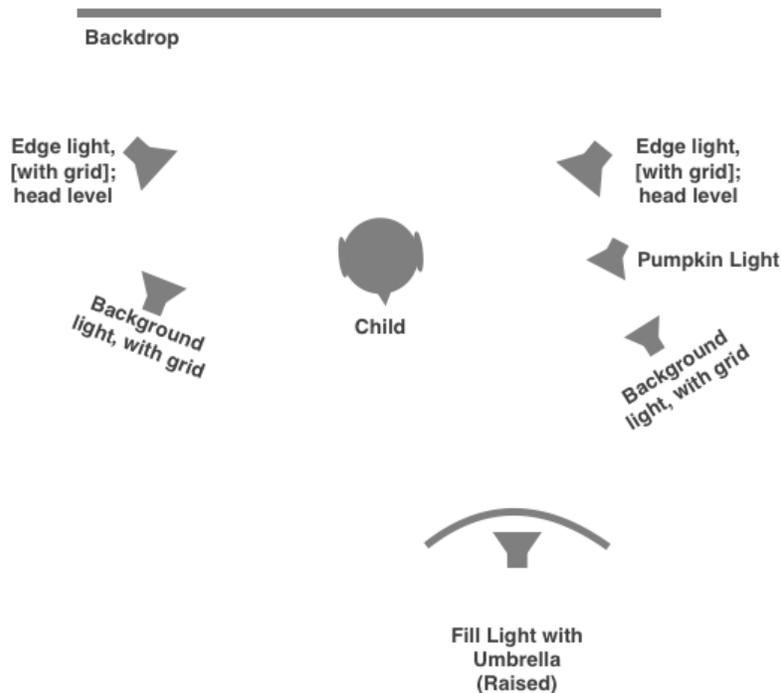
On the left, just the edge lights. Two speedlights, each with a grid, aimed forward. The main portion of the face is lit only by some reflected light. On the right, the fill light has been added; a speedlight in a small softbox. This “fill light” is set to be one to two stops darker than the rim lights.

**EXERCISE:** Shoot a portrait using edge lighting. Use three flashes or lights—if you have no flashes, use ordinary domestic light bulbs. Learn to improvise!

# EXCERPT

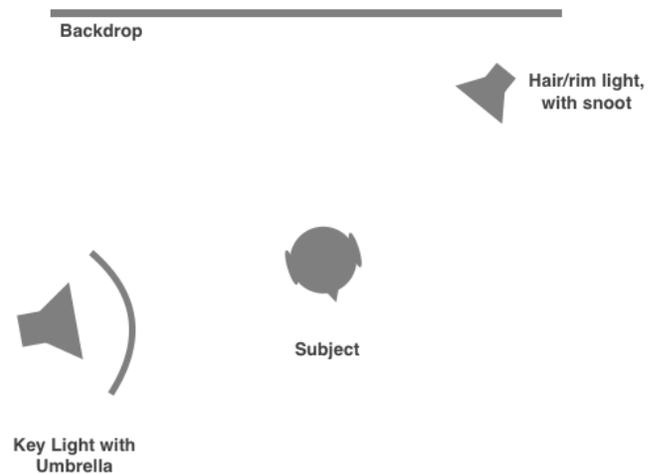


The child was lit with two edge flashes, a fill flash, and a few auxiliary flashes. The main flashes take care of edge lighting, and the fill light illuminates the rest of the face. Two of the other three flashes add splashes of colour; the third lights up the pumpkin from inside.



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## VIEWPOINT: BROAD LIGHTING



It is now time to discuss what I call the “viewpoint schemes”. Strictly speaking, these are not lighting schemes: they are viewpoints, which can be combined with the actual lighting patterns.

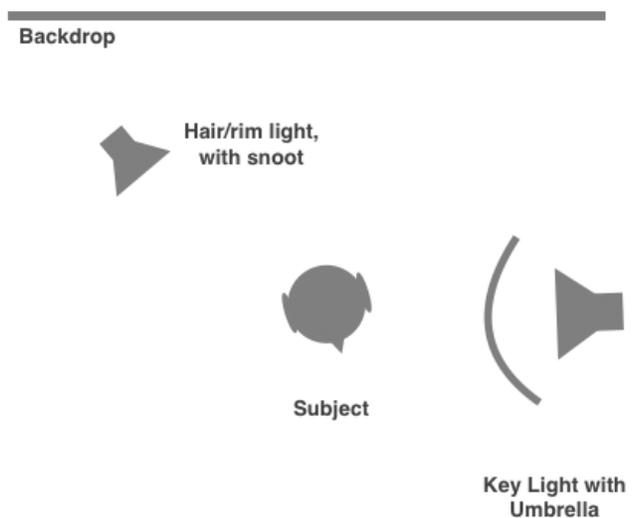
**Helpful explanation:** The patterns are about how light hits the face; i.e. *about the light and its position in relation to the face*. The two viewpoint schemes (short and broad) are about how you look at the face; i.e. *about the face and its position in relation to you*.

Broad lighting is where we primarily light the wider side of the face; that is, the side that looks wider from the camera’s position.

Broad lighting makes a face look broader; it can work well if someone has a very narrow face.

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## VIEWPOINT: SHORT LIGHTING



Just like broad lighting, short lighting is not a lighting pattern per sé, either: it is more a viewpoint, which can be combined with the actual lighting patterns.

Short lighting is where we primarily light the narrower side of the face; that is, the side that looks narrower from the camera's position.

Short lighting makes a face look narrower; it can work well if someone has a very square face and you want to make it look a little narrower. In general, short lighting is flattering lighting. That is why I start just about every portrait session with an off centre light, and the instruction “turn your head into the light please”.

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## PORTRAIT LIGHTING PRACTICE

If you are ready for some practice, here's an exercise or two.

**EXERCISE 1:** Using any light you like (window light, a single light bulb, or flash) create portraits with the following light patterns:

1. Butterfly Lighting
2. Loop Lighting
3. Rembrandt lighting
4. Split lighting

Keep these simple, with the subject looking straight at the camera. You will probably find this a lot easier with a continuous light source, such as a light bulb. If you are using a flash, make sure you *only* see the flash light (set your camera to manual mode, 200 ISO, f/8, 1/125 sec). If you are using continuous light, also make sure the portraits show primarily your chosen light source. If ambient light drowns out your picture, we cannot see what lighting pattern you were using.

**EXERCISE 2:** Shoot a portrait using Butterfly lighting, but do it two ways:

1. Using broad lighting
2. Using short lighting

Compare the two. How does the person look in one versus the other? Which one is more flattering?

Once you have performed these two exercises satisfactorily, you will be ready to tackle challenging tasks. More importantly, you will have learned a whole lot in the process.

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## The Environmental Portrait

That brings us to the environmental portrait: a portrait of a person in his or her personal or work environment. This can be an office for a CEO, a workshop for a mechanic, or a bus for a bus-driver in a story that talks about how the subject drives a bus.



*The geometrical lines help this photo work. Lit with one speedlight on our right, through umbrella. 24-70mm lens.*

The background is not just decorative; rather, it should help tell the story. Or even more accurately, it does not just help: it *tells* part of the story. It illuminates the person and his or her personality.

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The first questions I ask are, in this order:

1. Who *is* this person?
2. Why are we taking this portrait? What is the story I want to tell?
3. What environments do we have available in the location we are shooting at? There is usually more than one; I spend time looking for the right place to shoot. That place must tell the story, have diagonals or other items of visual interest; be simple, and have the right light or allow me to create it.
4. Which one of the identified locations *best* helps tell the above story? I may pick one, or two, to shoot in. Perhaps even three, but rarely more.
5. How do we use it best, i.e. with the simplest picture where each object in the picture (each “prop”) helps tell the story, and the composition works, aesthetically speaking, and the light is good?

## TECHNICAL ASPECTS

### Lenses

For dramatic environmental portraits I often use **wide angle lenses**, for three reasons. One is that these portraits benefit from depth and perspective, and wide angle lenses supply these: straight lines easily turn into diagonals. The second reason is context: a wide angle lens allows you to create a “wrap around” feeling that puts the subject and the viewer right inside the subject’s environment. The third reason is the desire for in-focus backgrounds in this type of portrait (see also the next point). So my first lens for environmental portraits is the 16-35mm f/2.8 lens; until and unless I know better, this is what I walk into the building with. (For a *general* portrait, my first lens is the 24-70; For a *headshot*, the 70-200).



# EXCERPT



*Capt. Jerry Fotheringham (86) and his WWI fighter aircraft (2014). 16mm lens.*

## **Aperture**

In portraits we often use longer lenses and larger apertures to blur the background. In environmental portraits, however, we use smaller apertures, because the background helps tell the story, and since it tells the story, the last thing we want to do is blur it out. The use of wide angle lenses also helps, since both wider lenses and smaller apertures give us sharp backgrounds.

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## Light

Available light, bounced on-camera flash, or off camera flash: it is all equally possible. I usually use off camera flash. The one thing you want to do is keep lighting equipment small and light. I usually try to do it with one off-camera speedlight with a light stand and an umbrella. That is what I used in the picture below, for example.



*A scientist in his environment. The books are a metaphor for knowledge. The smile shows his calm and humorous personality.*

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## OFFICE AND WORKPLACE

“The office” is where you will no doubt do a lot of environmental portraits. The challenges are always the same: too small, too little time, no power, bad light, lack of props, messy background. So I recommend that you walk around first. Get a feel for the office environment. Look for any cool locations that would look great in a photo. Any cool textures? Light? Converging lines?



Frames? Curves? Look for simplicity: the simpler, the better. Also look for relevance: what is relevant to the person? You need to find an environment that offers both.

There will, as said, be practical obstacles. Time—there is never enough. Space—there is never enough of that, either. Interference—you will interfere with other people and you will want to keep the disruption to a minimum. So it is essential that you prepare.

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A good exercise is to google other portraits and try to analyze what specifically appeals to you in the ones that you like. Write it down. After you have done a number, see if you can detect any patterns in what you have written down.



*The first task here was technical: Expose for the LCD screens, and balance that with the flash.*

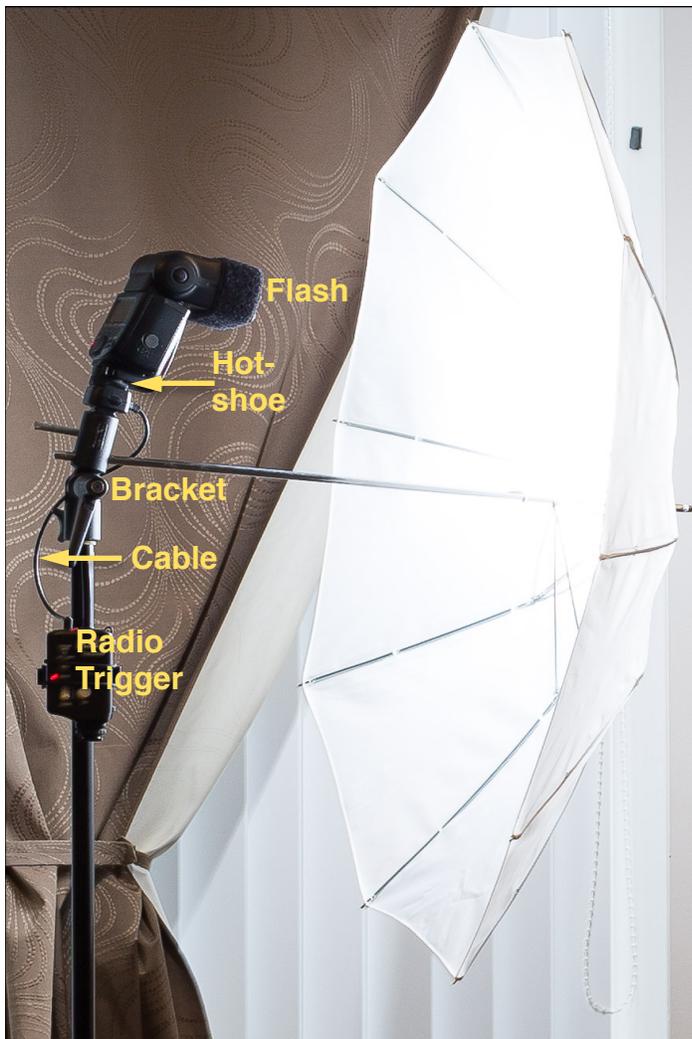
*One OCF through umbrella, on our left.*

# EXCERPT

## Tools

My most common tool is “one umbrella”, as shown on the right during a recent shoot. That one umbrella made most of the environmental portrait shown in this book.

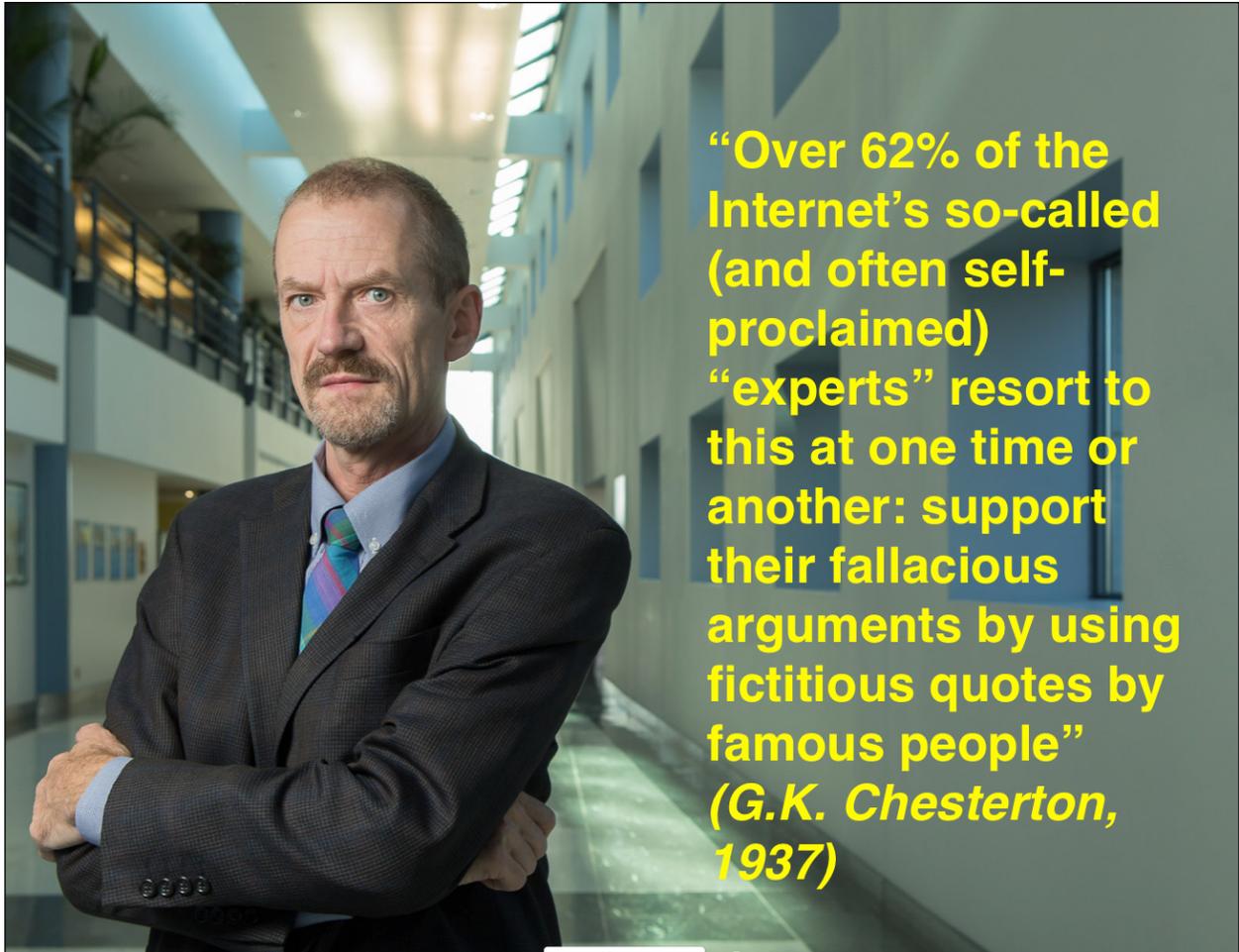
It consists of a light stand, a bracket for mounting the flash and umbrella, an umbrella (with removable cover), a pocketwizard, and a pocketwizard-to-hotshoe cable, available from [www.flashzebra.com](http://www.flashzebra.com). See the photo below for this full setup.



And of course a flash—and the big deal here is that since I use simple (flash only, no TTL) pocketwizards, the flash can be any brand, any type. As long as this flash has a standard hotshoe mount, and I can disable its automatic power timeout, and I can manually set its power level. This means I can use really cheap old flashes. No problem.

And all that gives me almost every photo in this chapter, including the one on the next page.

# EXCERPT



**EXERCISE**—Now shoot a person in his or her work environment. Use “proper” light. Ensure that every object is in the shot for a reason. Have your shot critiqued<sup>3</sup> by peers in an Internet group.

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<sup>3</sup> “Critiqued” does not mean “criticized”. A critique gives helpful advice for improvement, and it points out what does work as well as what could work better.

# EXCERPT

## THE DRAMATIC PORTRAIT

A Dramatic Portrait is a special type of environmental portrait that is, well... dramatic. Meaning such things as creative use of shadow; shadows that are prominent and harsh; high contrast; unusual light direction; often, dark, foreboding skies or backgrounds and a light subject, lit up by a flash:<sup>4</sup>



*This was 2pm mid January, not, as you might think, 7pm.*

In a dramatic portrait, like in any other environmental portrait, you need to ask: what is the reason for the portrait? But in this case, the reason is often different from the common “to make the subject look great”.

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<sup>4</sup> Remember *Willem's Dictum*: “Bright Pixels Are Sharp Pixels”.

# EXCERPT

## Exposure:

**In principle, the background can be as dark as you want to make it.** You, and only you, determine how dark the background is. A bright mid-day sky can look like it is night-time, or the reverse. Just a matter of your aperture, shutter and ISO. For a darker ambient exposure, choose lower ISO, faster shutter (up to your maximum flash sync speed, e.g. 1/250th second) and smaller aperture (up to f/18 if you have to).



*Even Lake Ontario can look good given the right angles and exposure. Underexposing creates saturated colours.*

“Washed out” means overexposed. It follows, then, that underexposing creates saturated colours; and indeed it does. I find the histogram, and especially the RGB histogram, very useful here: start by ensuring that none of your colour channels are overexposed. Then, expose them slightly less for more saturation and drama.

# EXCERPT

## Camera Angle:

More than ever, the angle of the camera with respect to the subject is extremely important. Do you look up, or down? Angled, or straight? These are things you need to think about carefully when shooting environmental portraits. generally you shoot at eye level, but even slight deviation from this can lead to dramatic results.

Looking down at a person can lead to a person exuding a non-threatening presence. If instead you look up, the impression is of a person who look down on you. Combined with the *wrong* expression this can be bad (“a look of disdain”), but combined with the *right* expression it can work very well to convey a sense of power and authority.



*This business executive is an authority in her field: environmental stewardship.*

# EXCERPT

## PRACTICE

If you are ready for some practice, here's an exercise.

**Exercise:** Using any light you like, create another environmental portrait of someone involved in a hobby or profession, as follows:

- Use a wide angle lens.
- Use props to tell the story
- Ensure that there *is* a story. The photo should give the viewer an insight into the subject's life and profession or hobby.
- Ensure that everything in the picture is there “for a reason”—else, remove it.
- Make this a *dramatic* portrait.
- But do it in camera: keep post-processing to a minimum, if possible.

# EXCERPT



**Talk about environmental:** my friend and student Peter McKinnon, a super talented photographer, shot me as ‘Heisenberg’<sup>5</sup> in late summer, 2014, as part of the “Plaid Chair Series”, which I am honoured to be part of for the second time. Peter photoshopped in the “blue meth” and a few other elements, but I am exactly the way he shot me. I guess I do look like a meth lab operator.

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<sup>5</sup> If you do not know who Heisenberg is, go watch “Breaking Bad”, a great TV series that lends itself very well to “binge watching”.

# EXCERPT

## And Now?



Now that you have read this manual, and worked your way through the tips and tricks and the exercises, you are ready to start making portraits. You may find the difference between “before” and “now” is that you are more aware of your photos’ light, techniques, composition, lighting scheme: in other words, you now have a framework to build your knowledge around. I encourage you to be analytical; to ask yourself “what other tools or techniques could I have used”, and then to use them.

The thing to do is to practice, one technique at a time. Start with the lighting patterns, perhaps; then work up to higher-level exercises involving poses and moods. Start with simple portraits, then do environmental. In each case, work your way up from fundamentals to more advanced use. And see how quickly things improve.

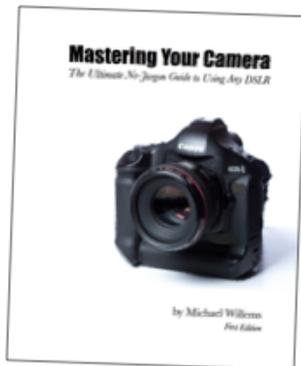
Above all, I encourage you to have fun. Portraying other people—or yourself—is very rewarding.

# EXCERPT

## OTHER BOOKS

**In the past two years, Michael has been committing all his unique knowledge, both of photography and of teaching it, into books.** He waited until he was sure: after years of teaching, Michael now knows exactly how people learn most quickly, and what they respond to best.

This unique series of books complement this book, and together the series teaches you professional photography in no time. They are available from the e-store at <http://learning.photography> today. Like this book, they are all between 100-200 pages, and are simple-to-use PDF files. Get them today, and benefit from all Michael's years of unique experience shooting and teaching. They work together, and the set of all six books makes you an expert in the shortest possible time.



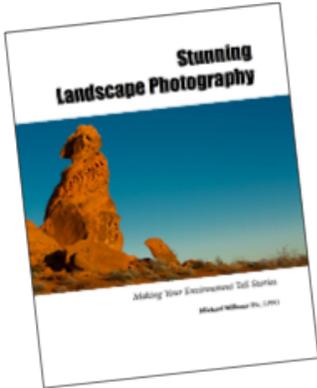
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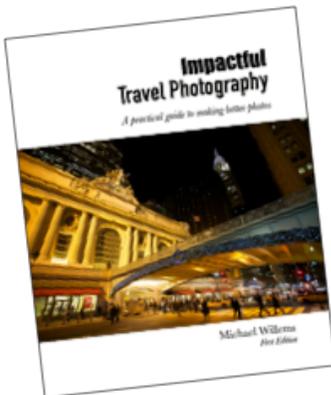
# EXCERPT



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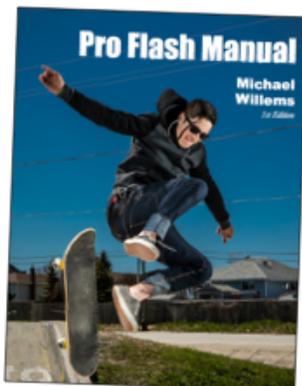
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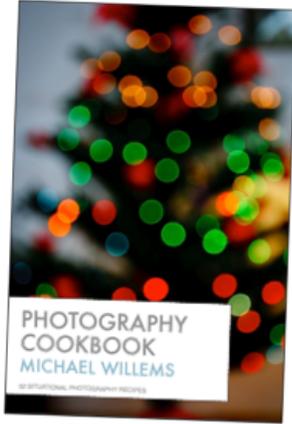


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## ***What People Are Saying About Michael Willems’s Photography e-Books:***

*“Perhaps the single best photography book I have read!”*

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*“Your wit comes through as well, making your book and cookbook a good read”*

*“Absolutely treasure and refer to the books on a regular basis”*

# EXCERPT

## About The Author

**An award-winning photographer,** Michael Willems shoots for executives, families, companies, newspapers, magazines, sports clubs, fashion models, stock sites, and government. He works out of his bases in Toronto, Las



Vegas, and Amsterdam. He understands engineers, because he is one: he has a BSc(Eng) in Electronic Engineering. He is a member of various professional organizations, and showcases his work regularly in solo and group exhibits.

**Michael is also one of Canada’s most popular photography educators** and the author of the popular “Advanced Flash”, “Event Photography”, and “Travel Photography” signature seminars, among others. He has written six photography teaching e-books, of which this is number six. They are available from <http://learning.photography>.

A keynote speaker at large events, he teaches privately, and to small groups, and online, and at the Faculty of Continuing and Professional Studies at Ontario’s *Sheridan College*. He also taught for six years as senior instructor at Canada’s largest school, the *School of Imaging*, and he teaches his signature seminars at Vistek. His work has been in many magazines and newspapers. He has written a regular series of photography articles for Canada’s premier photography magazine, *Photo Life*, and not least, he writes his own popular daily photography teaching blog, [www.speedlighter.ca](http://www.speedlighter.ca).

Michael has worked in 39 countries on 5 continents; from Iraq to Israel; from China to Nigeria; from Australia to Sweden. He has taught his signature courses in a number of these countries. He teaches online, too, using Google Hangouts. See <http://learning.photography> to learn more.