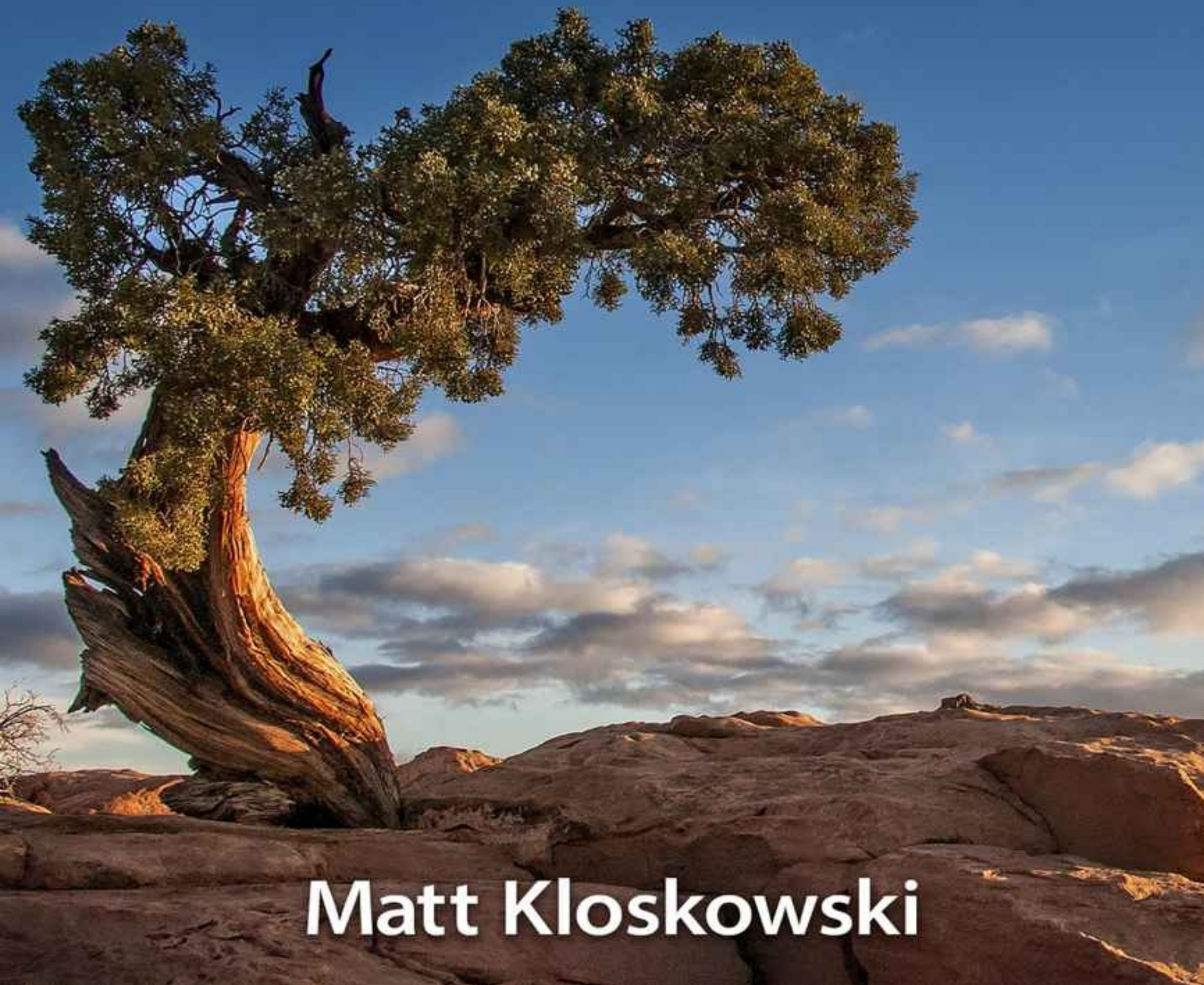


# LANDSCAPE

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# PHOTOGRAPHY WORKFLOW

## USING LIGHTROOM AND PHOTOSHOP



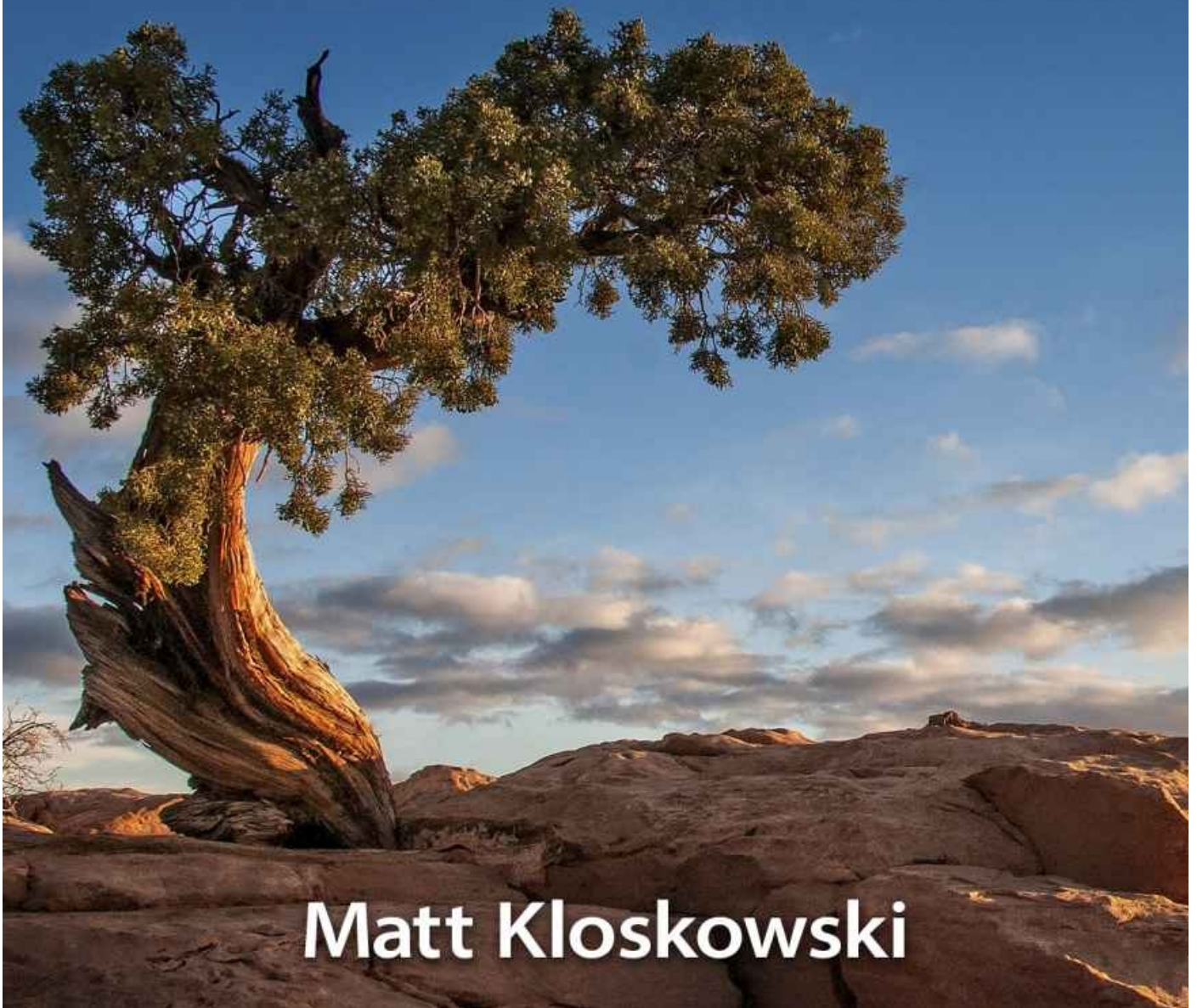
**Matt Kloskowski**



# LANDSCAPE

# PHOTOGRAPHY WORKFLOW

## USING LIGHTROOM AND PHOTOSHOP



**Matt Kloskowski**

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Find out more about Matt on his blog, The Ski Report, at [www.mattk.com](http://www.mattk.com).

# INTRODUCTION

## Who's This Book For?

This book is for anyone who likes to shoot landscape and outdoor photos and wants to learn some of my proven ways to get the most out of them in Lightroom and Photoshop. While the book isn't advanced, it's also not a beginner's book. I'm assuming you know how to use Lightroom and Photoshop already, so I won't be explaining what each slider does or the theory behind every setting, etc. I just show you, quick and easy, each step in my landscape photography workflow.

## What Will You Learn in This Book?

First, I've included some things that you'll want to know upfront. Then, I go over each of the things that I personally do to just about every landscape photo I shoot. That way, I don't have to write it over and over again in each photo example. Finally, we'll look at five of the most common types of landscape shots, and I show you my exact workflow for each one. (*Note:* I've made these images available for you to download, so you can follow along. You can find them at <http://kelbytraining.com/books/landscape1>.) While there are, of course, a ton of different ways to post-process your landscape photos, here I show you how I do it. So, if you're thinking to yourself that there may be another way to sharpen your photos that you read in another book or saw in a YouTube video, you're right, there probably is. And, once you get your workflow down, feel free to try out any other ways you're familiar with to see what works best for you.

I hope you enjoy taking a look at my landscape photography workflow.

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# CHAPTER 1



## THE LIGHTROOM AND PHOTOSHOP CONNECTION

First up, I just wanted to go over a few things about using Lightroom and Photoshop and what I use in my own personal workflow.



# WHAT IF I DON'T USE LIGHTROOM?

Throughout this book, I start out in Lightroom with all of the examples, but then we jump over to Photoshop for any cloning, healing, touchups, and finishing moves. Now, what if you don't use Lightroom? No sweat. Adobe Camera Raw (which comes free with Photoshop CC, CS6, CS5, etc.) is the exact same thing. Every panel in Lightroom has a corresponding panel in Camera Raw. There is one key difference, though: Lightroom has a dark interface and Camera Raw has a light interface. Seriously! When it comes to developing and editing your photos, that's the only real difference. They're the same thing. So if you see me adjusting a setting in Lightroom, just know you can do the exact same thing in Camera Raw (if you don't use Lightroom).



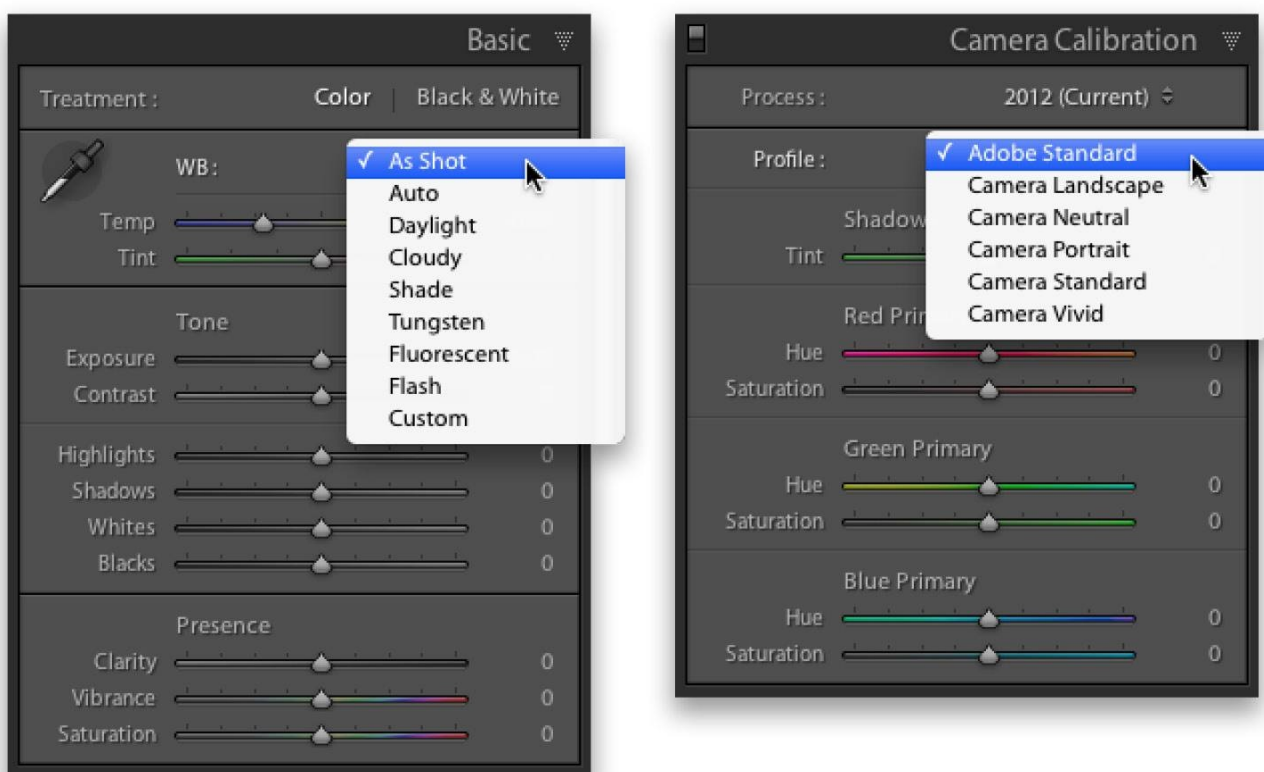
*Camera Raw*



*Lightroom*

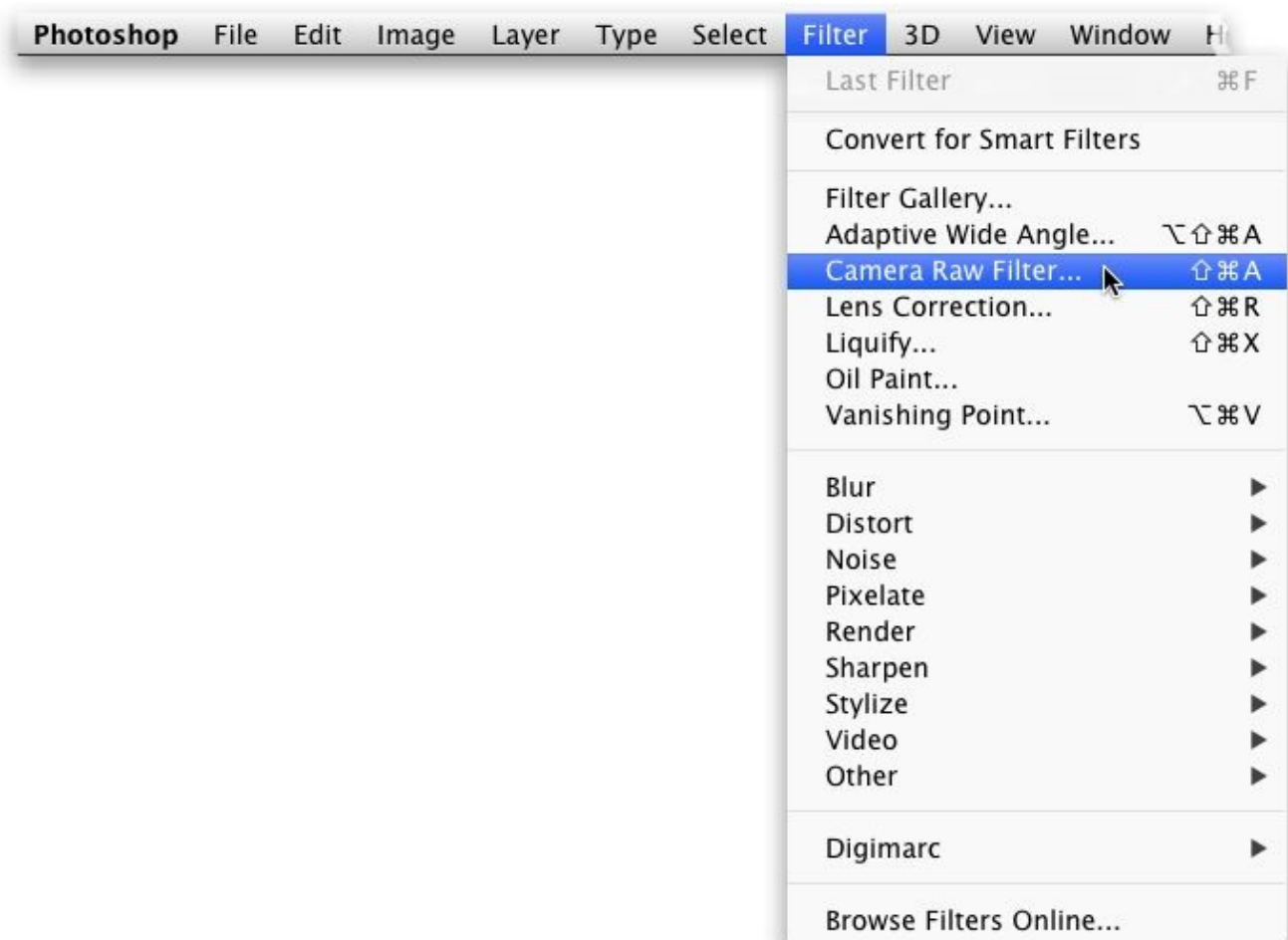
# I DON'T SHOOT RAW. WHAT ABOUT JPEGS?

Again, no sweat. If you're using Lightroom, it'll treat JPEGs almost exactly the same as RAW files. The only difference is that you don't get all of the white balance presets in the Basic panel (as seen here), or all of the Profile presets in the Camera Calibration panel (also seen here). However, I don't use either of those presets much in this book, so whether you shoot RAW or JPEG doesn't really matter here.



# HOW DO I OPEN A JPEG IN CAMERA RAW?

Now, there is one tiny gotcha: If you're going to use Camera Raw instead of Lightroom, there's a little trick to opening a JPEG. You see, RAW files open automatically in Camera Raw when you open them in Photoshop, but JPEGs don't (I know it sounds weird, but even though it's called Camera Raw, it's meant for editing JPEGs, too). To open a JPEG image in Camera Raw, first open it in Photoshop, then go to the Filter menu, and choose **Camera Raw Filter**. (*Note:* This option is only available in Photoshop CC. If you have an older version of Photoshop, you'll need to choose Open [PC: Open As] from Photoshop's File menu, then click on your JPEG in the Open dialog, and choose **Camera Raw** from the Format [PC: Open As] pop-up menu.)



# BUT CAN'T I ALSO DO IT THIS WAY?



One last thing: If you're reading through a technique and think to yourself "But, can't I also do it some other way?" the answer is absolutely "Yes." As you probably know by this point, there are 10 different ways to do everything in Lightroom and Photoshop. All I can show you is the way I do it. I don't want to take up your time showing you seven ways to sharpen a photo. I'd rather just show you the way I do it. If you're advanced enough to know the other ways, then feel free to give them a try. Perhaps they work better for you, but for me the best ways I've found to do things are written right here. Also, you're going to see me using my secret weapon from time to time—Perfect Effects, found within a plug-in from onOne Software called Perfect Photo Suite 8. I use it on just about every photo I process. Now, I could leave this out of the book and never show it to you for fear that someone might complain that I'm using an "extra" piece of software that maybe you don't have. But, then I wouldn't be showing you my workflow. So, I'm including it, because it's the way I sharpen and add detail to my photos. Now, just in case you don't have the plug-in and don't want to buy it, I will show you how to sharpen your photos without it. Sound good? Cool! Let's go ahead and get started :-)







## CHAPTER 2

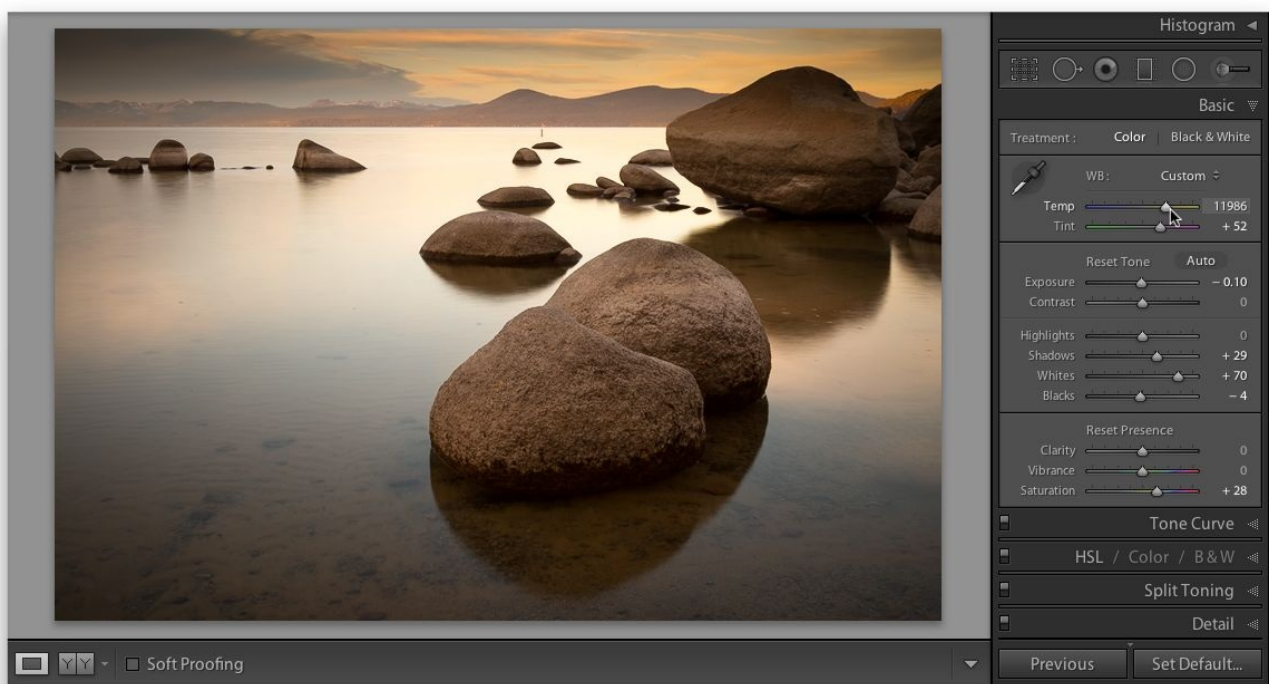
# THE STUFF I DO OVER AND OVER AGAIN

In this chapter, we'll take a quick look at all the things in my workflow that I usually do to all my landscape photos.



# WHITE BALANCE

For landscapes, I almost always prefer a warmer photo. So, the white balance sliders are usually where I start. For most sunrise and sunset photos, I'll usually shoot in my camera's Cloudy white balance mode. But when I process the photo, I'll typically make it even warmer by moving the Temp slider to the right a little.



The only time I really look for a different feel and color from my photos is for photos taken during twilight. Those typically have a cooler feel and even have some reds or magentas that stand out. In that case, I'll adjust the Temp slider toward the left a little and the Tint slider to the right to really bring out those colors.

The image shows the Adobe Lightroom Develop module interface. On the left is a large preview window displaying a landscape photograph of a lake at sunset, with trees on the left and mountains in the distance. The sky is a mix of purple, pink, and blue. On the right is the adjustment panel, which is currently set to the 'Basic' tab. The panel includes a histogram at the top, followed by a 'Basic' section with the following settings:

- Treatment: **Color** (Black & White is also visible)
- WB: Custom (White Balance)
- Temp: 4879
- Tint: +42
- Reset Tone: Auto
- Exposure: -0.70
- Contrast: 0
- Highlights: -100
- Shadows: +73
- Whites: +35
- Blacks: -17
- Reset Presence
- Clarity: 0
- Vibrance: 0
- Saturation: +7

Below the Basic section are other tabs: Tone Curve, HSL / Color / B & W, Split Toning, and Detail. At the bottom of the interface, there are icons for Soft Proofing and a 'Set Default...' button.

# EXPOSURE

Think of the Exposure slider as the sledgehammer of the adjustments. It's a broad adjustment that's going to pretty much make the entire photo brighter or darker. When it comes to my landscape photos, I usually go to Shadows and Highlights first (covered next) and adjust them. After that, I look at the overall feel of the photo and decide if it needs to be brighter or darker, and then adjust the Exposure slider accordingly. But, just so you know, you have a ton of control with this slider. I often photograph beaches and waterfalls and, rather than constantly putting a neutral density (ND) filter on and off my lens, I shoot in aperture priority mode and over- or underexpose the photo to change the shutter speed. Here's an example of an overexposed photo at a beach. I love the pattern of the water that the longer shutter speed gives, but you'd normally think it was way too bright.



But, by just adjusting the Exposure slider (along with the Whites slider, here), I'm able to regain all of the details in the photo. This gives me the best of both worlds. I'm able to shoot longer shutter speeds without worrying about putting an ND filter on and off, and I'm still able to capture the details and patterns in the water that you get from those longer shutter speeds.



# HIGHLIGHTS AND SHADOWS

These are two of the star performers when it comes to editing landscape photos. If you think about it, when you're outside, you have very little control over the conditions. The sun can be so bright, and dark shadow areas can be so dark, that it's nearly impossible for a camera to actually capture what we see. That's where the Highlights and Shadows sliders come in.

Here's a great example: When the sun is coming up, the sky gets really bright, but the ground remains dark. So, you're faced with a choice because your camera can't capture both and expose them properly. Do you expose for the sky or for the foreground? Me, I just let the camera determine the exposure and make sure I'm not totally blowing out the highlights and bright areas in the sky, and then I use the Highlights slider to bring back some of that detail (you'd be amazed at how much is lurking in there ready to be revealed).



*Before*



*Highlights*

The same goes for the shadowy or darker areas. Just drag the Shadows slider to the right and you'll see those darker areas open up with detail, while the rest of the photo remains untouched.





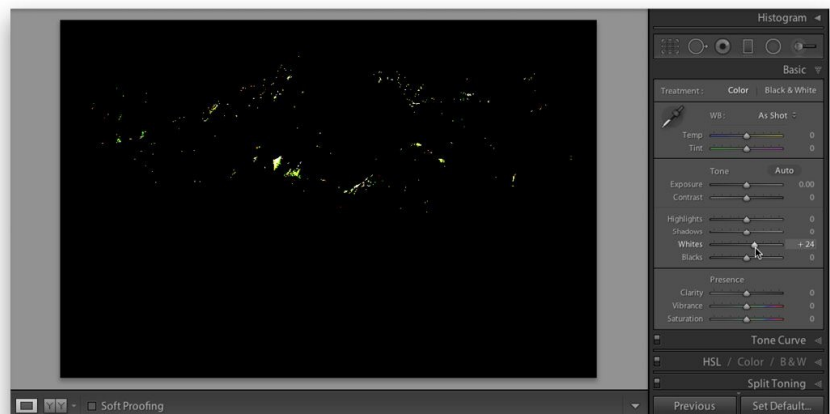
*Shadows*

# WHITES AND BLACKS

Setting the whites and blacks gives you a good overall base for your photo, so that your tones cover the entire range from highlights to shadows. For most landscape and outdoor photos, you'll see that we can use a formula to help out. First, press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key and then click on the Whites slider. Everything usually turns black, unless you have a blown out or overexposed area in the photo already. Once you see the black screen, drag the slider to the right. When you start to see little specks appear, that means Lightroom is showing you a white point. Don't worry if they're different colors; just keep dragging until you see some specks of any color. Once you do, release the Option key and take a look. Those little specks are usually something that was really bright in the photo, like bright clouds, highlights on water, snow, or anything else that was close to white.

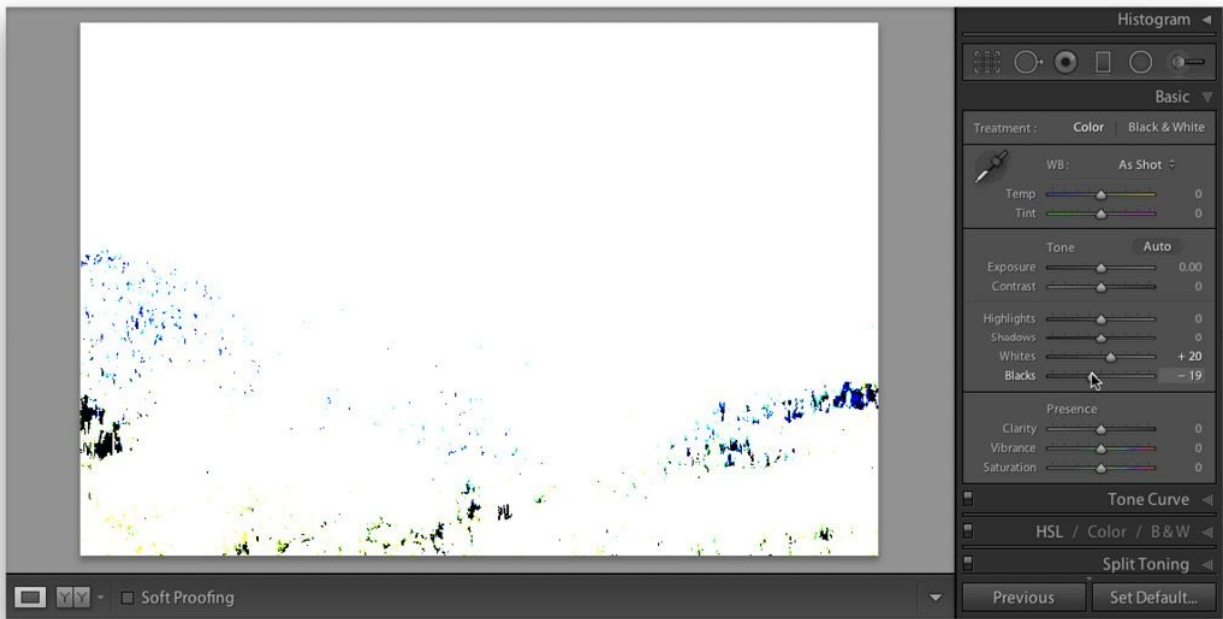


*Before*



*Blacks*

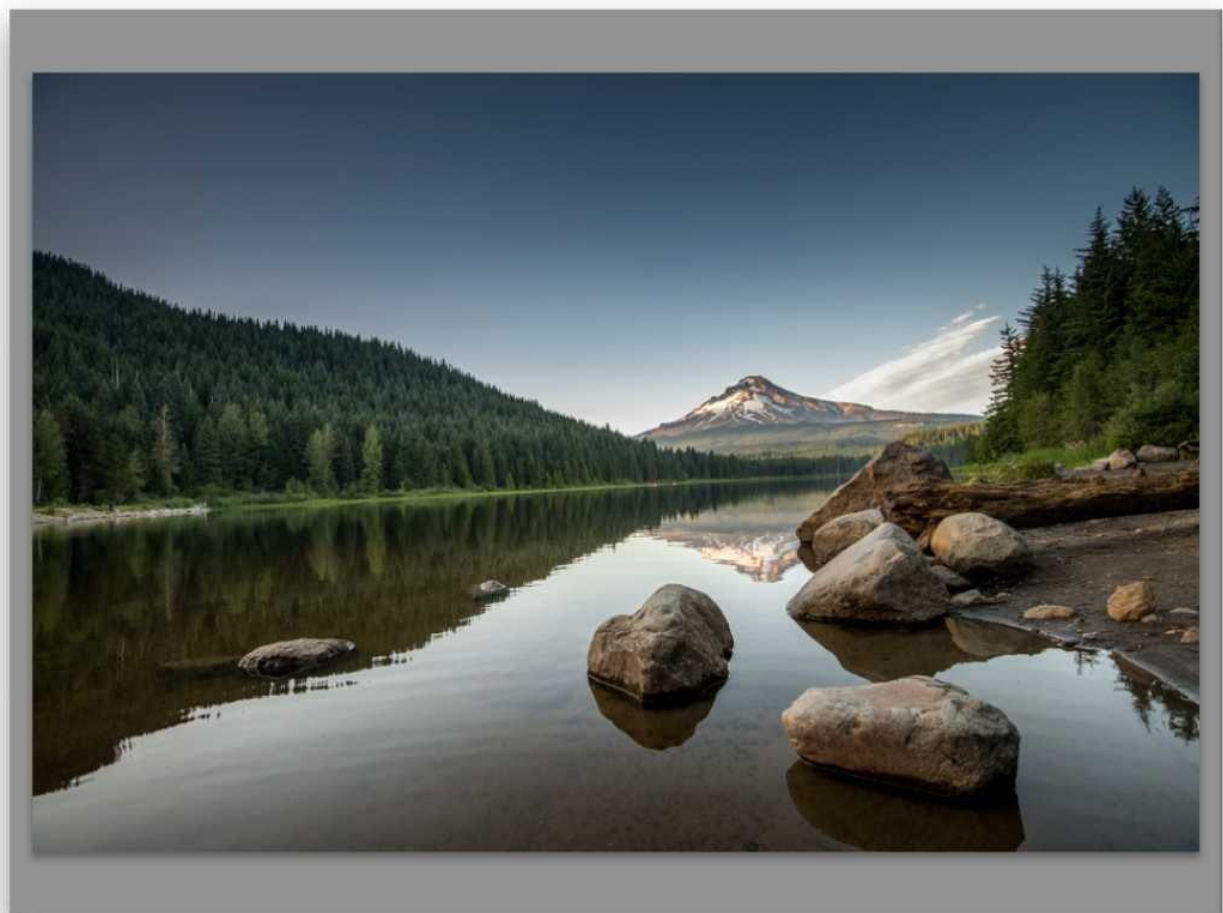
Now do the same thing for the blacks. Just Option-click on the Blacks slider and everything turns white. Drag it to the left, and you'll see some specks again, meaning that you now have a black point. Keep in mind that sometimes you need to step in and decide how far you really should go. What I just showed you is a good guide, but if you're photographing some water and a sky at sunset, you may not have a white or a black point because nothing in the photo is pure white or pure black. But, it is a good formula to try out, and I think you'll see it works great on most photos.



*Whites*

# CROPPING AND STRAIGHTENING

There's nothing too earth shattering here when it comes to cropping. If the photo needs to be cropped to a specific ratio, I'll usually try to do that early on so I can get rid of any unnecessary details. When it comes to landscapes though, the Straighten tool can be a lifesaver. Just click on it (it can be found within the Crop Overlay tool's options; its icon is the little level), and then drag it across whatever should be straight in your photo. If you have an obvious horizon line, like when you're shooting at the beach, then it's simple—just drag it along the horizon to straighten the photo. But, when you don't have an obvious horizon, it's not always that simple. For example, when shooting lakes and mountains, you may not have a horizon to base your straightening off of. In that case, I usually just drag the Straighten tool along the shoreline of a lake and that usually does the trick. And, if you're really stuck, remember that trees (usually) stand straight up, so you can always try dragging the Straighten tool vertically along a tree to see if that helps.



*Before*

# ENHANCING THE SKY

Much of what we do in landscape photography involves the sky, so it's a really important area to work on. One of the most common issues we have is when the sky is too bright. Sure, you can try to use the Exposure and Highlights sliders to darken it, but those are global changes that'll affect your whole photo. So, instead, you'll want to get cozy with the Graduated Filter (**M**; it's the third icon from the right in the toolbox above the Basic panel). It works a lot like a graduated neutral density filter works in the field. The filter goes from dark to clear, and you hold it in front of your lens to darken the sky, but leave the foreground alone. It's the same thing here. First, reduce the Exposure setting in the Graduated Filter's options. I always start around  $-2.00$  (but you can change this later). Then, drag downward over the sky toward the horizon line. The more you drag, the more you spread out and smooth the effect of the filter, so you don't see a harsh line across your sky. Then, when you're done, you can go back and adjust the Exposure to make the sky darker or brighter.



*Before*



*Darker*

What's really nice about the Graduated Filter is that you don't have to adjust just the Exposure—there are a bunch of other settings in its options, like Saturation, Clarity, Highlights, and Shadows. Also, my personal favorite is the Temp setting at the top. We often want our landscape photos to have a warm feeling to them. As a result, your skies will tend to look muddy. By moving the Temp slider to the right, you can add some blue to just the sky, so everything else in the foreground stays nice and warm.



*More Blue*

# DRAWING ATTENTION TO AN AREA/ADDING A VIGNETTE

Just about every outdoor photo can benefit from a finishing effect: a vignette. Think of it as a tool to help draw the viewer into the photo and really help them avoid the distractions we usually see along some of the edges of an image. There are two ways I do this: using the Post-Crop Vignetting settings in the Effects panel or with the Radial Filter that was introduced in Lightroom 5. Let's look at the vignette settings first.

## Vignette Method 1:

I usually use the Effects panel to add a vignette. For me, it simply darkens the edges and really helps draw the viewer into the photo. Luckily, it's really simple to use. Just drag the Amount slider to the left and you'll see the edges get darker. Usually somewhere between  $-20$  and  $-40$  works, so don't get carried away here. I'll usually drag the Midpoint slider to the left to bring the effect in toward the center a bit, too. Finally, I'll drag the Feather slider to the right to soften the transition between the dark edges and the rest of the photo.



*Before*



*Effects panel*



# LET'S GET STARTED!

## Vignette Method 2:

The only time I resort to this method is if I have a strong focal point in the photo that's not in the center, and I want to make it stand out. Take the small white house in this photo as an example—it's off to the side. The vignette settings we used in the previous method would darken the edges and make the house darker. So, instead, I'll use the Radial Filter (**Shift-M**). Just click on its icon in the toolbox (it's the second icon from the right), then double-click on the word "Effect" to reset all of the sliders to zero. Now, just drag the Exposure slider to the left to around -2.00. Position your cursor over whatever it is you want to draw attention to in the photo, and then click-and-drag a circle (or oval if it works better) outward. The further out you drag it, the softer the transition will be—it's kind of like putting a little spotlight on parts of your photo. And, if the effect is too dark (or not dark enough), go to the Exposure slider and adjust it live on the image to get it just right.



*Before*



*Radial Filter*

Well, that's the list of all of the usual stuff I do to my landscape photos. For the rest of the book, we'll walk through editing some photos from start to finish, and you'll see how they all come together, as well as learn a few new tricks.



## CHAPTER 3

# THE SUNRISE/ SUNSET PHOTO

Sunsets and sunrises are probably some of the most popular types of landscape photos. But, sunsets definitely win out because everyone is awake when it happens. Me, personally? Even though I'm soooo not an early riser, I do like photographing sunrises. There's just something about catching the first light of the day.

This photo was taken at the Dallas Divide, which is a high mountain pass just outside of the town of Ridgway, Colorado.



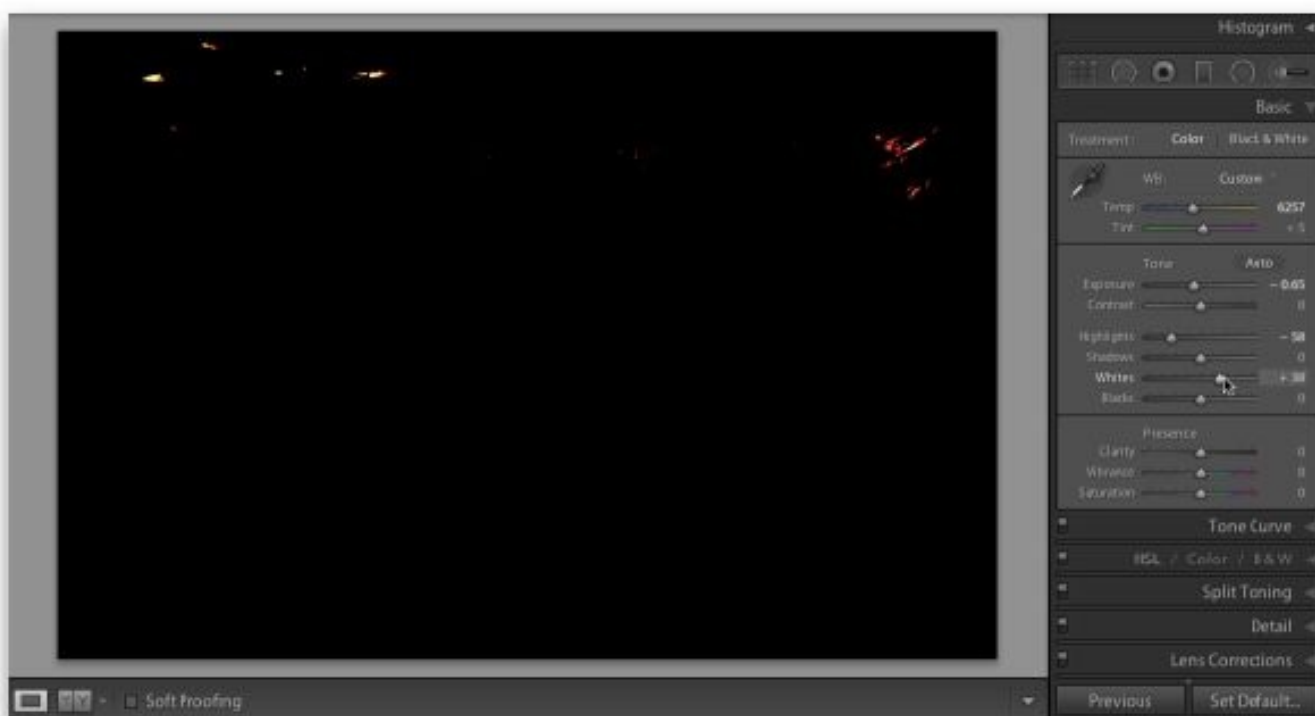
**First we'll crop and straighten the photo.** This is a tough one to straighten though, because there's no horizon line to base your adjustment on. When this happens, we can actually use a vertical surface instead. In Lightroom, I chose the Crop Overlay tool (**R**). Then, I selected the Straighten tool and simply clicked-and-dragged vertically along one of the trees. It's not a perfect science because who's to say exactly which tree is standing perfectly upright, but you can get pretty close this way.



**Next, I adjusted the white balance Temp slider, moving it toward the right to take advantage of the warm tones and make them a little warmer. After that, I reduced the Exposure setting because the photo looked a little too bright overall. Once the overall exposure looked good, I dragged the Highlights slider to the left to tone down only the sky a bit (don't worry, we'll make it even darker later). There's really nothing lost in the shadows in this photo, so I left that slider alone.**



**Whites and Blacks come next.** Here, I used the trick I talked about in the Chapter 2: Simply press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key and click-and-drag the Whites slider toward the right until you see some specks of color start to appear (as shown here), meaning you have a good white point. Then, I did the same thing with the Blacks slider, so we have good white and black points in the photo. Finally, I finished things up with a Clarity adjustment to add some more detail and contrast to the photo.



**Another adjustment I make to photos with lots of color is in the HSL panel.** By looking at the photo, you can see what some of the key colors are. Here, I think they're the oranges, yellows, and greens. By going under the Luminance section of the HSL panel, you can move those sliders to the right and make those colors appear brighter, which I think works out great in this example (especially with those bright yellow aspens).



**Sharpening is an important part of landscapes.** In the Detail panel, you can adjust the Sharpening Amount. For landscapes with a lot of detail, I'll usually crank it up in the 80–100 range. I set the Radius at around 1.0–1.4 for just about every photo, and then increase the Detail slider to around 30–40. (*Note: If you've got onOne Software's Perfect Effects in Photo Suite 8, I'm going to show you a great finishing technique that adds detail and sharpens at the same time. So, if you have it, you can skip this step and sharpen later.*)



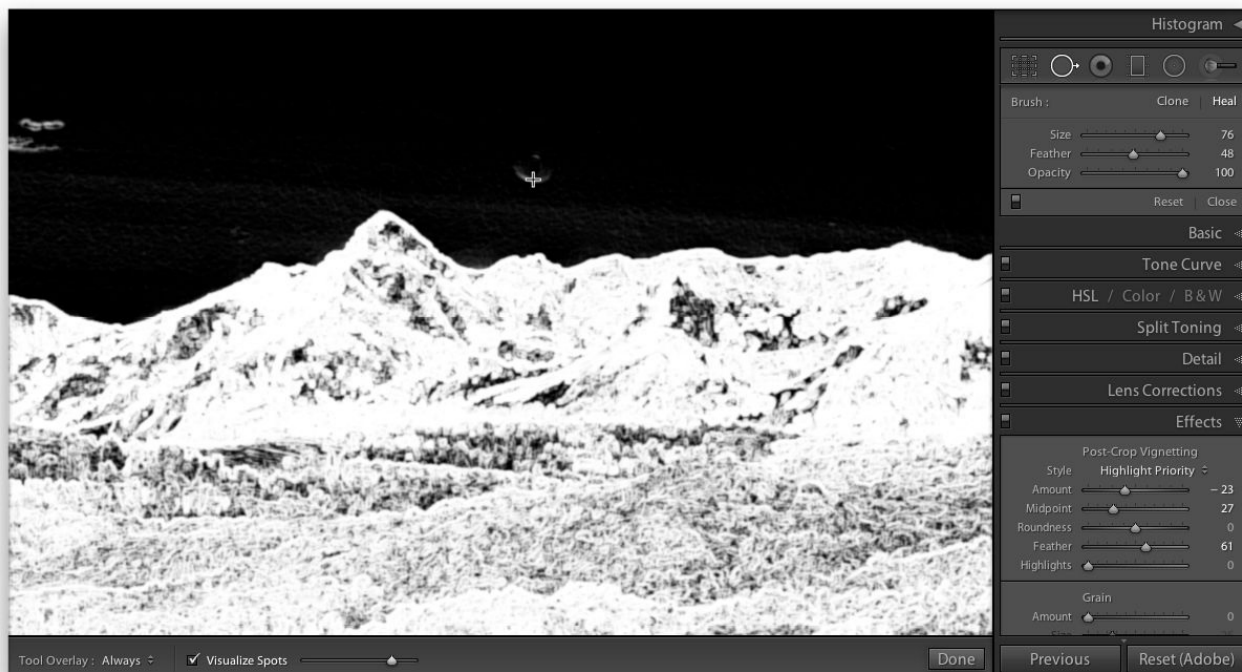
**At this point, I think the sky is still too bright.** The Graduated Filter (**M**) will work perfectly here. Just click on it in the toolbox, reduce the Exposure setting, and then click-and-drag from the top of the photo down. Since we warmed the photo earlier, I always move the Temp slider to the left (toward the blue side) to bring some blue back into the sky while darkening it at the same time.



**While we're working with tools,** now would be a good time to check for any



spots in the sky. The Spot Removal tool (**Q**) can not only fix the spots, but help you find them, too. Once you select the tool from the toolbox, turn on the Visualize Spots checkbox under the preview window. You'll see a really weird looking black-and-white version of the photo. But, more importantly, any spots in the sky should stick out and you can just click with the Spot Removal tool to get rid of 'em. It's a good idea to memorize the keyboard shortcut for turning the Visualize Spots option on and off: it's the **A** key. Also, it's not a bad idea to zoom in when you do this to get a really good look at the sky.



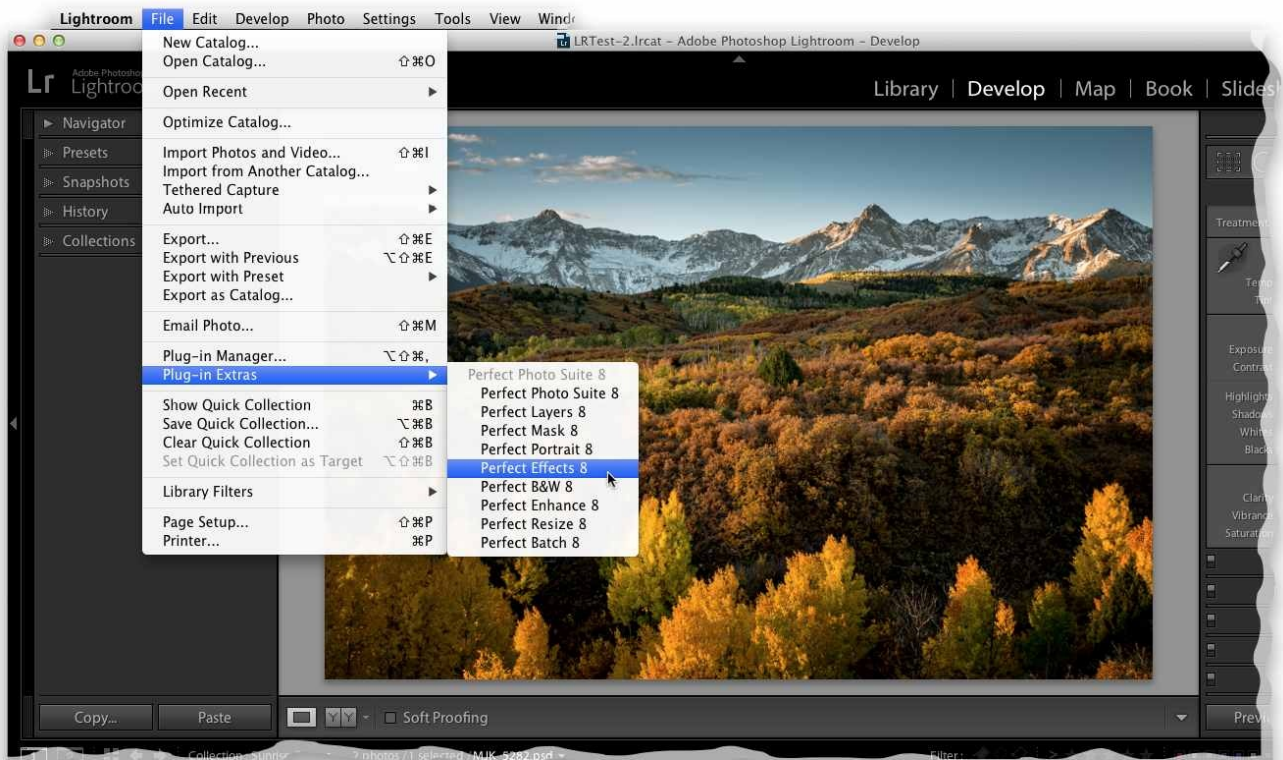
**Finally, just about every photo I edit gets a vignette.** For this photo, the Post-Crop Vignetting options in the Effects panel work just fine. Decrease the Amount setting to darken the edges (as shown here), then adjust the Midpoint setting to help hide the edges and soften the transition from the dark part of the vignette to the unaffected areas.

Well, that's pretty much it for this photo. But, next, I'm going to show you one of my secret weapons for landscape photos. Just be aware that it's a third-party plug-in, so it doesn't automatically come with Lightroom. But, if you want to see how I *really* finish my photos, then this is it.



**The plug-in I use is called Perfect Effects** and it's included in onOne Software's Perfect Photo Suite 8 (even though earlier versions of the suite have Perfect Effects, the specific effect I'm using here isn't included in them).

If you have the Lightroom version of the plug-in installed, just go under the File menu, under Plug-In Extras, and choose **Perfect Effects 8**. (Note: You'll want to choose it through the File menu, rather than from the Edit In menu, under the Photo menu, because you get some better options this way.) Now, once your image is open in Perfect Effects, the specific effect I was talking about earlier is called Dynamic Contrast—it adds detail, clarity, and contrast to your photo all at once. The best part about it is that it lets you apply it to parts of your photo that need it and keeps the parts that don't from getting that ultra-grungy, fakey look.



Once the Dynamic Contrast filter is selected on the left, I always choose the Natural setting. Then, on the right side of the window, you'll see all of the sliders that can adjust the effect in more detail. The main ones I use are in the Detail section (Small, Medium, Large) of the Filter Options panel. You basically adjust the slider that most fits the details you want to add contrast to. For example, I think the trees here would fall into the small and medium categories. The mountain range in back is probably more on the medium side. If you had puffy clouds in the sky, they'd be larger details, and you could really add some contrast to them (even though we don't have them here). When you're done, click Apply and you'll be taken back to Lightroom with a new copy of your photo, right beside the original, with the Dynamic Contrast effect applied.





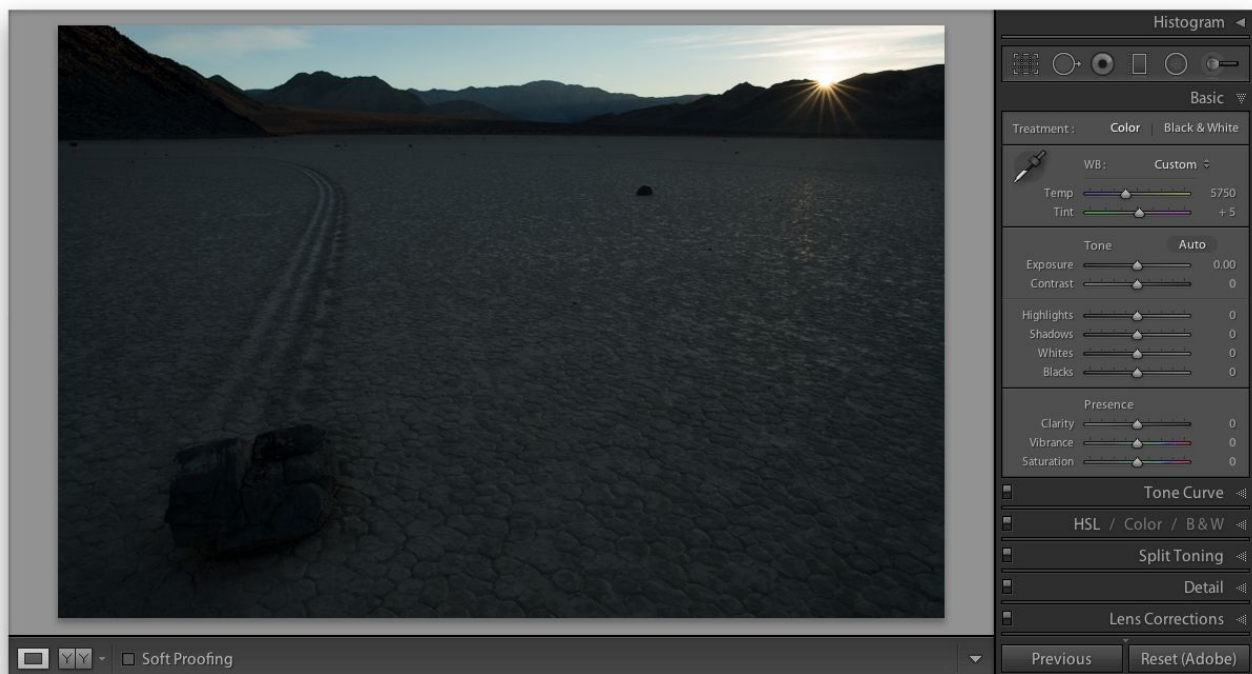
## CHAPTER 4



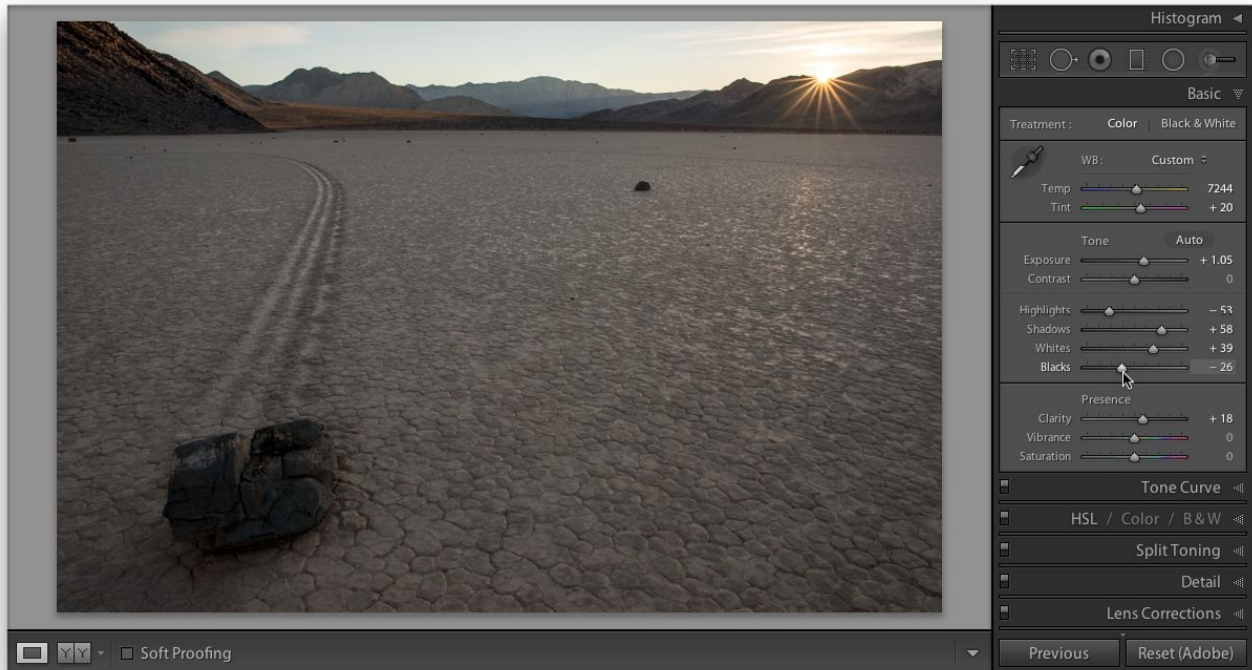
# SHOOTING INTO THE SUN

Shooting directly at the sun is one of my favorite things to do in landscape photography. You see, landscapes can be very static, but when you include the sun just as it goes below (or comes up above) the horizon, mountain peak, or tree, I feel like it captures a very specific moment in time, rather than just a static scene where the viewer doesn't have that connection. So, I often set my aperture to  $f/16$  (the small aperture setting is what helps give you that sunburst star effect) and wait for that key moment.

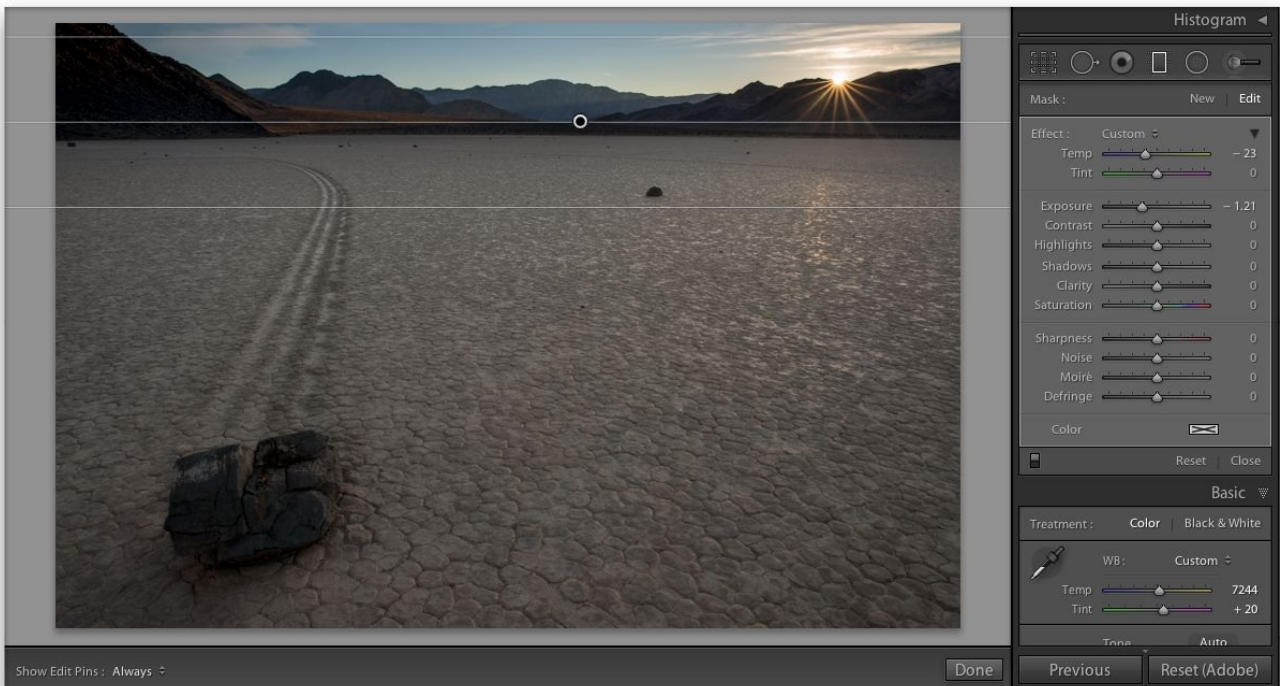
**The game plan for this image is to brighten it quite a bit.** Here, I captured the setting sun just before it went behind the hills in Death Valley's popular Racetrack Playa. Whenever you shoot into the sun, your camera's meter is most likely going to capture a darker photo, so that it doesn't totally blow out the sky and make it all white. As a result, you'll need to brighten things up a bit, while still keeping the sky under control. Also, in this image, there are a bunch of little rocks in the background that would just look like sensor dust spots if we left them, so we'll need to clone those out. Lastly, that rock in the foreground is one of the main parts of the photo, but it's really dark, so we'll have to brighten it up more than the rest of the foreground area so it stands out.



**Start off by increasing the Exposure and Shadows** to brighten up the entire photo and bring out the dark areas. Then, pull back on the Highlights slider, so that we bring back some detail in the sky. Follow that up by adjusting the Blacks and Whites sliders (you can use the Option-click [PC:Alt-click] trick that we've used before to find the black and white points). I also adjusted the overall white balance to make the photo warmer and even added a little red to it by moving the Tint slider to the right a little.



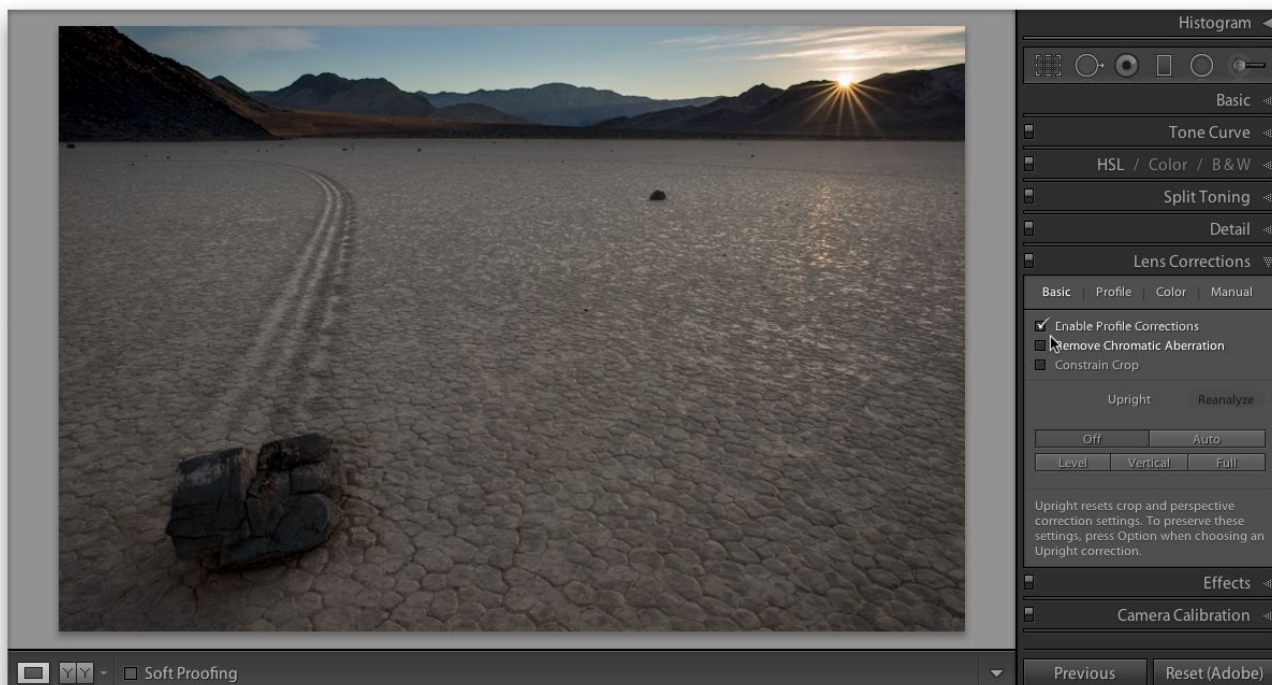
**The Graduated Filter comes in really handy on the sky, once again.** Select it from the toolbox, then reduce the Exposure setting to darken the sky, reduce the Temp setting to add some blue, and then drag the filter downward, so it just affects the sky area.



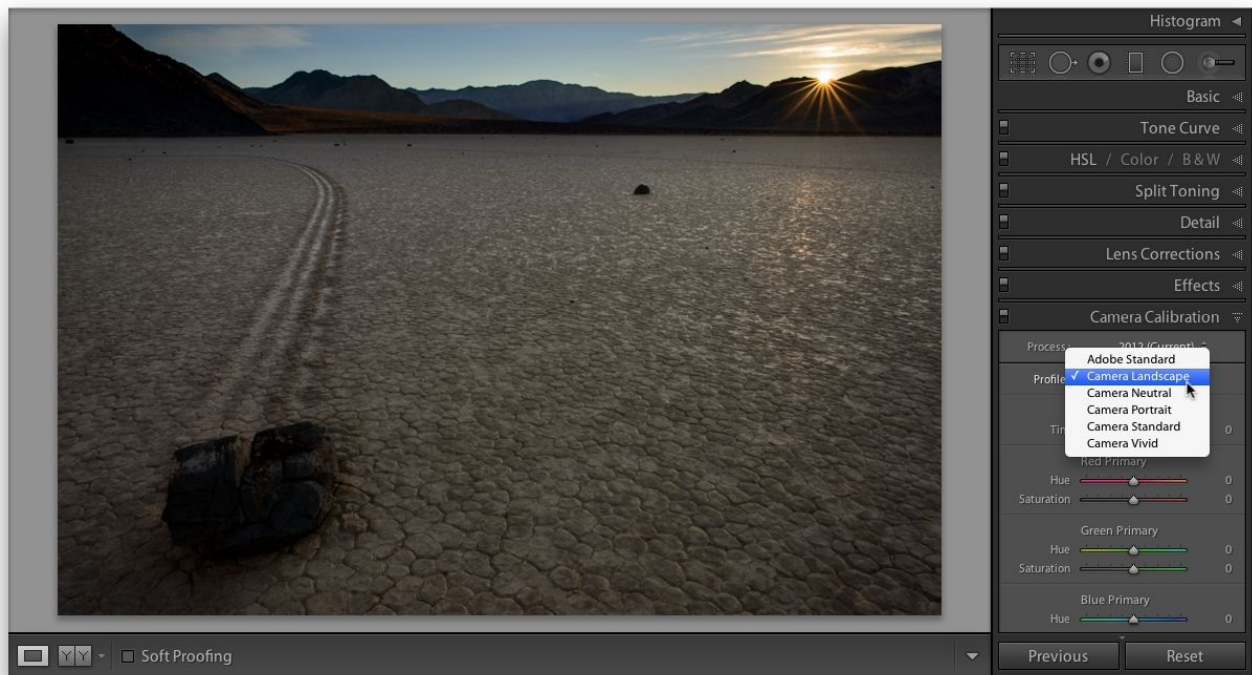
**The photo looks a little distorted (curved) along the base of the mountains.** You can almost see a curvature, which happens a lot with the wide-angle lenses



that we typically use for landscapes. If you notice this, just go to the Lens Corrections panel and, in the Basic section, turn on the Enable Profile Corrections checkbox (as shown here), and you'll see Lightroom automatically makes some adjustments by looking at the camera and lens that you captured this image with.



**Overall the photo needs some more contrast and maybe even a color boost.** One of the settings I always like to try is in the Camera Calibration panel. If you shoot in RAW (it doesn't work with JPEGs), you can adjust the Profile setting to enhance your photo. The settings are camera-specific, so they may be called something different for the photo you're looking at, but for my Nikon D800, the **Camera Landscape** setting works really well here.

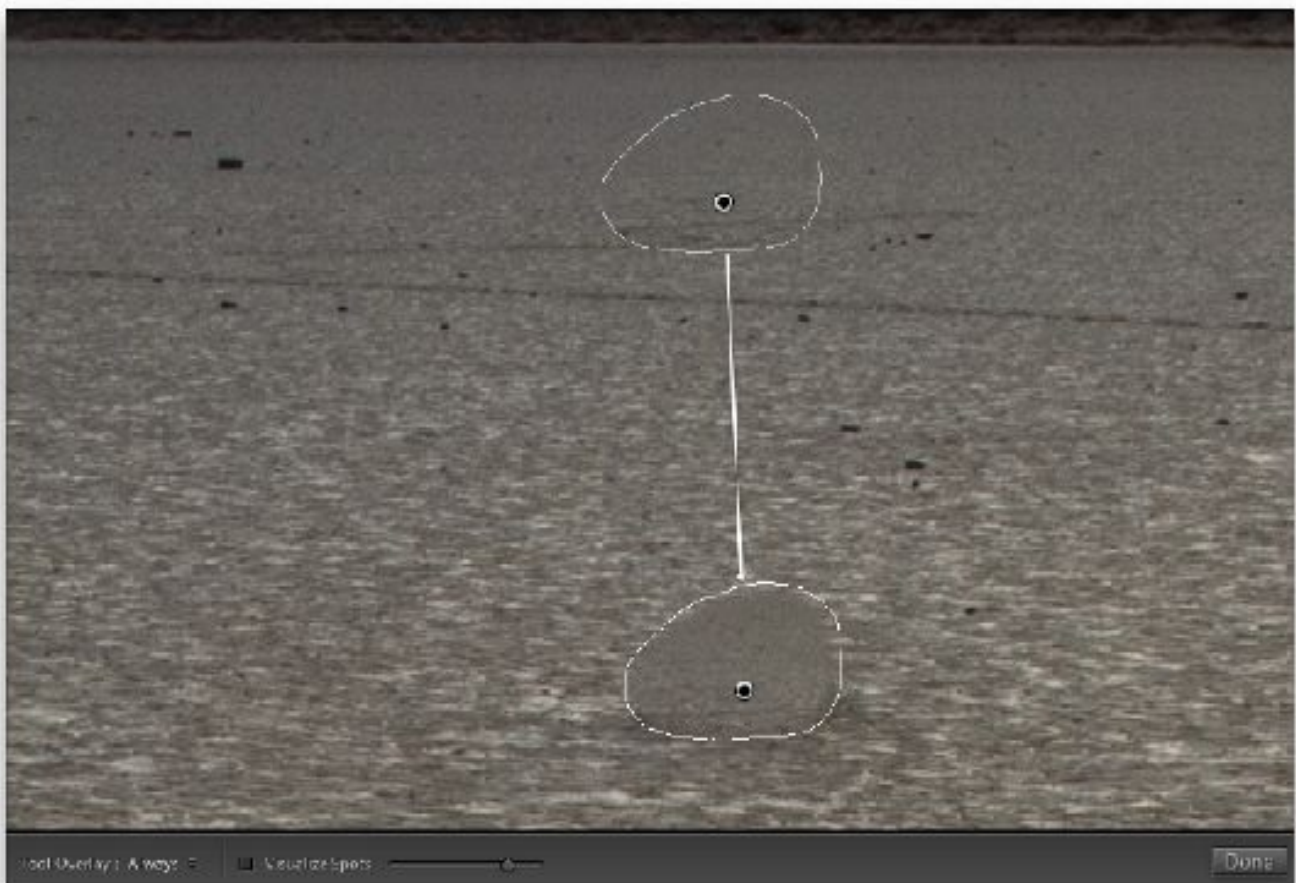


**Now, one thing that's bothering me is the rock in the foreground.** It's really one of the focal points in the photo, but it's so dark. Heck, those rocks are why you go to photograph the Racetrack Playa in the first place. So, it'll need to get brightened, and one of the best tools that can do that is the Adjustment Brush. It works a lot like the Graduated Filter, but it uses a brush rather than a gradient line. Zoom in on that rock, then select the Adjustment Brush (**K**) from the toolbox, and increase the Exposure and Shadows settings. Now, just paint over the rock to make it brighter (as shown here). If your brush is too big, and you paint on the outside of the rock, just press-and-hold the **Option (PC: Alt)** key to switch the brush to Erase mode and paint to remove any of the spillover areas.



**Now it's time for some retouching.** Those smaller rocks in the back will end up looking like sensor dust spots or just spots on the photo if we were to print this image. They're just not big enough to show up and people that have never been to the Racetrack Playa would never know what they were. So, let's get rid of 'em.

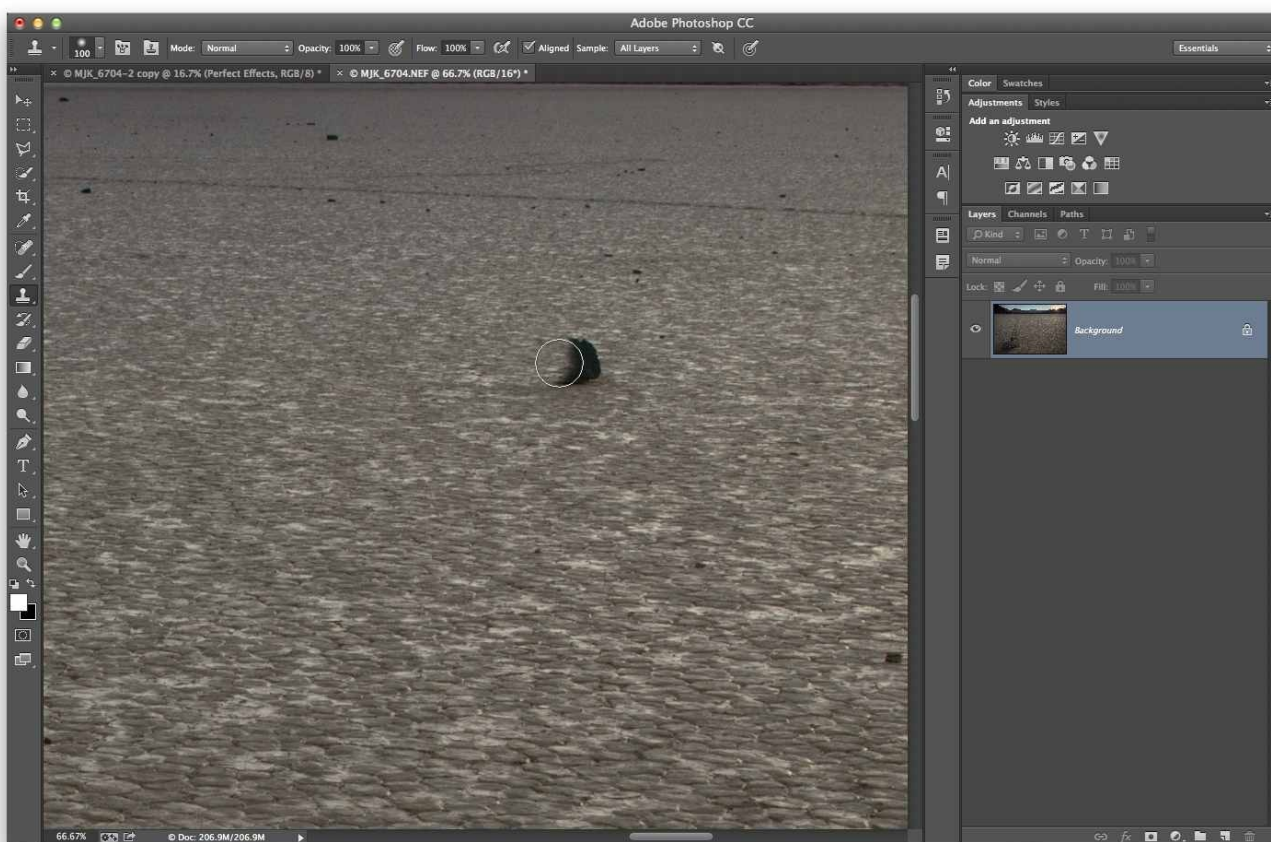
Your first thought may be to use Lightroom's Spot Removal tool for the Clone and Heal features it has. It's mine too, so let's give it a try: Select the Spot Removal tool (**Q**) from the toolbox and brush over one of the rocks. Whether you have the tool set to Clone or Heal doesn't really matter here because the result is the same. The tool, though, is so haphazard in the area it chooses to fix from—look how far away it chose a source area (the top selection) to use to remove this rock.



Well, you've got two options: you could always click on the sample area and move it closer to the rock to "help" it along, or you could use Photoshop since it has superior cloning and healing. Since Photoshop will be a lot faster (and we haven't jumped over there yet in this book), we'll go with that route. So, go under the

Photo menu, under Edit In, and choose **Edit in Photoshop CC** (or CS6, CS5, or whatever version you're using). This opens a copy of your photo in Photoshop, where you can now use all of its retouching tools to help get rid of any distractions. Get the Clone Stamp tool (**S**) from the Toolbox, then, press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key and click to sample an area right next to a rock. Then, just paint over the rocks to remove them.

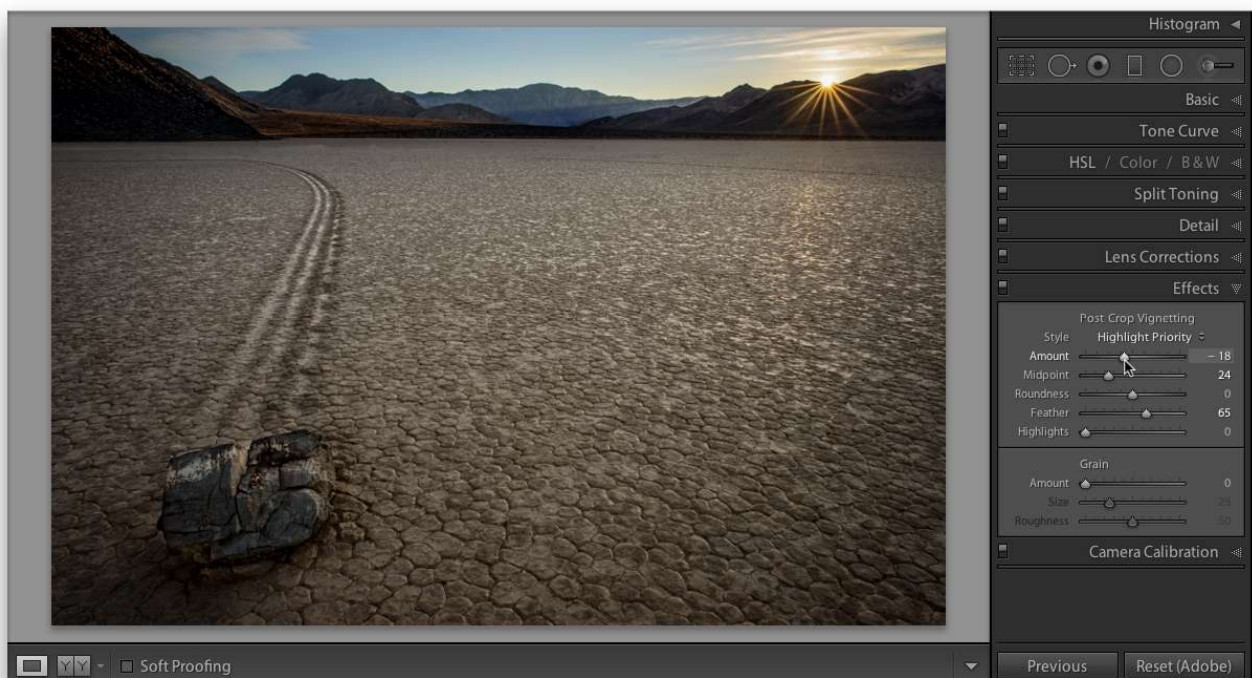
When you're done, go under the File menu and choose **Save** to save your image, and then close it. Don't change the name or location or do Save As. Just save and close it, and Photoshop and Lightroom take care of getting a copy of the image back into Lightroom right next to the original.



**Now that we're back in Lightroom, it's time for some finishing touches.** You could use the Detail panel to sharpen the photo and you'd be done. But, this is another one of those photos that would benefit from Perfect Effects, which we used in the previous chapter. If you have it, go under the File menu, under Plug-In Extras, and choose **Perfect Effects 8**. Again, I'm going to add the Dynamic Contrast filter like we did before. But, this time, I'm also going to add a new layer in Perfect Effects' Filter Stack panel, add the Sunshine filter, and use the Glow preset (as seen here). It's a nice effect for sunrise and sunset photos to add just a little bit of extra warmth to the image. When you're done, hit the Apply button to return to Lightroom.

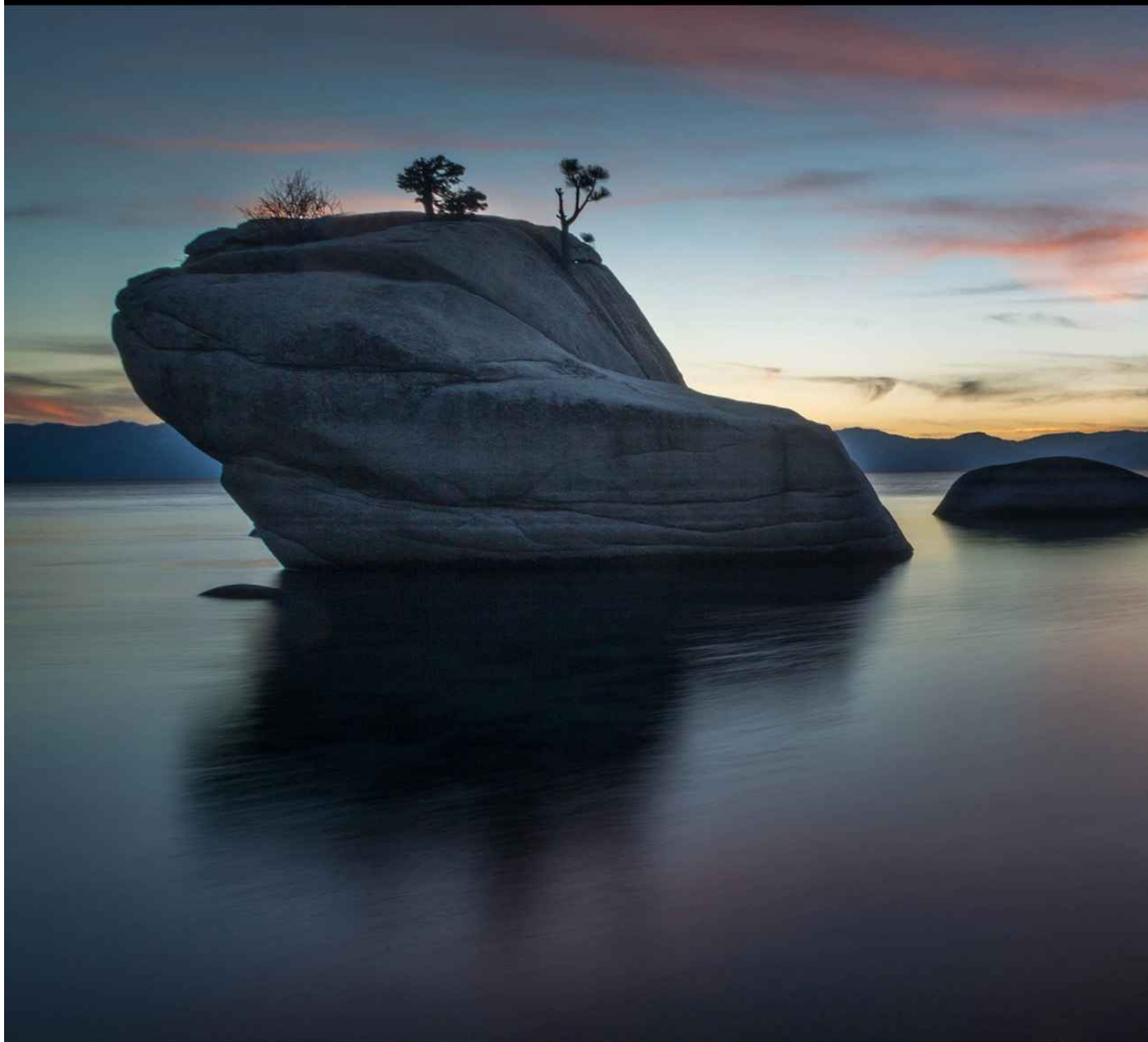


**The last thing that the photo needs is a vignette.** For this photo, once again, the Post-Crop Vignetting settings in the Effects panel work just fine. Decrease the Amount setting to darken the edges, then adjust the Midpoint setting to help hide the edges and soften the transition from the dark part of the vignette to the unaffected areas.





## CHAPTER 5

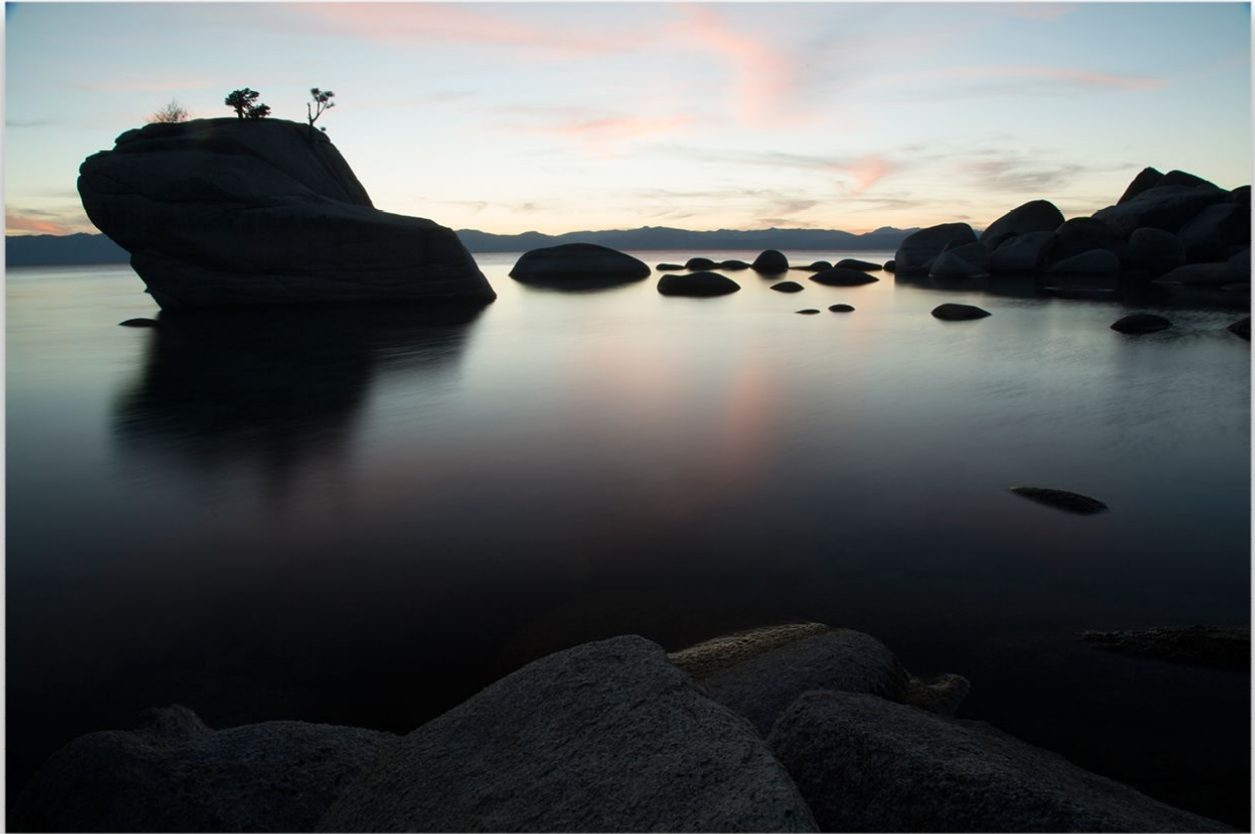


# THE TWILIGHT LANDSCAPE

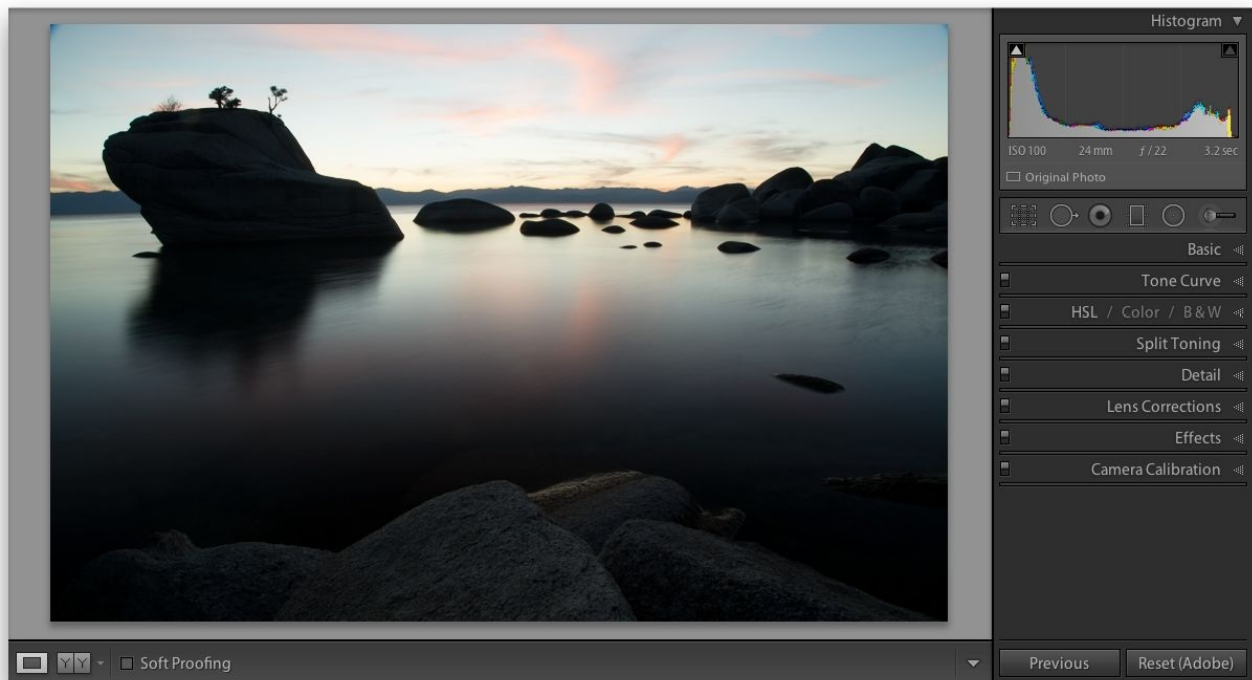
Twilight is one of my favorite times to shoot. We often have it drilled into our minds that the only time to shoot is when the sun is coming up or right when it's going down—basically, a key few minutes each day. But, you can capture some beautiful photos during twilight, too. The landscape around you won't be totally dark, since the recently set sun still reflects off the atmosphere, and it won't be totally light—it's somewhere in between.



Here's a photo of Bonsai Rock at Lake Tahoe, which is near Sand Harbor. I actually photographed this when the sun was still up and kept shooting right as it was going down. But, to me, I really like the twilight version better. It just has a certain mood to it that the sunlit photo doesn't.



I think part of shooting landscapes is also knowing (and taking advantage of) the things that you can do in Lightroom and Photoshop. This photo is a great example. The light was literally changing by the minute. In the clouds, on the rocks, the sky...you name it. I wanted a longer exposure/shutter speed because it helps to smooth the water out, so it doesn't have so many ripples in it. But, since it was getting dark and the light was changing so fast, I opted not to put my neutral density filter on to slow the shutter speed. Instead, I just overexposed the photo a bit. The result: smooth water and a slightly bright sky. But, I think this is a great example because it shows how much flexibility we have in Lightroom with exposure and toning adjustments.



**Let's start with Highlights and Shadows.** We want to darken the sky, so reducing the Highlights will help. Then, adjust the Shadows slider to open up those darker areas up front on the rocks. From there, adjust the Whites and Blacks sliders and remember that there probably isn't a pure white point in this photo, so there's no need to push the Whites slider until you see one. Now, overall, if you feel you need to make the whole photo brighter or darker, then adjust the Exposure. In this photo, I thought it was good as is, so I'm leaving it at 0.

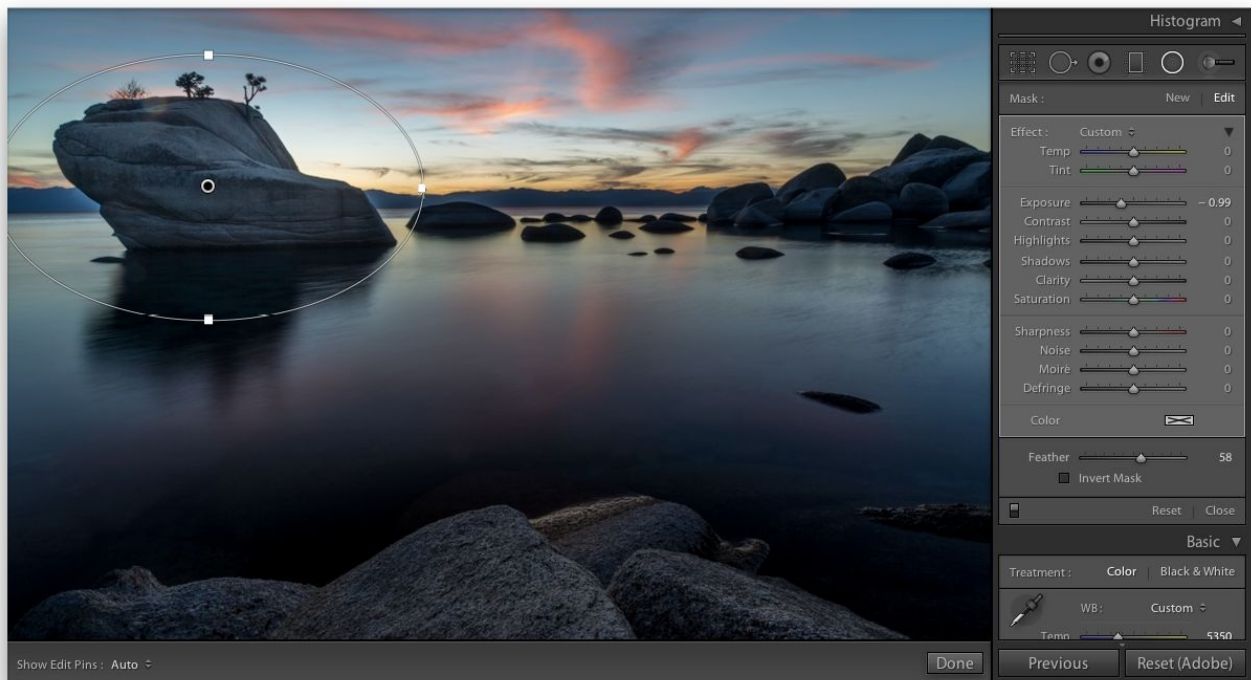
**White balance is a really important part of twilight photos.** Remember, twilight is all about color. It's color that you can't get any other time of the day, so we want to take advantage of it. Now, white balance is a very creative adjustment for landscape photographers—it really depends on how you view the scene and how the landscape "feels" like it should look. For me, I tend to keep my sunset and sunrise photos very warm. If the sun is there, then it should have a warm feeling. But, the colors change during twilight. I tend to drag the Temp slider toward the cooler/blue side and the Tint toward the right to a more magenta color. It really helps with those subtle blue and pink/red colors we see in the sky.



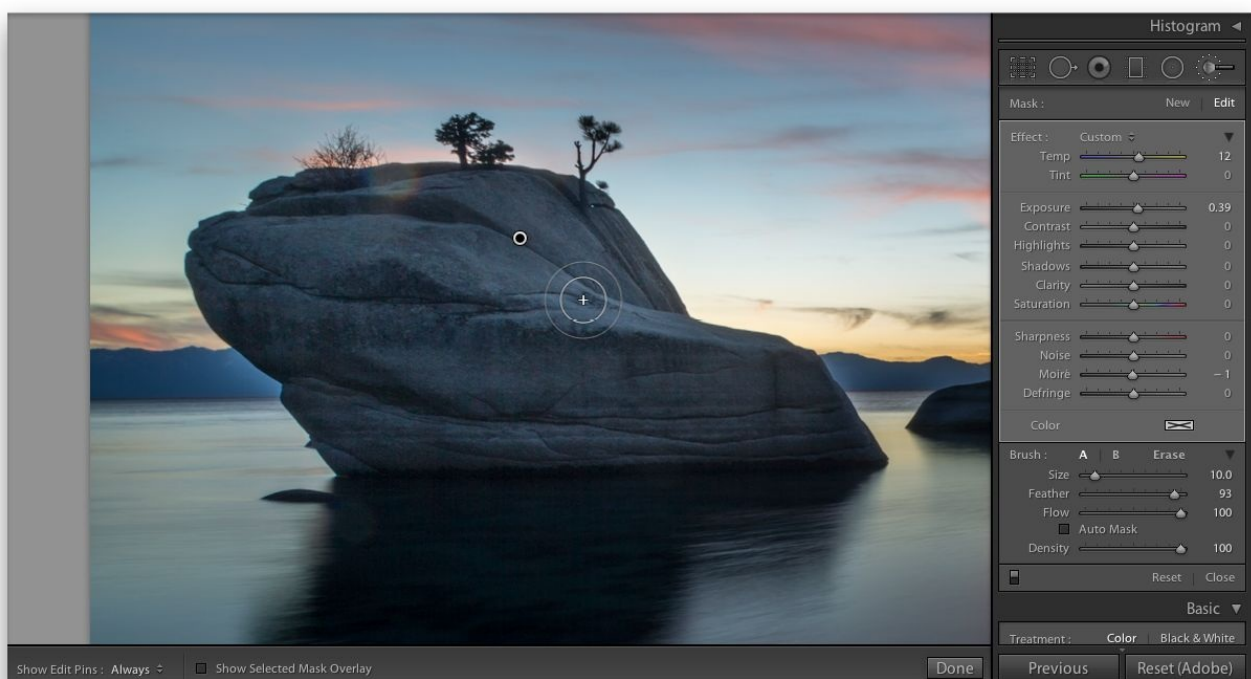
**Next, I usually add some clarity, and even a little saturation if the photo needs it.** I know the Saturation slider usually gets a bad reputation, but if you use it sparingly it's not bad at all—especially for landscapes. While the Vibrance slider works great on portraits, Saturation boosts the colors in everything, which I think is exactly what we want in a landscape photo. There's also some dark vignetting along the edges of this photo, so go to the Lens Corrections panel and turn on the Enable Profile Corrections checkbox and Lightroom will automatically fix it. It's usually a good idea to turn on Remove Chromatic Aberration, too, as it will remove any of those color fringes we see when we shoot with wide-angle lenses.



**Whenever you have a photo with a strong subject or focal point that's not in the center, it's a good time to use the Radial Filter.** It's basically another way of adding a vignette. Because vignettes make the edges darker and leave the middle alone, this is another way to make something (not in the center of the image) stand out—it's almost like putting a spotlight on something. Just get the Radial Filter (**Shift-M**) from the toolbox, then reduce the Exposure setting, place your cursor over whatever it is you want to draw attention to (Bonsai Rock in the top left here), and then click-and-drag outward. The larger you make the circle, the wider the spread of the effect. In this example, I'm keeping it pretty close to the rock so everything else but Bonsai Rock gets darker.



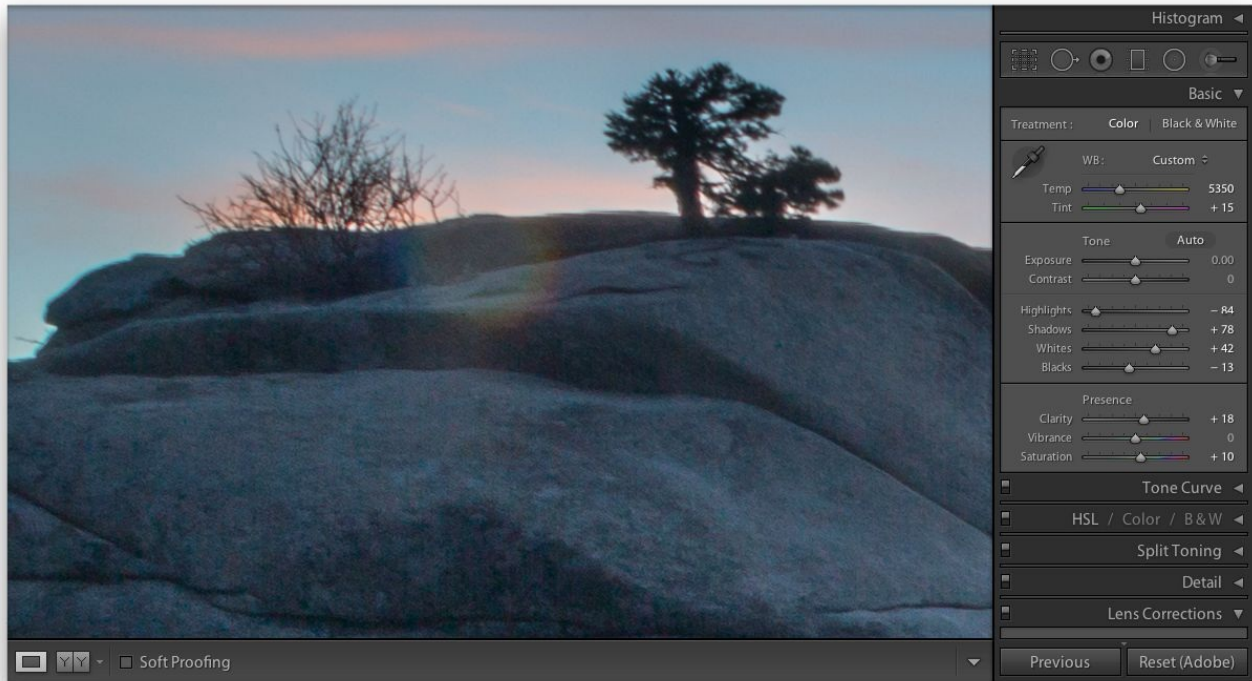
If the rocks (or whatever should stand out in your photo) are still too dark, then give the Adjustment Brush a try. Get the Adjustment Brush (**K**) from the toolbox, then increase the Exposure setting, and paint over the rocks in the foreground, as well as Bonsai Rock in the upper left. I'm also adding just a tiny bit of warmth to the rock by increasing the Temp setting a bit, so the rock doesn't appear too blue.



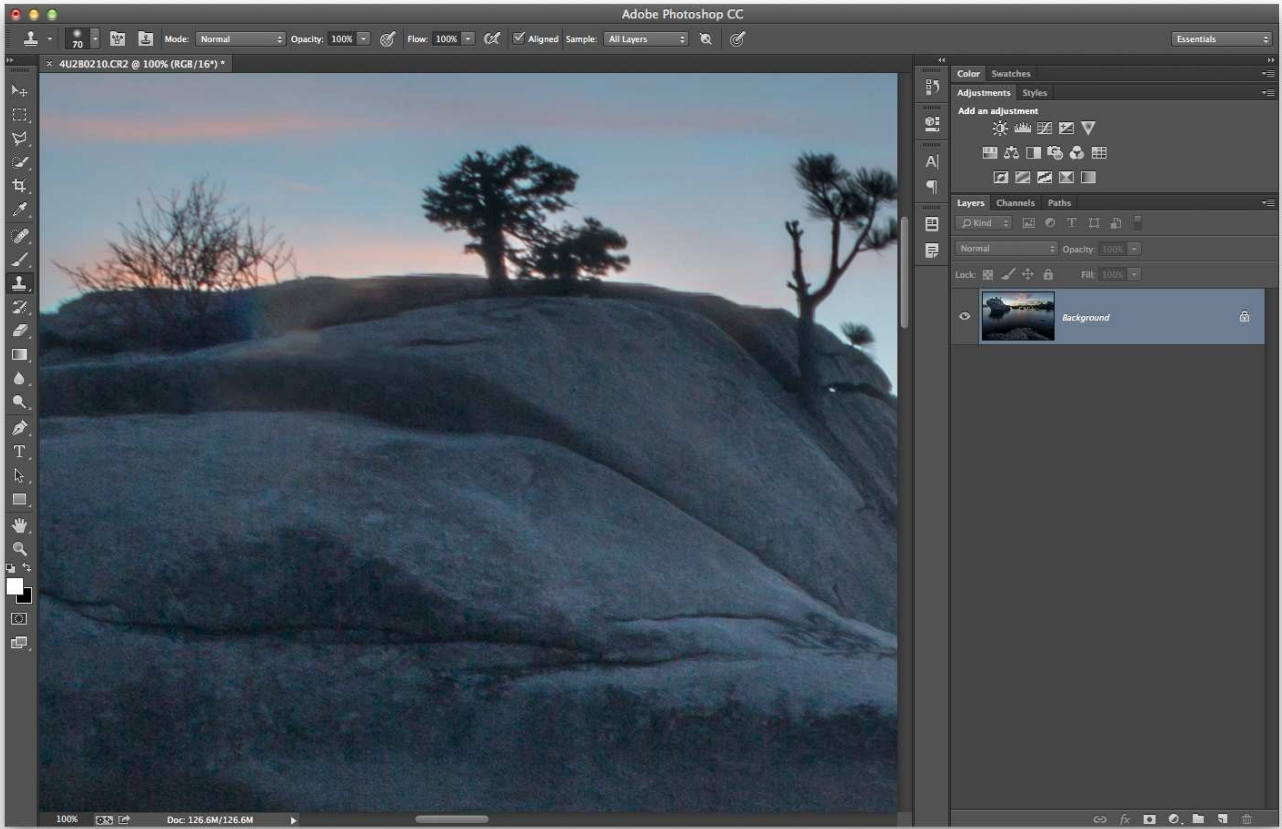
While you have the Adjustment Brush options open, it's a good idea to take a look at some other things in the image. For example, whenever you brighten a dark area, you run the risk of introducing noise to the photo—you'll probably have to zoom in quite a bit to see it. If that happens (we have a little here), just increase the Noise setting. But, since noise reduction tends to blur the photo a little, increase the Sharpness setting, as well, to help counteract it.



Okay, that's just about it. But, there's one tiny thing that's bugging me: there's a little reflection at the top of Bonsai Rock. It could be a water drop or a smudge on the lens, but either way, it's kinda distracting. This would be tough to fix using the Spot Removal tool in Lightroom, so I'm going to jump over to Photoshop for it. Go under the Photo menu, under Edit In, and choose **Edit in Photoshop CC** (again, it's the same for CS6, CS5, etc.).



Once you're in Photoshop, get the Clone Stamp tool (**S**), press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key, and click to sample an area next to the spot. Then, just paint over it to remove it. When you're done, from the File menu, choose **Save**, then close your image to return to Lightroom with your final image.







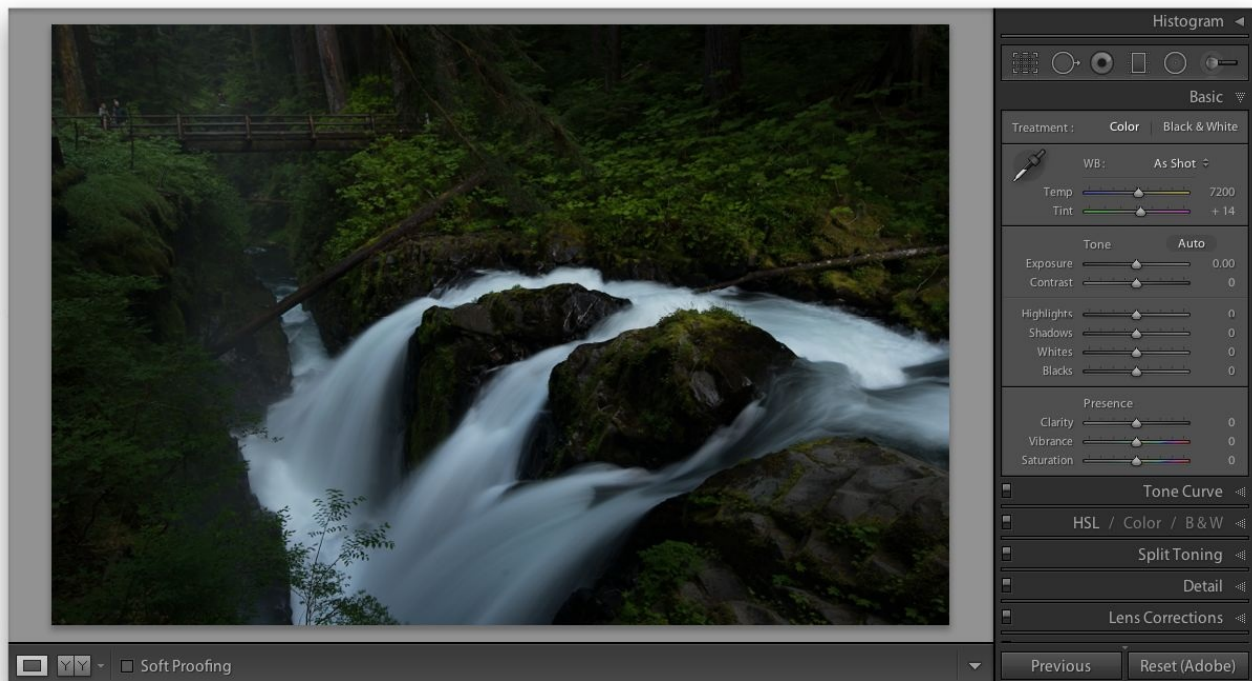
## CHAPTER 6



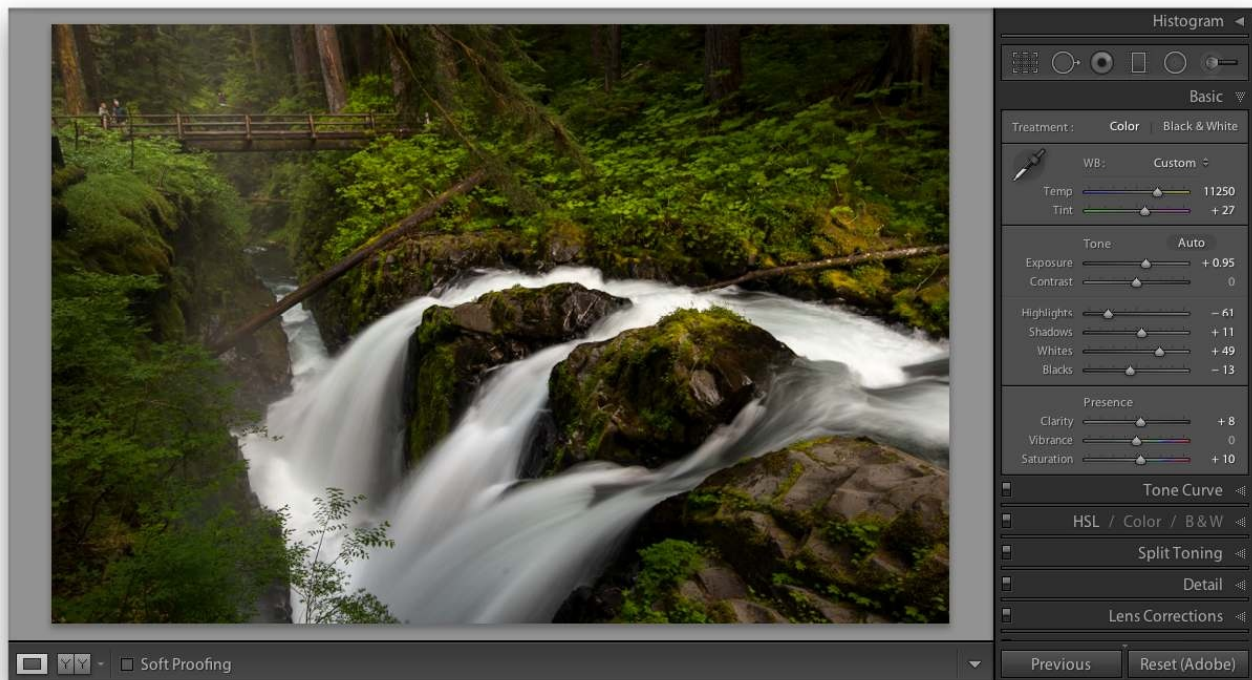
# WATERFALLS

It's hard to talk about landscapes without talking about waterfalls. There's just something that's so captivating about running water. And, when you're able to use a neutral density filter to slow the shutter speed and really capture the movement and silky effect in the water, you can create some incredible photos. But, they do come with their own challenges when it comes to editing. First off, waterfalls tend to have lots of trees, branches, and distractions around them. Not to mention, you have to balance the exposure of the areas surrounding the water with the bright white water itself, without losing any detail in the water. But, when it's all done, they're some of my favorite photos.

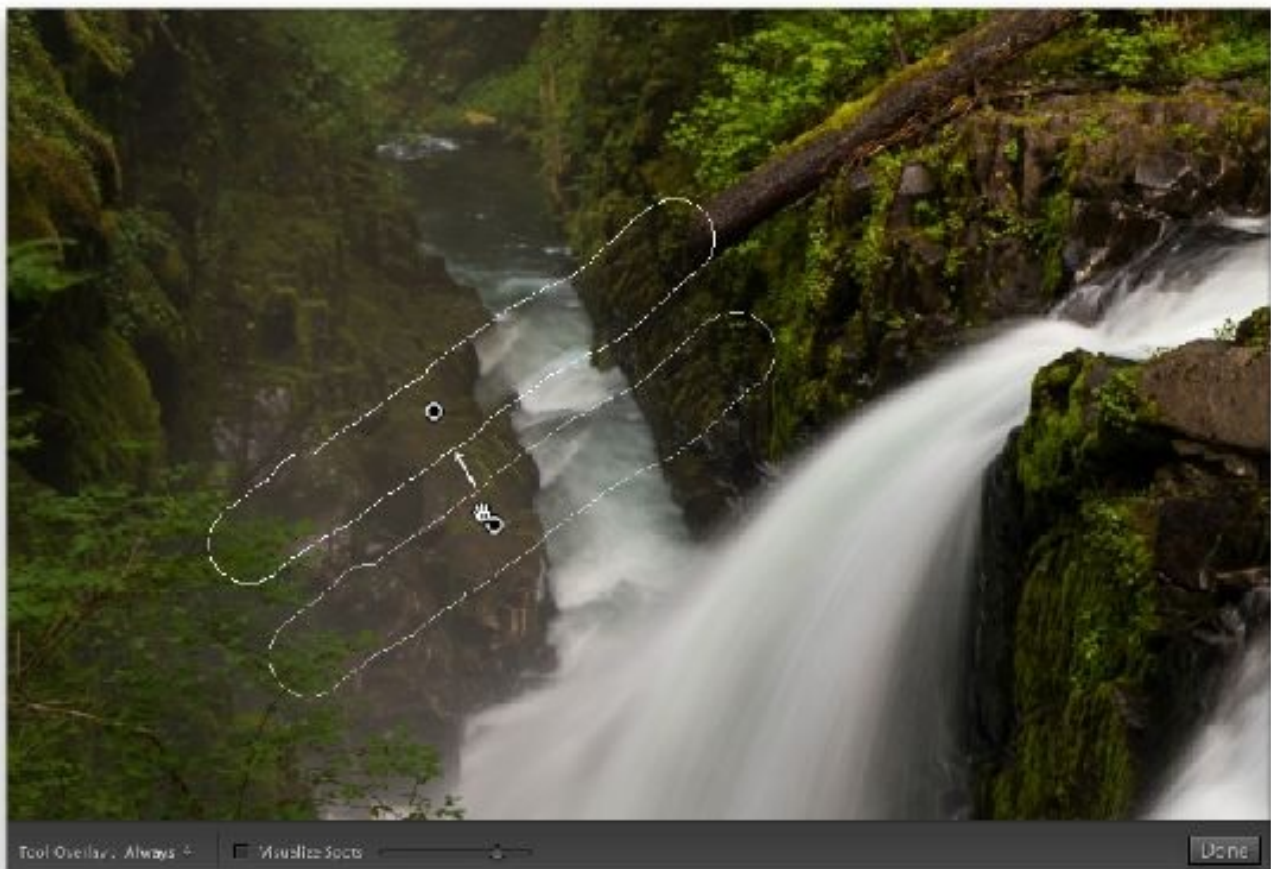
This photo is of Sol Duc Falls in Olympic National Park. It's a gorgeous waterfall that's almost hard to capture because it gives off so much mist in the air that your lens constantly gets water drops on it. The photo was taken in early morning, but there was enough sunlight that my shutter speeds made the water look frozen. So, I put on a 3-stop neutral density filter and that let me slow the shutter speed down to about a half-second and capture that smooth, silky water effect.



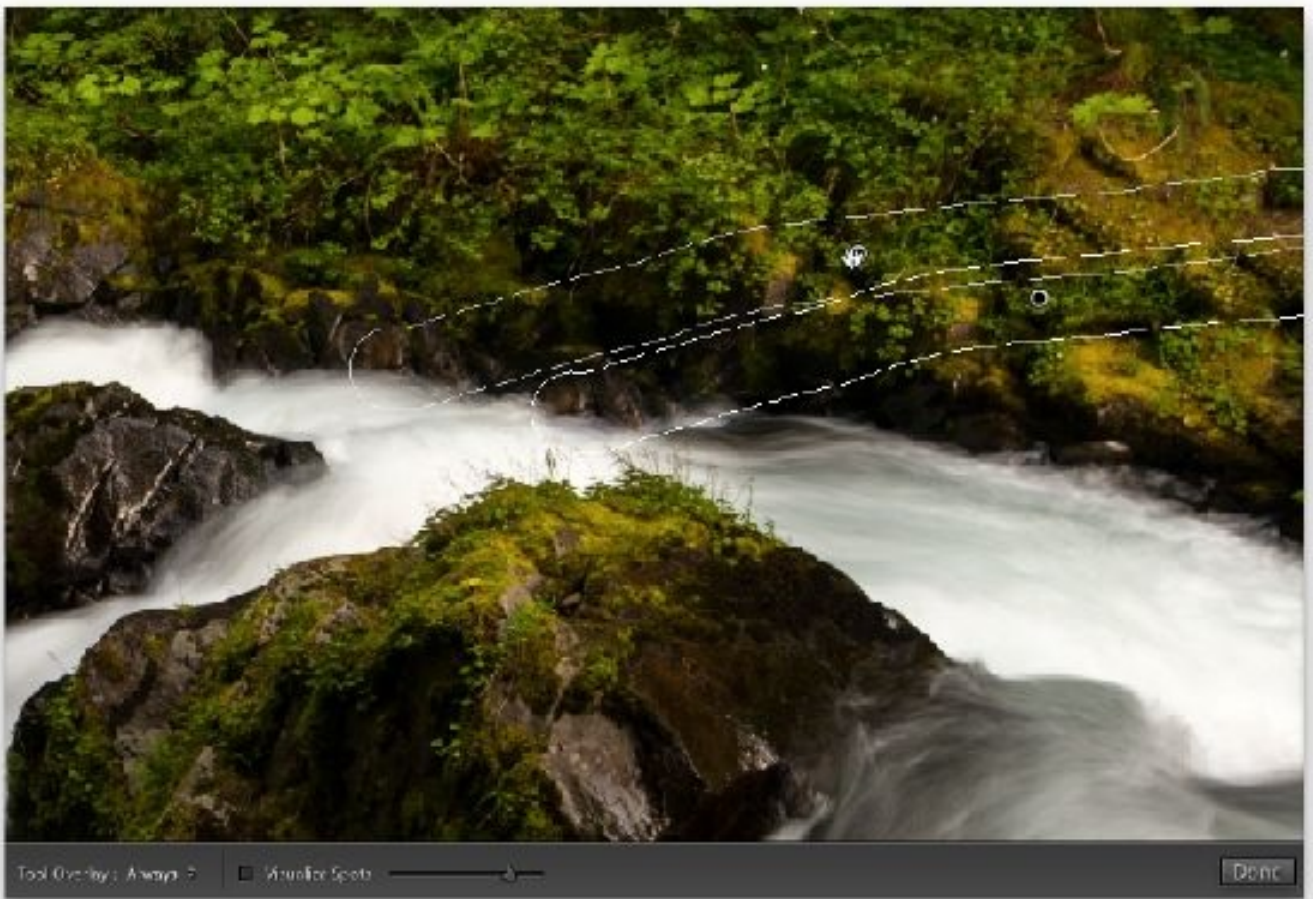
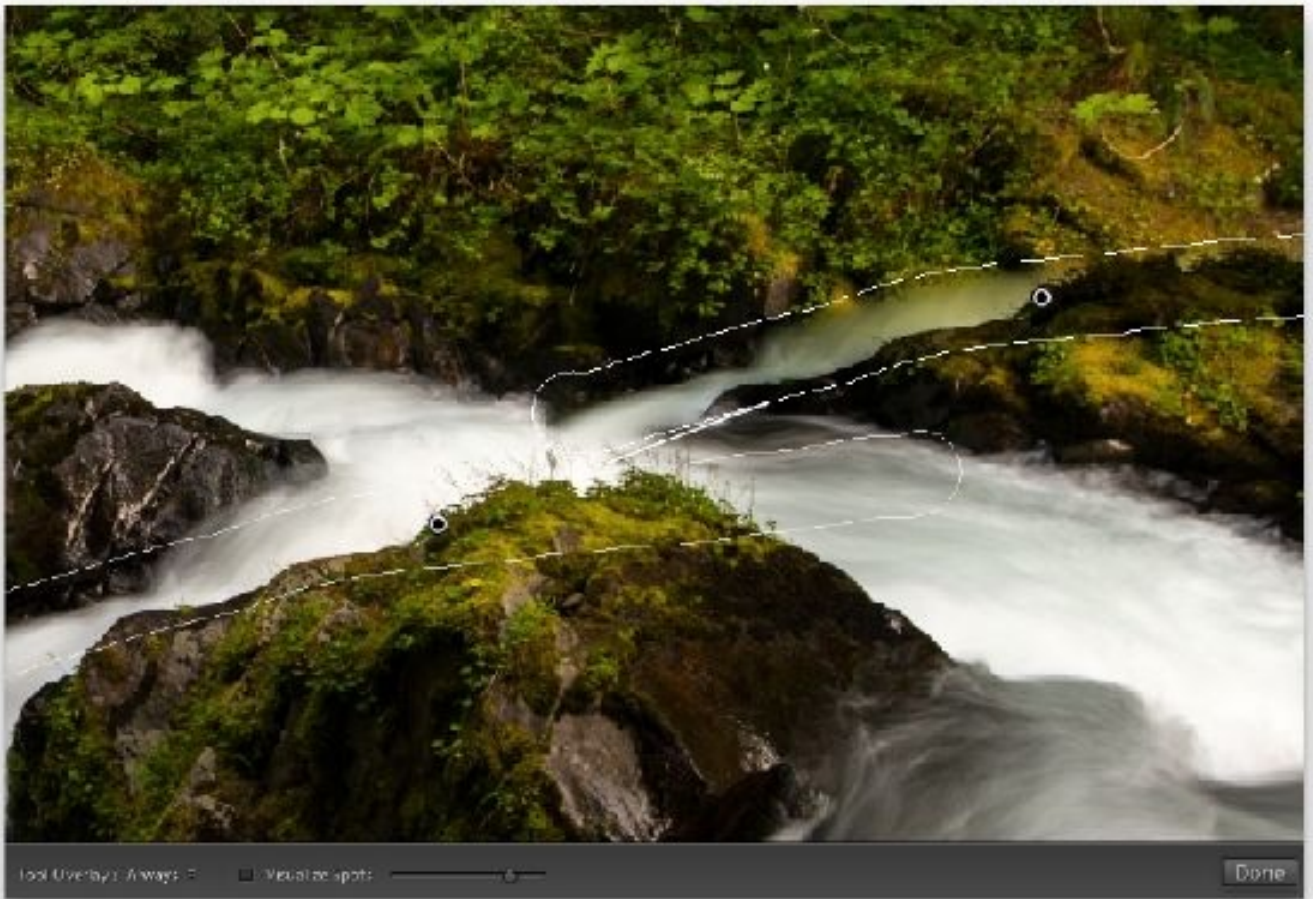
**The photo is a bit dark, so increasing the exposure helps out a lot.** Adding some warmth to it with the Temp slider will help the overall mood, too. Since you don't want the water to get too bright, reduce the Highlights and that'll bring back some more detail and texture in the falls. We do have some lost detail in the shadows, so increasing that will help, as well. And, of course, the ol' Blacks and Whites sliders should get adjusted for this photo. When it comes to the Whites though, don't push them too far or you'll lose detail in the water—just increase it enough until you see some small areas of water get white, then pull back a little. I increased the Clarity setting for a little more detail and added just a tiny bit of Saturation to boost the colors (be really careful, though, not to go too high with the Saturation or it'll look radioactive).



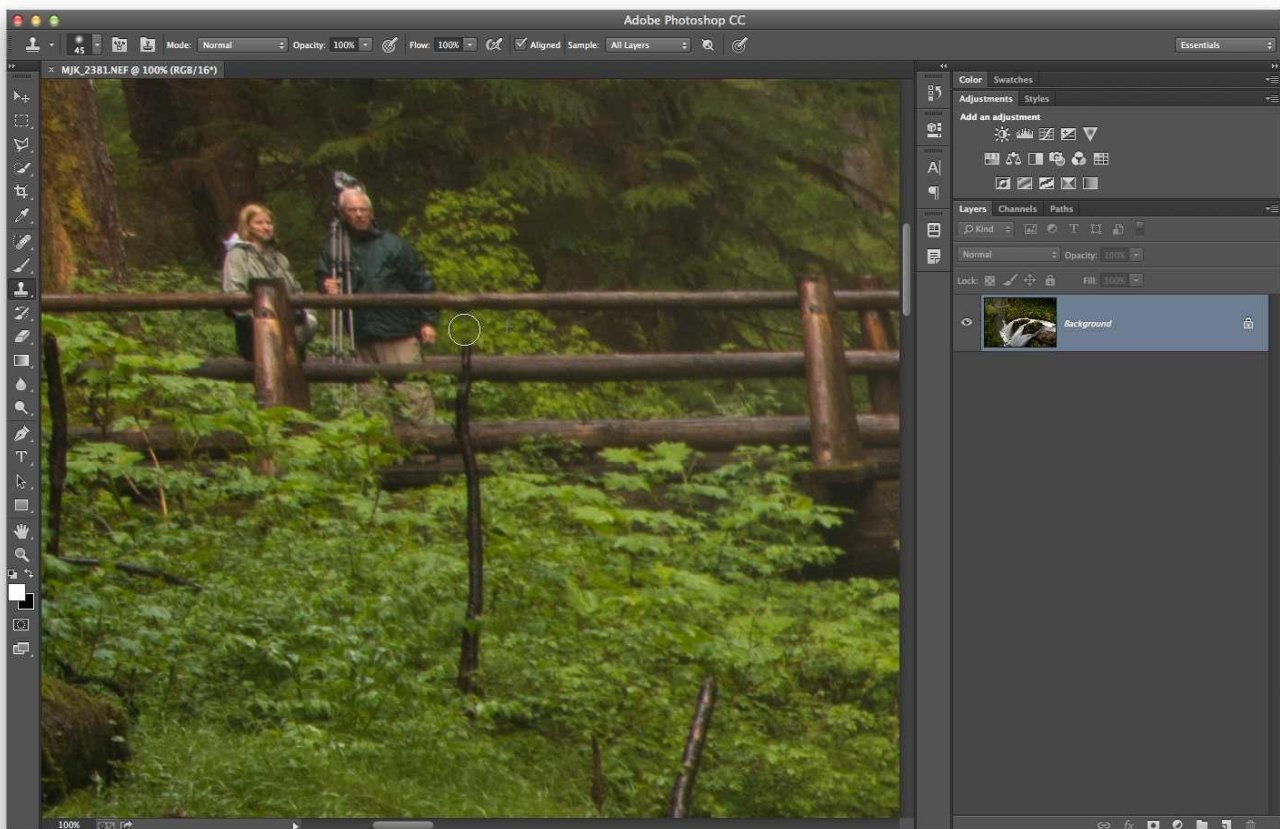
**When it comes to exposure, color, and tone, there's actually not much more to do here than what we just did.** But, there are a few more things we can do that'll dramatically help this photo. For starters, that log across the water in the middle of the photo is a little distracting. This is a total judgment call, though. Some people feel that because nature put the log there, it should remain in the photo. If you're one of those people, then feel free to leave it. I'm going to assume that some really mean person cut it down to ruin the photo for photographers and go ahead and remove it, so he doesn't win ;-). So, select the Spot Removal tool **(Q)** from the toolbox, make sure the Brush is set to Heal, and then paint over the log (as shown here). Lightroom does a pretty good job of removing it.



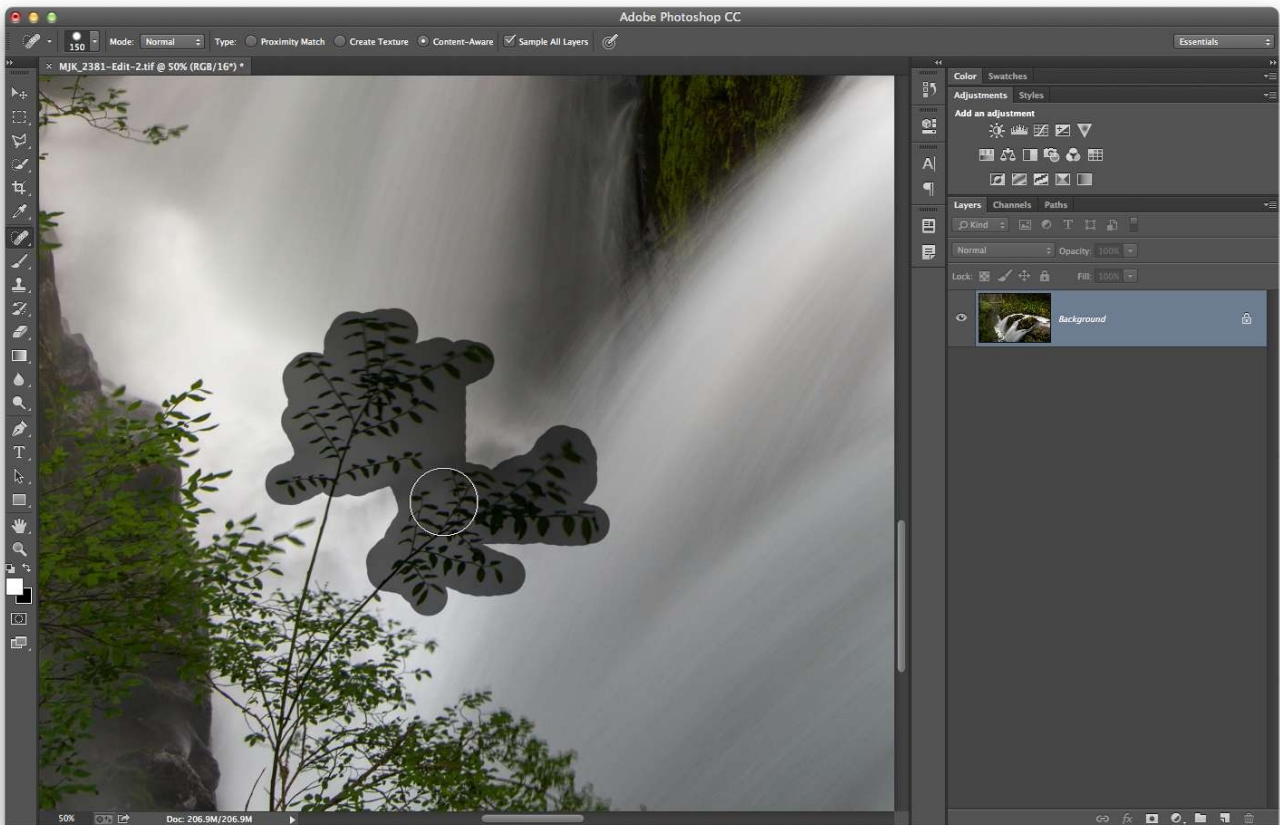
**Now do the same for the log on the right side of the photo.** In this case, Lightroom didn't do too great of a job removing it and actually replaced it with part of the waterfall itself. No sweat, though. If that happens, just click on the sample area dot you see on the photo and move it over something that looks like it'll be a better match for the area you're trying to remove (as shown here).



At this point we've pushed Lightroom pretty far when it comes to removing the distractions in the photo. If you really spend some time, you could try to zoom in on the top left of the photo and painstakingly paint over the people on the bridge to get rid of them. Or, you could leave them, if they don't bother you. Or, you could use Photoshop, which is exactly what I did here. Just go under the Photo menu, under Edit In, and choose **Edit in Photoshop** (or just press **Command-E [PC: Ctrl-E]**). With the photo open in Photoshop, zoom in on the people and that large piece of dead wood coming up out of the ground next to them, and use the Clone Stamp tool (**S**) to remove them. Remember, with the Clone Stamp tool you Option-click (PC: Alt-click) to sample an area, and then paint over the area you want to remove (as I'm doing here with the piece of wood).



And, if you're really feeling adventurous, you could use the **Spot Healing Brush** to paint over some of the tree near the lower-left corner that's sticking up into the waterfall. Between cloning and healing, it would take some patience and time to get rid of the entire tree. But a couple of quick swipes with the Spot Healing Brush (**J**) at the top parts of the tree should at least help reduce its overall distracting impact on the photo. When you're done cleaning the photo up a bit, from the File menu, choose **Save**, and then close the image to return the final to Lightroom.



**Okay, one last thing.** The newly edited copy of the photo is back in Lightroom at this point, and normally, I'd add a vignette to finish things off. But, I really want to draw attention to the waterfall here, so we'll add a Radial Filter effect instead. Get the Radial Filter (**Shift-M**) from the toolbox, reduce the Exposure setting, and click-and-drag over the rocks and top of the waterfall. It's almost like putting a spotlight on the area and really helps to draw attention to the nicest part of the photo.



The image shows a screenshot of the Adobe Photoshop interface. The main canvas displays a photograph of a waterfall in a lush forest, with a white circular mask applied to the central part of the waterfall. The right-hand side of the interface shows the 'Histogram' panel at the top, followed by the 'Mask' panel with 'New' and 'Edit' buttons. Below this is the 'Effect' panel, set to 'Custom', with sliders for Temp (0), Tint (0), Exposure (-0.91), Contrast (0), Highlights (0), Shadows (0), Clarity (0), and Saturation (0). Further down are sliders for Sharpness (0), Noise (0), Moiré (0), and Defringe (0). The 'Color' panel is collapsed. Below that is the 'Feather' panel with a slider set to 50 and an 'Invert Mask' checkbox. At the bottom of the right panel are 'Reset' and 'Close' buttons. The bottom of the Photoshop window shows the 'Basic' panel, 'Tone Curve', 'HSL / Color / B & W', and 'Split Toning' panels, along with 'Previous' and 'Reset (Adobe)' buttons. The status bar at the bottom left reads 'Show Edit Pins : Auto'.



# CHAPTER 7

## THE CLOUDY DAY

If you learn anything about landscape photography, hopefully you learn that a *huge* part of it is luck. Luck that you wake up early enough in the morning for a beautiful sunrise or go out one evening and have a beautiful sunset. But, if you're reading this, you've probably already learned that's not always the case. Sometimes (and, if you're like me, all the time), you get icky weather. Sometimes you just flat out get miserable weather. But, with a little creative post-processing you can take those cloudy photos and do something more with 'em.

What I just mentioned is exactly what happened the day I was traveling to Death Valley. Along the way there, I was hoping to pull over and shoot as I drove. Instead, the clouds rolled in.



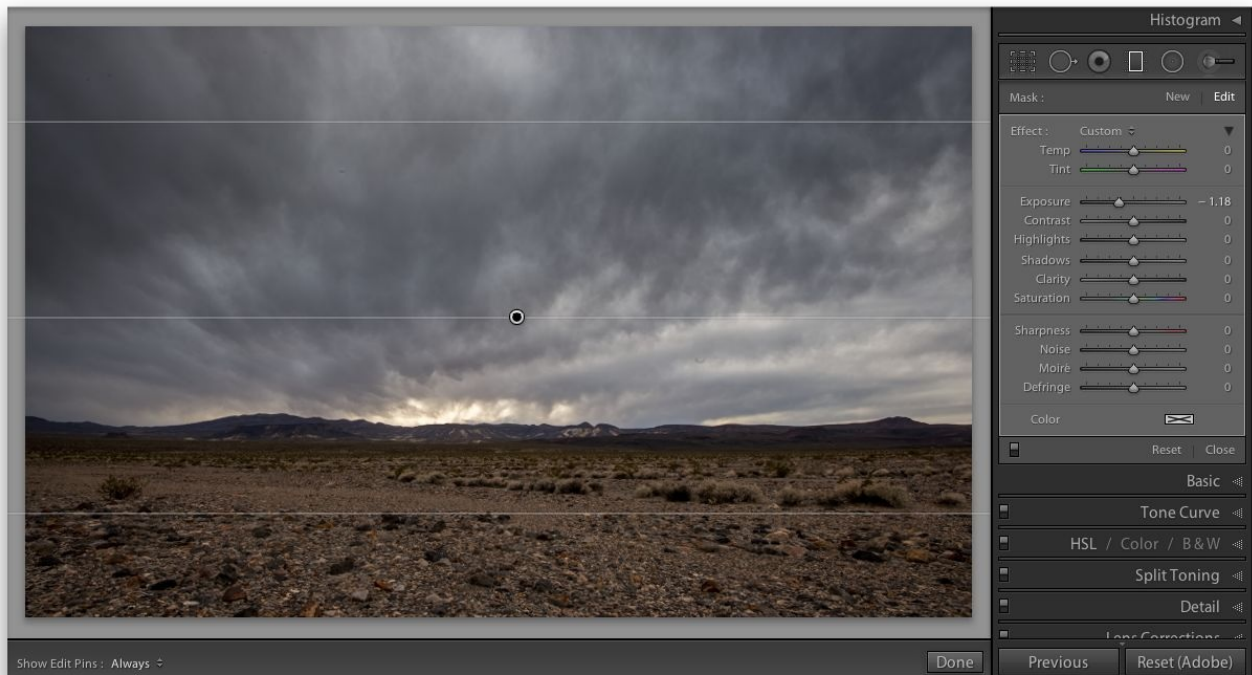
**Color and tone can play a big factor in dramatic cloudy photos like this.** So, white balance settings really mean a lot here. Overall, I think a warmer color will help, so I'll move the Temp slider to the left. The exposure is a little dark, so I'll increase that just a little so the rest of the photo doesn't get too bright. Dramatic clouds can usually be enhanced by reducing the Highlights setting quite a bit, and the foreground is a bit dark, so I'll increase the Shadows. From there, you already know the drill. Do the Option-click (PC: Alt-click) trick on the Blacks and Whites sliders to find your black and white points.



**Next, you'll notice the Clarity slider works great on cloudy photos.** It really helps to enhance the detail and texture in the clouds. However, I don't want to add too much clarity to the foreground, so be careful if you see things getting that ultra-detailed look. It may look great in the sky, but bad somewhere else. In this example, you'll see (in a moment) how you can add more clarity to just the sky and clouds. And, believe it or not, even though this is a fairly colorless photo, increasing the saturation will help add some nice color to the photo.

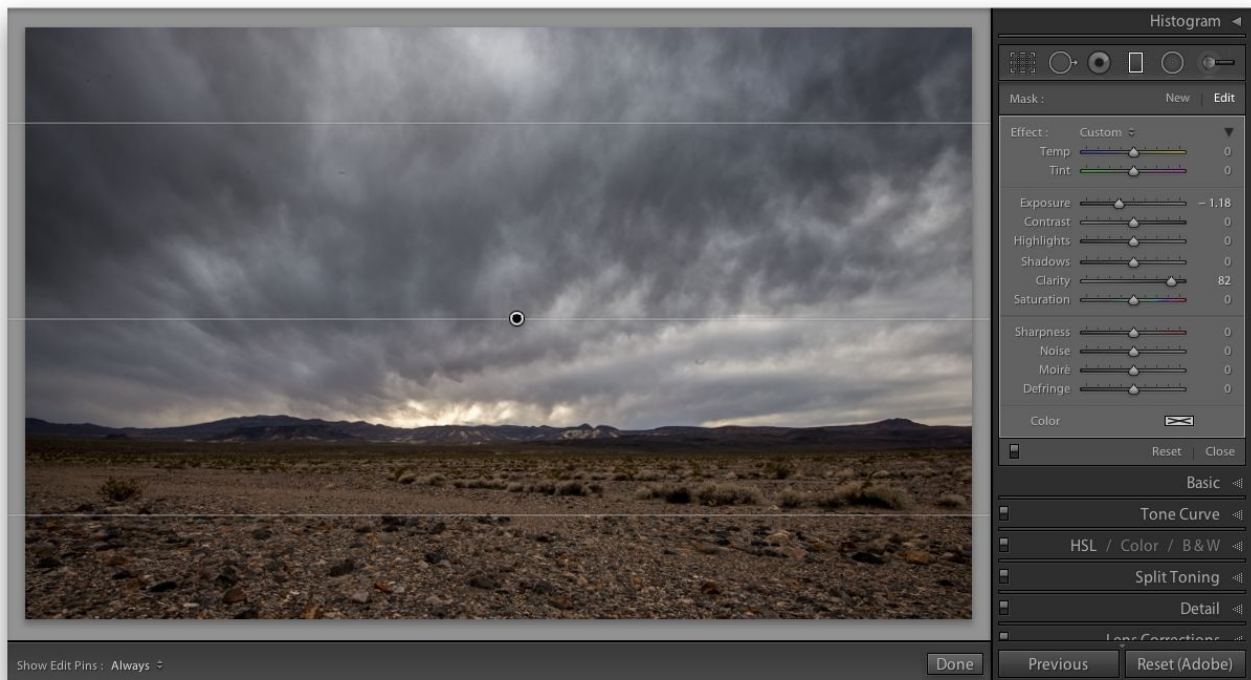


All right, the rest of the work is pretty simple and revolves around really making the clouds dramatic. Select the Graduated Filter (**M**) from the toolbox and decrease the Exposure setting. Now, click-and-drag from the top downward to darken the sky a little. Not bad, right? That definitely helps out.



**Ready for this?** While you still have the Graduated Filter active, in addition to the Exposure slider adjustment, try increasing the Clarity setting. Rather than adding

clarity back in the Basic panel, this method lets us add it to just the sky.



**Okay, now this next part is really cool.** Click on New at the top right of the Graduated Filter options, then drag downward one more time. Yep, you can actually add Graduated Filter adjustments on top of Graduated Filter adjustments. And, whatever settings you use get intensified. In this example, I decreased the Exposure and increased the Clarity setting in the first adjustment. But, I think the sky is getting too dark, so I reset the Exposure slider to zero and left the Clarity setting cranked up. You can continue to stack as many filters as you want on top of each other to intensify the effect, but I actually think that two is plenty here.

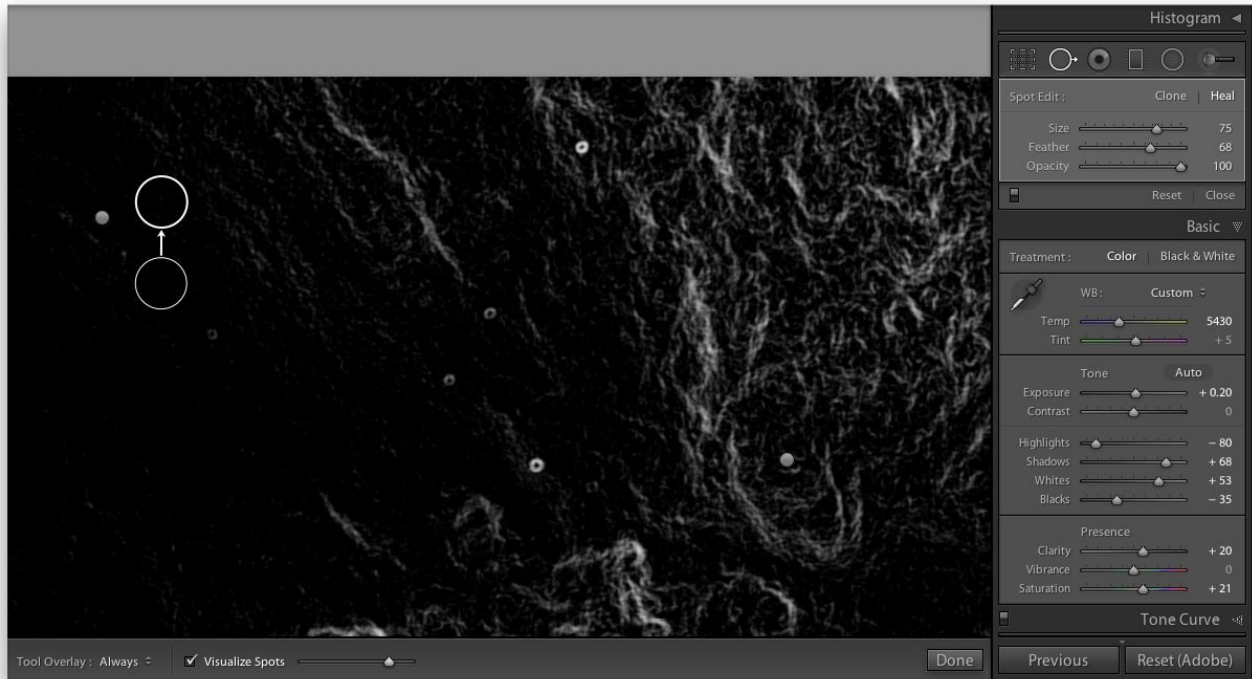


## TIP: Resetting Your Sliders

You can double-click on the name of any slider in the Develop module to reset it to its default value of 0 (zero).

**Next, let's remove some of the sensor spots in the sky.** Get the Spot Removal tool (**Q**) from the toolbox and don't forget to turn on the Visualize Spots checkbox beneath the preview area, so you can see where the spots are. Just be aware that the Visualize Spots option won't see all of the spots here because there are clouds in the sky, but it definitely does help. Once you turn it off, it's a good idea to zoom in and take a look around the photo for any more spots lurking about.





**Finally, go to the Effects panel and finish things off with a vignette.** If you've got a cloudy photo like this, and you've already added a lot of drama to the sky with the Graduated Filter like we have here, be careful with the vignette settings—you don't need to go too dark. Make sure you lower the Midpoint setting, though, and increase the Feather setting, so that the edges don't look artificially darkened.



Well, everyone, there you have my landscape post-processing workflow. Hopefully, after reading all this, you'll realize that it's fairly repetitive and there's almost a formula you can follow for each photo. Before we go, though, here are two things I'll leave you with:



BRIAN MATTIASH

(1) Don't forget to stop by my landscape and outdoor photography blog at [www.mattk.com](http://www.mattk.com) for more.

(2) I've included my basic gear list on the next page. Luckily, landscape photography doesn't require a lot of gear. A camera body, a few lenses, a tripod and ball head, and some filters, and you're good to go.

Enjoy and happy shooting!

Matt Kloskowski

# MY GEAR

## Camera Body

- Nikon D800
- Canon EOS 5D Mark III

## Lenses

- 16–35mm (both Nikon and Canon have one)
- Nikon 18–35mm (cheaper and lighter than Nikon's 16–35mm and just as good)
- 24–70mm (Nikon, Canon, and Tamron all have one)
- 70–200mm (again, Nikon, Canon, and Tamron all have one)

## Tripod & Ball Head

- Really Right Stuff TVC-33 (anything sturdy will do)
- Really Right Stuff BH-55

## Filters

- Tiffen Neutral Density Filter (2-, 3-, 6-, and 9-stop screw-on filters)
- LEE Filters Big Stopper 10-stop Neutral Density Filter
- B+W Circular Polarizer Filter